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Social Influence

Social Influence is a process in which we change our behaviour because of the direct or indirect influence of other people or group.

causes of human behaviour →

1. Reason
 2. Emotions
 3. Attitude
- } Constitutional factors
as these are internal to us.

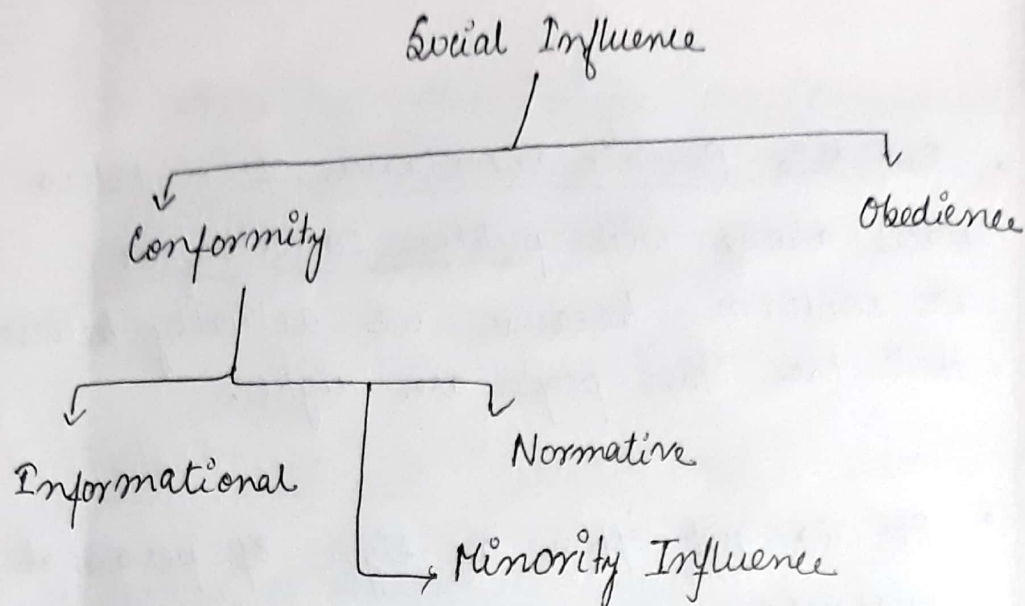
- Situational factors →
4. Other people around us also influences our behaviour.
 5. Social Institution e.g. family, caste system etc.
- These are external.

Examples of Social Influence

1. Holocaust of Hitler conducted by his bureaucrats.

2. Heavens' gate case.

→ 'Banality of Evil' by H. Arendt.



Conformity ÷

It is a process in which we change our behaviour because of the indirect influence (Real or Imagined) of other people or group.

There are 2 types of Conformity —

1) Informational Conformity

When the situation is ambiguous & we are not sure of what is right then we often take the other people as a reliable source of right behaviour & start behaving accordingly. This is called Informational Conformity.

~~In this~~ This occurs because of — our desire to be right.

- In this Private acceptance often takes place along with public compliance. we conform because we actually believe that the other people are right.
- It is not often a sign of personal weakness.

e.g. Rumor leads to Belief.

Factor influencing Informational conformity

1. Ambiguity

If the situation is ambiguous & we are not sure of what is right then we are more likely to conform.

2. Crisis situation

If the situation is that of crisis then we neither have time nor the cognitive ability to think properly & thus we are more likely to conform.

3. When the other people are considered as Expert in their area, then we are more likely to conform to them

Application of Informational Conformity :-

* Research of J. Nolan

for saving Electricity.

- by creating a standard, we can influence people's behaviour.

⇒ Normative Conformity (N.C)

Every group has a set of norms of accepted behaviour which every member is ~~to~~ expected to follow. Those people who do not follow these norms are initially ridiculed, may slowly & slowly isolated & may finally be expelled from the group.

N.C is a process in which ^{just} we change our behaviour because of the fact that we want to remain or become a member of that group.

It occurs because of -

- Our Desire to be liked / accepted / to gain approval.
- In this Public compliance often takes place without necessarily having private acceptance. We conform even when we may believe that ~~the~~ the norms may not be right.
- This is often a sign of personal weakness.

Factors influencing normative conformity:

1) Importance of the group

If we consider the group as very important for us, we like & respect its members & want to gain their approval at any cost then we are more likely to conform.

This has an important implication for those groups which have been formed to take important policy decisions. All the members of such

a group should not be very good friends of each other, because in that case, pressure of conformity will be very high, not much discussion would take place & thus the quality of decision would be low.

- Decision making group : Non-conformity
- Implementation group : Emotional Intelligence / Conformity

2. Unanimity \div

If every member of the group conforms, then the pressure of conformity is very high on each of them but if even a single member dis-conforms & breaks the unanimity then this pressure is reduced significantly from all others

3. Size of the Group \div

If the size of the group increases from 2 to 7, then conformity normally increases but after that it remains more

or less constant.

4. Culture ÷

In a collectivist culture like India or China where the groups like family, caste, etc are considered as more important than the individual, conformity is high but in the individualistic culture like the U.S or Western Europe where individuals are considered as more important than the group, conformity is slightly less.

Examples of Normative Conformity

- Fashion.
- Women's Body Image.
- Beauty
- Man's Body Image