



# UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL EMOTIONS IN RELATION TO SOCIAL CONTEXT

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## ABSTRACT

*In many psychological researches, there is a typical trend to capture emotions in their purest form by shedding them off from their socio-cultural context. As a shared reality, they pervade people's social and professional lives, influence thinking and behaviour and profoundly shape relationships and social interactions, therefore the fundamental role these emotions play in all sociocultural circumstances must be taken into account, and therefore, taking this into account that our emotional lives are socioculturally constituted. Both 'Social' and 'cultural' of sociocultural term have special significance in this research paper. This research paper inculcates various types of emotions such as empathy, love, anger, jealousy, compassion, forgiveness, envy, moral and its relation to social context. It also taps how expression of emotions differ in individualistic and collectivistic culture.*

**KEYWORDS**-Social Emotions, collectivistic and Independent Cultures, love, anger, jealousy, compassion, forgiveness, envy, moral.

## INTRODUCTION

Understanding emotion in connection with social context is a comparatively new phenomenon within psychology, sociology and other social science disciplines. Cooley (1964) was the only sociologist in the early nineteenth century who played a very significant role in analyzing emotions, therefore the study of sociology of emotions did not emerge until the last decades of the twentieth century. It was around 1986, due to rapid escalation in the level of curiosity to study emotion, led to the origin of sociology of emotions section within the American Psychological Association. After a lot of contemplation on the relation between emotions and their social experiences, sociologists came to the understanding that a significant portion of human behaviour is influenced by affective commitment (e.g., desires, attitudes, values and moral beliefs) and emotional attachment to others (Etzoni, 1988; Hoshschild, 1975). Thus, it can be easily stated that understanding of emotions has become imperative in elaborating the reciprocity between individual agency and social structure. Bartlet (1988) believed that sociology encapsulates emotion because sociology is a field which eloquently articulate social phenomenon and emotion also perpetuate from social phenomenon. According to Kemper (1978, 1987, 2011) vast majority of emotions that human beings experience tends to be meaningful in the context of social relations. Loneliness, envy, hate, fear, shame, pride, horror, resentment, grief, nostalgia, trust, sadness, satisfaction, joy, anger, happiness, frustration and numerous other feelings emerge in specific social situations, expressing in the individual's bodily consciousness and the rich spectrum of

human social interaction and relationships, therefore it is quite palpable that apprehension of an emotion means apprehending the situation and social relation that produces it. Kemper (1978) elaborated same thing in his social relational theory in which he states that primary emotions result from the interactions between two basic social dimensions-power and status.

Another important thing is that emotion plays a very imperative role in perpetuating the principles of social behaviour. Therefore, it can be easily elucidated that emotional experiences tend to play a cardinal role in all social phenomenon. So, because of this it becomes portentous for sociology to inculcate the analysis of affective structures and emotional dynamics into its objects of study. For a long time, emotions have been considered as an integral part of psychology but from last few years sociologist are also founding social arena of emotional expression, their social contextual function and the ways in which social-cultural milieus shape the very experience of emotions as quite captivating and intriguing area of study. According to sociologists' emotions are considered to be originated from the conscious relations, actions and experiences of selves. Emotions are described as actions that we carry out in the external world; they are not something inside our body. Similarly, according to sociologists it is conspicuous that emotions are not something "private", "inner" or "deep". (Pace Lofland, 1985 p.172; and Denzim, 1984, pp.1,24;1985, p.234).

As we know that society has a detrimental role in shaping our emotions. Emotions that are considered to be



private experiences are rooted in history, culture and social structure. It is not possible to comprehend emotions without paying attention to the social processes and forces that influence emotions. The experience and expression of emotions depend on what one knows and what one believes. According to Hochschild (1983), social processes are considered to be fundamental to emotions because they are implicated in the managing of emotions. Although emotions play a very important role in understanding an experience or situation, but the signals that are passed on by the emotions are interpreted through expectations and experiences that people hold about themselves and the world. There is also an introduction of concept by Hochschild (1983) called emotional labour, which eloquently elaborates the process by which employees' emotional expressions are determined in accordance with the rules and guidelines defined by the employer. According to Berger and Luckman (1986) emotions that human beings experience are product of social construction. Various social processes and social forces play a very imperative role in shaping emotions. According to Mills (1959) public issues of social structure carved the individuals' expression of emotions. People living in different cultures may experience the same emotion in different ways and their emotional expression towards the situation would also be different. For example, India is a country with diverse religious groups and caste systems and every group has their own way of dealing with a situation. Despite all these differences, there is unity and bonding among individuals from diverse cultures.

Emotions are shaped by biological as well as socio-cultural processes. The cultural organization of emotion development is defined on the basis of cultural model of self-construction which includes independent or the interdependent self. In Western cultures, the model of independence exists, which describes self as an independent and separate entity. Whereas in many non-Western cultures the cultural model of interdependence dominates that defines the self in terms of social relationships. People living in different cultures may experience the same emotion in different ways and their emotional expression towards the situation would also be different. For example, India is a country with diverse religious groups and caste systems and every group has their own way of dealing with a situation. Despite all these differences, there is unity and bonding among individuals from diverse cultures.

### WHAT ARE SOCIAL EMOTIONS?

All emotions serve as social signals to other people and are typically affected by the sociality of the context (Fridlund, 1991; Barrett, 1993). But in recent decades, classification of emotion as either social or individual has been the prime issue of concern for researchers of emotions. Many researchers have attempted to capture this distinction, though using a variety of terminologies such as primary versus secondary, subjective versus collective, biological versus collective etc. We must discuss those specific characteristics of social emotions, which distinguish them from the broader emotion category. What is special about social emotions, if all emotions are, in some sense, social? That's the reason for lack of any explicit demarcation of emotion category on the basis

of their sociality. The emotions of love, guilt, compassion, envy or jealousy etc., are considered as social, because they necessarily depend on the thoughts, feelings or actions of other people, as experienced, recalled, anticipated or imagined at first hand, or instantiated as a generalized compliance to the social norms, values and conventions. An intrinsic relation to social concern becomes the defining quality of each of these emotions.

Another necessary constituent of social emotions is social appraisal, which means the implicit or explicit apprehensions about the relevance of an event or object to diverse societal concerns. This appraisal process becomes the determining cause of an emotional response (Scherer, Schorr & Johnstone, 2001) that can be relevant only within a social context. Social appraisal specifically relates to other people when they or their actions or evaluations become objects of emotion, and also take into account social norms, rules, conventions etc. For example, the appraisal of fairness, responsibility or intention falls within the ambit of social appraisal (Weiner, 1995, 2005; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). On the other hand, in non-social context, fairness, intention and responsibility are meaningless.

An additional but significant consideration why these emotions are believed to be social is the perceived concerns of these emotions presumed to be socially constructed. For instance, the main worry of the individual feeling pride or shame is the compliance or inability to conform with societal norms or standards. We wouldn't have these expectations, if we weren't residing in social groups. Social emotions have been found developing later in life than basic emotions (Izard, 1971), as their development depends upon children's direct engagement with society because they must understand the social rules and standards which will determine the appropriate social behaviour, and the awareness that their own behaviours will be evaluated by other people according to these socially approved rules and standards (Lewis, 2000; Lewis et al., 1989). Social emotions seem to be more complex than other emotions since they develop relatively later and they are dependent on cognitively more sophisticated mechanisms.

Lewis et al., (2008) in Handbook of Emotions, have classified social emotions into two subgroups of interpersonal and group emotions. Through the interactive engagement between individuals in society, interpersonal emotions are believed to emerge and can either enable to bind individuals with each other or to create distance between them (Fischer & Manstead, 2008). For example, A person may feel a compassionate attachment to another when he notices that this other person expresses pleasure in performing an activity that he enjoys. In just the same way, somebody else might convey one's desire to distance himself from other persons by expressing its resentment at, or hatred for, their conduct. In contrast, group emotions are characterized as, either (a) shared emotions that is, emotions experienced by individuals who feel that they belong to the same community, such as a nation, ethnicity, religion, race, caste or class; or (b) collective emotions experienced by large groups close to one another in geographical proximity (Smith & Mackie, 2008). Researches



on these subcategories of social emotions have established that the difference between the two isn't merely conceptual: Whereas interpersonal emotions are frequently interpreted as sociability agents, they also, seem conducive to peaceful coexistence; group emotions are closely linked with collective biases and incidents of aggression and violence (Hoffman, 2008). Group-level emotions among individuals are socially shared, and are communicated more intensely among those who associate more with the group.

The expression of emotions are generally subjective, situational and collaborative. There is also variation in the expression of emotions in the presence of others as compared to being alone. In one study (Khosla, 2008), when the participant was alone, the intensity of emotion was very intense after viewing the scenes depicting basic emotions. However, when the participant viewed the scenes in the presence of other participants their emotional expression varied significantly. This variation in the emotional expression describes the effect of socialization process on the display of emotions.

The next section is devoted to brief overview, definition, review of past researches and cross-cultural patterns and differences of various social emotions such as empathy, compassion, love, forgiveness, anger, jealousy, envy and the moral emotions of shame and guilt.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

In the 1950-60s, social scientists were categorized into two groups-the universalists and the social constructivists. The universalist camp claimed that despite cultural differences in customs and traditions, at a fundamental level, all humans feel similarly. Universalists believed that because emotions evolved in response to the environments of our primordial ancestors, emotions are the same across different human cultures. Indeed, people often describe their emotions as "automatic," "natural," "physiological," and "instinctual," supporting the view that emotions are hard-wired and universal.

The social constructivist camp, however, claimed that despite a common evolutionary heritage, humans evolved to adapt to their environments, and because human environments vary so widely, people's emotions are also malleable and culturally variable. For instance, Catherine Lutz (1988) argued that many Western views of emotion assume that emotions are "singular events situated within individuals" (p. 212), whereas collectivistic cultures like India views of emotion focus on "exchanges between individuals" (p. 212). Social constructivists argued that because cultural ideas and practices are all encompassing, people are often unaware of how their feelings are shaped by their cultures, and therefore emotions can feel automatic, natural, physiological, and instinctual, and yet still be primarily culturally shaped.

## **EMPATHY**

Empathy is generally defined in terms of stable approach (trait empathy) or a situation specific approach (State empathy) (Brouns, deWied, Keijsers, Branje, VanGoozen, & Meens, 2013). Emotions play a very important

role in comprehending other intentions and engage in appropriate social discourse. Empathy is defined in terms of cognitive and affective approach and both approaches are pivotal to explaining empathy. Understanding other emotions Affective empathy refers to the ability to understand other emotions and confront the same emotions with them (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004). Personal distress generally refers to the apathetic response to another person's negative emotional state and its sole motivation is to enervate one's own unpleasant feelings (e.g., Batson, Fultz, & Schoenrade, 1987). Whereas, in empathetic concern which is closely related to sympathy, the focus is more on the another person's emotional state and involve paying attention to the person in distress (Eisenberg et al., 1989; Dovidio, Sibicky, Matthews, & Allen, 1988). Cognitive empathy involves the ability to become conscious of another person's perspective (Phillips et al., 1998) and feelings (Kohler, 1929) and its attention is given more on essential cognitive processes such as perspective taking or recognizing another's emotions accurately. The cognitive empathy is examined in terms of empathetic accuracy index which involves how accurately and successfully individuals infer target person feelings and thoughts (Ickes, 1997, 2003).

Researchers revealed on cultural differences suggests that empathetic responses to others emotional state tend to vary due to cultural differences. For example, due to variation in their cultural background, individuals living in India and America will interpret the other's emotional state differently. The cross-cultural studies conducted with participants from European American and East Asian cultures also articulate the same variation between two different cultures in their way of understanding other's emotional state. In western cultural contexts, self is primarily seen as an independent entity which inculcates internal characteristics like traits, aspirations and preferences (Kitayama, Duffy & Uchida, 2007; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Whereas in contrary to the western contexts, In eastern cultural contexts, the self is understood in terms of social and interpersonal relationships and is described as an interdependent entity (Kitayama et al., 2007; Markus & Kitayama, 1991 because in eastern culture self comes into existence only through social interactions.

## **ANGER**

Anger has been described as a "basic" emotion by many scholars (Ekman 1994; Izard 1997; Turner 2000), but this definition of anger is still considered to be debatable. According to Kemper's view anger is a type of primary emotion because it has evolutionary value, is present early in life, has cross-cultural universality and has differentiated autonomic patterns from other emotions. Many researchers have defined anger in terms of its subcategories. Social cognitive approach regarding anger conceptualizes four anger like emotions which encapsulates "frustration emotions (involving outcomes which are undesirable), resentment emotions (involving the outcomes received by others), reproach emotions (involving the attribution of blame), and anger emotions (involving both undesirable outcomes and



blame)" (Clore et al. 1993:68). Scholars are still perplexed whether anger inculcates or is different

from emotions like frustration, reapproach, and resentment (Berkowitz and Harmon-Jones-2004; Smith and Kirby 2004). Anger is considered to be a highly social emotion because elicitation of anger is the result of betrayal, injustice, actual or perceived insult, inequity, goal obstacles, unfairness, the incompetent behaviour of another and because of the verbal and physical aggression of another person (Berkowitz and Harmon-Jones 2004; Izard 1977,1991).The indirect and direct threat towards an individual's self-concept, identity or public image is also one of the pertinent reason for the outbreak of anger.

The experiences of anger vary in different social context. (Carstensen et al. 1996).Thus social and family contexts are considered important for studying social emotions especially anger. The structure of job in the organization determines the level of experience of anger by the individual. Among this job authority is the most potentially relevant structural conditions which expose individuals to anger provoking sites Studies conducted in different countries and culture suggest that both positive and negative experiences of anger are related with relationships in work or family roles (Scherer and Tannenbaum 1986; Scherer et al. 1986). The most intense experiences of anger are likely to occur in close and intimate relationships because individuals have invested a lot of time and energy in those relations (Smith 2002). Professionals' workers with good income and higher levels of authority often experience lucrative benefits like job autonomy and nonroutine work (Reskin and Ross 1992; Ross and Reskin 1992).

## LOVE

Love is defined as an intrincating intellectual function that work in close association with many other cognitive processes, such as memory (Alea & Vick,2010), attention (Langeslaq et al., 2014), perception such as taste (Chan et al.,2013), reasoning (Weber & Lehman,2005) and it also affect health ( Haert et al.,2007; Carey et al., 2014). Moreover, the association between love and beauty has also been studied (Takahashi et al.,2015; Zeki et al., 2014; Ishai, 2007). Therefore, all mental functions are influenced by love and love also inculcates different types of styles which are transformed by the culture.

The Eros style, according to the conventional classification of love (Lee,1973) is described as a passionate or romantic love which encapsulates intimate, sexual activity and intense feelings. Commitment is another important element of love (Sternberg,1986,2004),and friendship, which relate to the style of storage (friendship and love relationship).These styles of love are considered to be ethical and valuable in some cultures (Hendrick & Hendrick,1993) than in others (Ferrer et al.,2008).In the early phase of their relationship, the younger people may adopt eros style, but in later phase of their relationship they may opt for the style of love which include commitment (storage) and attachment (Shaver et al.,1988) and rational styles of love such as Pragma

(Hendrick & Hendrick,1986). ). Culture plays a significant role in the origin of styles of love and is shaped by the norms and expectations of the culture.

Many theorists have described love as a fundamental cultural construction. Researches relating to culture evaluate the products of culture such as ideology, norms, values, and material goods and the ways in which these cultural elements configure and hamper Individual's behaviour and emotions. The ideology of individualism has received considerable captivation in the studies relating to culture. Bellah and Colleagues (1985) argued that the extreme focus on maintaining individual identity and the desire for individual happiness and success can cause discord with the ideals of love. According to Swidler (2001) there are two types of love in cultural settings-the romantic love and practical, "real" love. Romantic partner refers to the personal desire to have a unique partner which involve defiance of social forces. Individuals generally do not positively accept the cultural symbols that are embedded within the culture and are made available to them, especially those of romantic love, and many also remain highly sceptical. On the other hand, real love involves more rational and compatible process and do not last forever. Cross-cultural studies have indicated romantic love to be higher among individuals from modern countries with their individualistic culture (Goode,1959; Rosenblatt,1967). Whereas in traditional collectivistic cultures, the romantic love is not considered to be a very valuable phenomenon because collectivistic culture incorporates strong, extended family ties (Simmons, Vons Kolke, & Shimizu,1986).

## COMPASSION

Most of us, in real life situations are confronted with the situations in which we witness different forms of human sufferings. When we are encountered with such situations, for example, a homeless person walking in the street, do we react with kind and friendly feeling toward that homeless person or appalled by his appearance. Compassion is one such emotional reaction elicited when being faced with such sufferings. As Keltner & Goetz (2007) have defined, Compassion is the emotion a person experiences when feeling concern for another's suffering and desiring to enhance that individual's welfare. This definition entails three central notions about compassion: first, compassion as an emotional reaction to another person's suffering; second, compassion as an affective feeling of kindness for the other; and third, compassion contains a motivation to act prosocial.

Empathy as a social emotion seems to be similar to the notion of compassion, but have differences in respect that empathy is not dependent on emotional valence, and thus a person can show empathy with sadness and happiness alike (Klimacki & Singer, 2015). There is, however, a key distinction between compassion and empathy when being confronted with another's suffering and that is while empathy signifies the same affective experience, compassion denotes a non-shared experience, i.e., having a sensitive concern for the suffering person (Singer & Lamm, 2009; Batson, 2009). Compassion is also correlated with positive affect and



compassion fosters well-being and prosocial behaviour (Condon et al., 2013; Leiberger et al., 2011). Some researchers have also explored whether people can be trained with compassion and what influences the compassion training has on human behaviour. One such compassion fostering technique is 'loving-kindness' training (Salzberg, 2002), in which focus is on encouraging an attitude of sociability and generosity toward other beings.

The existing cross-cultural studies of the conception, experience and expression of compassion reveal various cultural similarities and differences. Cultures seem to differ in what's meant to be compassionate. For example, In western cultures, people experience compassion for those with whom they identify themselves (Batson et al., 1983), having perceived similarity in perspectives they share (Toe & Batson, 1982) and how similar they feel one another (Barson et al., 1987). In contrast to the western conception, Buddhist idea of compassion believes everyone and everything to be interconnected and therefore, people experience compassion towards all (Dalai Lama, 1997).

### Jealousy

A kind of protective reaction to a perceived threat on the quality of an important relationship is called jealousy (Clauton and Smith 1998). All these protective reactions inculcate thoughts, feelings or actions. Feeling of Jealousy generally arise because of the desire of the person to secure the relationship which he values (especially marriage) the most from a perceived threat (especially adultery). If anyone undergoing through the feeling of jealousy and embarrassment, this does not mean that he is holding an irrational impulse as stated by Goffman (1967), but is part of the person orderly behaviour itself. Jealousy is considered as a useful emotion for the psychosocial wellbeing of individuals, couples and functioning of the society. Jealousy tends to preserve social order by protecting marriage from the betrayal of adultery (Davis 1936). This is because jealousy is considered as a useful emotion for the psychosocial wellbeing of individuals, couples and functioning of the society. Jealousy tends to maintain social order by safeguarding marriages from the treachery and perfidy of adultery (Davis 1936). Jealousy also cannot be always perceived as something negative because jealousy can also be congregated with healthy feelings like love and caring about someone or something. Feeling of jealousy can also be used as a mechanism of defence when one finds his/her relationship in a jeopardize situation.

Every culture teaches individuals to form valued relationships on the basis of prevailing norms because whether the individual interpret his/her experience as threatening or not threatening is influence by the culture. Jealousy is just the protective reaction to the valued relationships that has been taught and established in accordance with the prevailing norms. Pines (1992, 1998) and Buss (2000) also stated the protective function of jealousy. They stated that due to enormity in the diversity of human beliefs about threat, boundaries, relationships and protection, therefore the feeling of jealousy varies to a great extent across cultures. The belief

system in a particular culture tend to play a very paramount role in the interpretation of jealousy because across different cultures the way people comprehend jealousy tend to vary as beliefs about the matter change.

### ENVY

Despite its considerable significance in social arena, envy has been largely a neglected topic in scientific enquiry (Scheler and Schoeck, 1961). The study related to Jealousy has been undertaken more and received more fascination than envy (Parrot, 1991). In the book "The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy" written by Salovey states that in 1970s and 1980s, there was an inception of research in the area of jealousy. Envy is totally different from jealousy. This is because envy takes place when one lacks some object which the other has and it generally transpires between two people. Whereas jealousy occurs because of suspicious thoughts and trepidation of losing someone generally a loved one to a competitor and it typically transpires between three people. Envy is described as holding hostile attitude toward others who are superior to us, a state of negative feeling against someone whom we think is better than us (Scheler, 1961, Scholck, 1970). Aristotle (350 BC/1754) has defined envy as a state of pain that arise by perceiving another's good fortune, escalated by those who have what we ought to have. Envy was considered as the main reason for unhappiness and same was even illustrated by Bertrand Russel. Russel further elaborated that due to his or her unhappiness the envious person may ponder and expect misfortune for others whom he believes are very fortunate. It is important to apprehend that envy is not caused by desire or wish to have that object or advantage. It is rather a very darker state which involves the malicious desire that the superior should lose that object or advantage. The envy person feels the inappropriate pleasure and venomous joy when other whom he thinks is superior to him or her fails or suffer. The assessment of envy is almost impossible through self-report measures because it is completely negative and therefore it is denied, repressed, relabelled and disguised, because if we admit our envy, then we declare our self to be inferior as well as hostile towards another person (or class of persons) due to the feeling of inferiority, that's why people think it is better to repress their feeling of envy.

The strongest feeling of envy is likely to be there, when the other person is in advantageous or superior position in comparison to the individual's own self-definition. It has been argued that envy arise due to comparisons made in the domains that are considered to be important to ourselves (Salovey & Rodin, 1989; Salovey & Rothman, 1991). Thus, according to this "domain relevance hypothesis", experience of envy is most likely to occur when comparisons with another individual are thought to be negative for the self and these comparisons generally takes place in the area of specialization that is especially relevant and pertinent to self-definition. Past researches have indicated that there are two types of envy, malicious and benign (Parrott, 1991; Smith & Kim, 2007). Both these malicious and benign envy are considered to be negative and create annoying feelings because they arise when someone else is in advantageous position and doing better



than oneself. Both these envy types differ from each other in terms of action tendencies that trigger them. Action tendencies which are considered to be destructive and aimed at pulling down others or thinking misfortune for others are called malicious envy. On the other hand, benign envy is considered to be more constructive because its action tendencies are aimed at improving one's own position.

## FORGIVENESS

Human beings, when victimized or insulted, show the tendency to reciprocate or seek retribution which seems deep rooted in human nature at the biological, psychological and cultural levels. The motivation to revert back harm for harm has long been one of the most simplistic strategies to deal with perceived injustice (Black, 1998). Almost all cultures have tried to objectify the law of retaliation to place the punishing rights in the hands of a detached third party, such as the society itself.

A variety of solutions have been devised to interrupt the destructive effects of such type of transgressions. One such mechanism is forgiveness - an approach whereby people crush their natural destructive responses to transgressors and become increasingly motivated to follow constructive attitudes instead. Since centuries the concept of forgiveness has been articulated by different religions of the world (Rye et al., 2000). Despite, forgiveness has been ignored by social theorists for the past three centuries. But, in the last three decades, social scientists have made substantial progress in defining and measuring forgiveness, exploring various social and developmental linkages, and assessing the value of forgiveness for the individual and social well-being. When people feel forgiveness, their responses toward others who have offended or harmed them become prosocial or less negative and more positive over time (McCullough et al., 2000). Forgiving to another person, oneself and situation or circumstance form three different contexts of forgiveness.

The concept of forgiveness is culturally universal, as many cultures and religions share a somewhat common forgiveness schema (Suchdey, Friedberg & Almeida, 2006). All major religions which are followed all around the world, including Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism and Islam advocate forgiveness in response to being wronged or victimised (Rye et al., 2000). However, important cultural differences exist in the conception of and people's approach toward forgiveness. A culture's history and key events happened in the past especially those shaped by violence and war, has very significant influence on individuals' belief about forgiveness and revenge. For example, Cambodians believe that forgiveness has meaning only when the offender or transgressor apologizes and materially compensate (Mullet & Neto). Many researchers who work on peace and conflict resolution have argued that intergroup forgiveness play a significant role in resolving intergroup conflict and in facilitating reconciliation (e.g., Wenzel & Okimoto, 2015; Bright and Exline, 2012). Many intervention techniques have also been developed to promote forgiveness by several researchers, specifically to deliver for the groups rather than individuals.

## SOCIAL EMOTIONS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Social emotions play a vital role in our lives because they have important intrapersonal, interpersonal, and the social and cultural functions. The intrapersonal functions refer to the roles that social emotions play within each of us individually. As a rapid information-processing system, social emotions help us to act or react quickly with minimum conscious awareness based on vector and valence of the social situation, past experiences and perceived consequences of one's actions (Matsumoto & Wilson, 2008; Baumeister et al., 2007). These emotions also serve as the affective basis of many attitudes, values and beliefs about the world and people around us. Social emotions motivate and guide our future behaviour because as a social being, we strive to experience the positive social emotions of love, pride, compassion, satisfaction and meaning of life and at the same time, work hard to avoid negative social emotions such as anger, shame, guilt and hate.

The interpersonal functions describe the relevance of emotions to build and sustain our relationships with significant others. Social emotions influence our social interactions and signal the nature of interpersonal relationships. In Keltner's (2003) view, social emotion's communicative signal value in a particular social context, help in providing solution to various social problems by evoking others responses, communicating the nature of human interactions and interpersonal relationships and by offering incentives for desired social behaviour. Also, emotional displays in interpersonal context, generate specific, complementary responses from the other involved in the interaction. For instance, emotional distress evokes sympathy (Eisenberg et al., 1989) and anger evokes fear in others (Esteves et al., 1994).

The social and cultural functions refer to the roles and meanings that social emotions have to the maintenance and effective functioning of the social orders within a society and cultures at large. Individuals in their social life, are part of multiple groups with different roles, norms and expectations. The human social life may create chaos if there is lack of coordination among its people and systematic organization in relationships. Culture provides this requisite cohesion, coordination and organization in relationships to allow its individuals and groups to manage the social complexities of human social life, and thereby, preserving social order and preventing social chaos. Social emotions also regulate the balance of power, by encouraging people to express threats of retaliation or forced submission and conformity. They also, represent social cohesion and motivate it by encouraging wide-ranging forms of social interaction, such as proximity seeking, help- seeking and carefulness pertaining to others (Frijda & Mesquita, 1994).

When social values, norms, beliefs and attitudes related to emotions develop, the cultural transmission of object or event's meaning takes place as a crucial aspect of cultural learning. From socialization to interaction with cultural products available in our society such as books, movies, fictitious plays, etc. all have very crucial role in the cultural transmission of information related to emotions. Cultural experiences and norms help us manage and modify our



emotional reactions, to serve the purpose of maintaining social order, and thus, allowing us to live relatively harmonious and constructive social lives. Since past two decades, social emotions are also shaping social media interactions people have with one another, because technology has provided easy accessibility of an unprecedented collection of tools to interact with others and express their views publicly on various issues. Virtual social encounters with variable level of attention, involvement and activity play important role in social relationships, with the experience, expression and management of these emotions.

It is now, clear that if cultural values, norms and standards about emotions didn't exist or social emotions were not regulated in culturally defined ways, people would have shown all kinds of emotional experiences and their expression in unpredictable and significantly harmful ways, and various groups and societies facing difficulties in their effective functioning. Thus, social emotions have a very crucial role in the successful functioning of any society and culture and ultimately, for the human species.

### **CONTRAST BETWEEN COLLECTIVISTIC AND INDIVIDUALISTIC CULTURE**

Social emotions, as we have discussed in this chapter, are functional adaptation to social living which monitor and negotiate our social relations. Since our social relations vary across cultural context, therefore every human being always works in specific cultural space and emotions help them navigating this cultural space. Considering the pronounced social roles of emotions in our lives, as discussed in the previous section, fairly substantial cultural differences can be expected in terms of the strength of their expression, the focality of events that may evoke them, and regularity in their occurrence. According to Constructionists view, along with the perceiver's cognitive appraisal of the emotion event, the unique cultural setting also, play very significant role in emotional experience (Harre, 1986).

Many anthropologists and cross-cultural researchers suggest that the way independence and interdependence as two social orientations are incorporated into the construction of the self-shows one important difference among numerous cultural groups, based on which they can be classified into two, individualistic and collectivistic (Fiske et al., 1998; Kitayama et al., 1997). Individualistic cultural context highlights the boundaries of each individual, whereas collectivistic culture accepts mutual interdependence of individuals in relationship (Triandis, 1995; Markus and Kitayama, 2003).

According to Fox and Calkins (2003), there are cultural expectations regarding, for instance, overt emotional expressions, and these expectations affect the degree of self-control one exercises over displaying emotions. According to Kang and his Associates (2003), cultural disparities in emotional expressiveness have been observed because of the inhibitory influence of "display rules" in some cultures, possibly because collectivist communities socialize their people in order to retain inter-group harmony by the effective

manipulation and control of emotional expressions (Oyserman et al. 2002), in contrast to the individualistic societies where expressiveness of such emotions is proscribed.

Social emotions are also dependent upon the moral context associated with the specific culture. The moral context doesn't vary randomly from culture to culture, but rather tend to aggregate the three ethics, the ethics of "autonomy", the ethics of "community" and the ethics of "divinity" (Haidt et al., 2004, Jensen, 1998, 2005). Within a culture, the relative weights given to these three ethics provide the actual moral context which appear to affect the conceptualization, experience and expression of social emotions. For instance, in cultures where the ethics of autonomy is preferred, they value freedom and individualism. People there, strive to maximize their personal utility and express sadness, happiness, shame and pride in response to their individual success or failure, gains or losses. Emphasis on the ethics of "community" lead priority inclination toward collectivism, where cultural moral goods are shaped by such feelings as loyalty, respectfulness, honor, modesty, duty etc. These emotions necessitate the strong dedication and attachment to the social group and also, dominate over people's individual choices (Shweder et al, 1987). Within the cultural world, where the ethics of divinity dominate, people are primarily governed by the divine experiences which protect and dignify the individual's inherent self. Serenity or calmness become part of their emotional life. Love and hate both, seem having lost their positive or negative hedonic valence as they believe both attachment and hatred must be renounced because they degrade the human being preventing their rise to the true stature (Yatiswarananda, 1979).

In collectivistic cultures, while experiencing positive social emotions such as empathy and compassion, people reduce focus on their own 'selves', as against to dominating self-humanising bias among people of individualistic societies (J. Park et al., 2015). Self-humanising bias is the bias, on average, to perceive oneself as more human than others. In terms of the experience of negative social emotions, since East Asian cultures show higher preference for harmony, it may lead to the expectation that people in individualistic cultures would more frequently experience and express negative emotions such as anger in comparison to the collectivistic cultures. However, Japanese have been found recalling more experiences of recent anger in comparison to Americans and Europeans (Scherer et al., 1988), but Japanese anger don't harm their in-group harmony as they are mostly directed toward strangers. On the other hand, anger among the west independent cultures are more often concerned with personal relationships.

In terms of self-control, the west individualistic world is socialised to value and give emphasis on primary control, which provide them an intrinsic sense of power and competence, whereas the eastern cultures preferably engage in secondary control that allow them to adjust to situations and circumstances. Because of this difference in self-control, the members of collectivistic cultures may be more likely to endorse and engage in emotional expressions which lead to better adjustment, whereas the individuals from independent



cultures show such emotional expressions which increase their influence over the situation.

Some recent studies have examined the cross-cultural differences in relationships between self-construal and affective experiences in social interactions (Nezlek & Smith, 2008). In a more individualistic culture (e.g., United Kingdom), independent self-construal was found having positive correlation with positive affect, whereas for collectivist culture participants (e.g., Greece) independent self-construal have negative correlation with positive affect. In a similar study, Mesquita and Karasawa (2002) reported similar finding in which Japanese participants showed positive within-person relationship between emotional pleasantness and interdependence concerns, whereas with respect to American participants, result show positive within-person relationship between emotional pleasantness and both independence and interdependence concerns. Also, interpersonal situations, for instance friendliness, was found more commonly associated with feeling good in collectivistic cultures, whereas interpersonal distance, such as proud feeling or feeling superior was found frequently associated with feeling good in individualistic cultures (Kitayama et al., 2000). Social emotions relate more closely, in collectivist cultures, with interpersonal relationships and its members' feelings of social worth than to intra-individual feelings or internal evaluations (Mesquita, 2001).

## CONCLUSION

In this research paper we have given a brief overview of social and cultural contexts' relevance in understanding emotions, conceptualization of social emotions and its classification into positive vs negative, interpersonal vs intergroup, structural vs transition emotions. Various social emotions such as empathy, love, anger, jealousy, compassion, forgiveness, envy, moral emotions have been discussed with emphasis on cultural variation in feeling, expression and their behavioural transformations. Culture being the central theme of this book, special attention has been given to cultural variations in experiences and expressions of social emotions in each section of the chapter, particularly differences in two cultural contexts: eastern (India, China, Japan, Korea, etc.) and western (United states, Canada, etc.) world have been highlighted. The collectivistic vs individualistic cultural differences in feeling of social emotions have been explained in terms of various constituents of emotions such as concerns, appraisal process, action readiness, social sharing of emotions and belief changes. Despite the broad coverage of cross-cultural researches on social emotions, many constraints limited us to allude to more relevant literatures only. To do justice with them in form of comprehensive review connecting culture and social emotions, we would require a complete book or even several volumes of it. Overall, this chapter has demonstrated that if social emotions were not regulated in culturally defined ways, then emotional experiences and their expression would have been unpredictable and significantly harmful, and it would have led various groups and societies to face difficulties in their effective functioning. Thus, social emotions and its correspondence with cultural context have a

very crucial role in the successful functioning of any society and ultimately, for the human species.

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