



PATNA UNIVERSITY
M.A (PSYCHOLOGY) SEMESTER-1
ADVANCED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY (CC2)
TOPIC: SOCIAL COGNITION

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SOCIAL COGNITION

- Social cognition refers to the ways in which individuals interpret, analyze, remember, and use information about social world. Social cognition studies the ways in which social information is processed by people, particularly encoding, storage, retrieval, and application to social situations.
- It represents a crossover between Social Psychology and Cognitive Psychology. The main topics which are discussed in social cognition are Impression formation, Persuasion, Prejudices, and Attribution.
- **Features of Social Cognition:-**
- **Automatic Process-** Social cognition is an automatic process. Information from the world around us is processed in an automatic, effortless and unintentional manner.
- **Limited Cognitive Capacities-** Cognitive capacities are limited. Because of this, we adopt shot cuts to save mental effort.
- **Relationship between Cognition and Affect-** Our thinking can influence our emotions and feelings and in turn, our feelings can shape our thought.

IMPORTANT TOPICS IN SOCIAL COGNITION:-

- **Schemas-** Schemas are mental frameworks containing information relevant to specific situations or events, which, once established, help us to interpret these situations. There are various types of schemas. "Self schema" is for organizing knowledge about our-self knowledge. Schemas for other individuals are "person schema". Schema for social roles are called "role schemas" and Schemas for events or situations are called "event schema". Schemas influence social cognition by acting upon three basic cognitive processes. They are attention, encoding and retrieval.
- **Heuristics-** Heuristics are simple rules for making complex decision or drawing inference in a rapid manner. We use heuristics to think about and use social information. Three types of heuristics are- Representativeness Heuristics, Availability Heuristics, and Anchoring and Adjustment Heuristics.



- **Automatic and Controlled Processing-** Social thoughts are processed in two distinct ways- Automatic Processing, and Controlled Processing. Automatic Processing refers to fast, relatively effortless, intuitive, automatic and non-conscious processing of information due to sufficient experience of the cognitive task or social information. Controlled Processing refers to the processing of social information in careful, systematic, logical, rational, and effortful way.
- **Priming-** Events or stimulus that increases the availability of the specific type of information in the memory or consciousness. If the priming is expressed in thinking process or in social behaviour, then effect of priming decreases. This is called unpriming.



Sources of errors in Social Cognition:-

- **Negativity Bias-** Negativity bias refers to the tendency to show greater sensitivity to negative information than positive information.
- **Optimistic Bias-** The optimistic bias refers to the tendency to expect the overall outcomes as positive.
- **Counterfactual Thinking-** Counterfactual thinking is thinking about a past that did not happen. It is tendency to imagine other outcomes in the situation than the one's that have occurred.
- **Thought Suppression-** Human beings can manage to keep some thought out of their consciousness. This is called as thought suppression.
- **Magical Thinking-** Magical thinking involves assumption that does not hold under rational scrutiny.

