

**The Lecture Contains:**

- ☰ Countering prejudice
- ☰ Learning not to hate
- ☰ Direct intergroup contact
- ☰ Recategorization: common in-group identity model
- ☰ Cognitive intervention

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### Countering prejudice

- In the previous two lectures, we tried to understand and explain inter-group relation and prejudice. Based on that understanding, this lecture orients towards making attempts to reduce prejudice. We will cover the following scientific ways to counter prejudice :
- Learning not to hate
- Direct intergroup contact
- Recategorization: common ingroup identity model
- Cognitive intervention

### Learning not to hate

- In our discussion of the origins of prejudice, we had observed that learning plays an important role in the formation of prejudice (which is actually a negative attitude towards another group members). According to the principles of classical conditioning, if a neutral stimulus (people of another group) may begin to evoke negative thoughts or attitude when it is associated with an unconditioned stimulus (mother's or father's face showing disgust toward the other group members), this learning can be unlearned too. In this example, neutral stimulus had become a conditioned stimulus by acquiring the response of a unconditioned stimulus. Now, if the conditioned stimulus (people of another group) is paired with another unconditioned stimulus (such as scenes of communal harmony or soothing folk music of that group) several times, then the prejudiced response may change to a positive feeling towards that other group.

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### Learning not to hate (continued...)

- According to the principles of operant conditioning, we had learnt that if showing negative behaviour towards a member of another group is rewarded, then the negative attitude towards the other group gets formed or strengthened. Now, if showing negative behaviour towards a group is punished or showing a positive behaviour towards that group is rewarded, then the negative attitude or prejudice can be reduced.
- Furthermore, we also learnt that people have role models whom they try to imitate in their thoughts and actions. Now, if we choose our role models who have more realistic and progressive worldviews, it may have an impact on our learning of assessing other groups in a realistic rather than negatively biased way.

### Direct intergroup contact

- Recognizing intergroup similarities: While it may be difficult not to get affected by 'us' and 'them' categorization or the in-group positive and out-group negative bias (also known as 'ultimate attribution error'), on the hindsight, one may also realize through more direct interactions with the out-group members that there can be many similarities between one's in-group and the out-group. Such a realistic appraisal of the characteristics of in-group and out-group and their members may counter the prejudice towards the out-group.

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**Direct intergroup contact (continued...)**

- Learning exception to the stereotypes: Stereotypes lead us to consider all the members of the out-group to be having the same negative qualities. However, a more realistic appraisal through an increased interaction with the out-group members may make us understand that there are many exceptions to the types of qualities we assign to the out-group members and one may have to re-evaluate one's attitude towards them. This may be effective in reducing prejudice.
- Countering the perception of outgroup homogeneity: We may also notice through an increased interaction with the other group members that not all the members of the out-group are the same and one may have to question one's attitude towards them. This also could result in reducing prejudice.

### **Recategorization: common in-group identity model**

- Prejudice is often a result of a trivial or a social categorization of a collective into different group. Also, it is a result of competition over scarce resources. In both these cases, the origins of prejudice may be weakened by creating mechanisms such as bringing to the fore a super-ordinate goal for which the groups at conflict have to work towards a common or mutually acceptable goal by combining their existing resources.

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### Cognitive intervention

- Social psychologists have also recommended certain cognitive interventions for countering prejudice. Using attribute-driven processing rather than category-driven processing may be useful as it emphasizes that in our evaluations of people of other groups, we utilize the qualities that he/she possesses rather than the social categories that he/she belongs to. It is important to note that this process can also counter the prejudice associated with the beneficiaries of affirmative action programmes that promote women and minorities (a prejudice that discounts their merit as they are promoted on the basis of their social category) as the attribute-driven processing focuses on the qualities of the beneficiaries rather than their social category.

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