

## Stereotypes and hate crimes in the light of an Indian context

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### ABSTRACT

Stereotypes are most generally defined as "beliefs about the characteristics, attributes, and behaviours of members of certain groups". Stereotypes are as old as humanity and today they have become a common phenomenon in cultures around the world. It is a cognitive construct based on the processing of perceptual information. Research indicates that stereotypes can imply both positive and negative ideas. A negative perspective based on some kind of generalisation paves way to prejudices and bias which then may influence people to commit crimes known as hate crimes. Hate crimes can be defined as crime, most commonly violence motivated by prejudice, bias, or hatred toward a particular group of which the victim is presumed to be a member. A comprehensive search of the literature was performed on books, journals and other credible online internet websites. This study reviewed the literature on the activation of stereotypes, the models used to explain bias, the relationship between stereotypes and hate crimes. Finally, research incorporating useful interventions for prejudice reduction.

**Keywords:** *Stereotypes, Hate Crimes, Bias, Prejudice*

Stereotypes are most generally defined as "beliefs about the characteristics, attributes, and behaviours of members of certain groups" (Hilton & Von Hippel, 1996, pg. 240). Past characterizations of stereotypes include "pictures in our heads" (Lippmann, 1922) and the definition, "exaggerated belief associated with a category. Its function is to justify (rationalize) our conduct in relation to that category" (Allport, 1954, p.191). Stereotypes have both a positive view and a negative perspective based on some kind of generalisation such as colour, creed, class, religion and gender. Stereotypes can be thought of as trait associations for a particular social group. These trait associations contribute to our overall attitude and its members are deemed to possess the same variation of a particular trait regardless of the actual within group variation that might exist (Khan, S. R., Benda, T., & Stagnaro, M. N. (2012).

Stereotyping is a cognitive construct based on the processing of perceptual information (e.g., Y.-T. Lee, 1994b, 1995, 2000; Y.-T. Lee, Albright, & Malloy, 2001; Malloy, Albright, Diaz-Loving, Dong, & Lee, 2004; Ottati & Lee, 1995). Although there is no agreed-on definition of stereotyping or stereotypes, most researchers agree that stereotypes involve ascribing characteristics to social groups or segments of a society (e.g., Banaji & Bhaskar, 2000;

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Fiske, 1998; Haslam, Turner, Oakes, McGarty, & Reynolds, 1998; Y.-T. Lee, Jussim, & McCauley, 1995; Y.-T. Lee, McCauley, & Draguns, 1999; Y.-T. Lee & Ottati, 1995; Mackie & Hamilton, 1993; Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994; Ottati & Lee, 1995; Schneider, 2004; Steele, 1998; Zanna & Olson, 1994). These characteristics may include personality traits (e.g., industrious or workaholic), physical attributes, societal roles (e.g., occupation), or specific behaviors. Stereotypic characterizations of a social group are comparative by nature (e.g., Y.-T. Lee et al., 1995; McCauley, Stitt, & Segal, 1980). Stereotypes and stereotyping are so complicated and controversial that there is no clear-cut solution to them (Y.-T. Lee, 2004; Schneider, 2004)

Stereotypes have both a positive view and a negative perspective based on some kind of generalisation this also paves way to prejudices and bias on a negative context and they are interrelated to each other and how they may influence people to commit crimes known as hate crimes. According to Cunneen, Fraser, and Tomsen (1997, p. 1), hate crimes can be defined as crime, most commonly violence motivated by prejudice, bias, or hatred toward a particular group of which the victim is presumed to be a member. Also, a hate crime is generally directed toward a class of people; the individual victim is rarely significant to the offender and is most commonly a stranger to him or her (Mason, 1993, p. 1).

This research will examine the how stereotyping leads to hate crimes in the Indian society and multiple perspectives from which stereotypes arise by using an EPA model (Lee Yueh-Ting; Vue, Sandy; Seklecki, Richard; Ma, Yue. *The American Behavioural Scientist*; Thousand Oaks Vol. 51, (Oct20017)

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Khan, S. R., Benda, T., & Stagnaro, M. N in 2012 studied, Stereotyping from the Perspective of Perceivers and targets. From the perceiver's view various factors were considered such as motivational and cognitive reasons that happen to cause bias. From the targets' perspective, their reaction of being inferior was studied. From both perspectives it was understood that stereotypes and bias affects both perceiver and target group alike. Towards the end useful methods for prejudice reduction are given.

Tobias Tempell and Roland Neumann, (2001), investigated the effects of activated gender stereotypes on the performance of women in various tests of different ability domains. The Bem Sex Role Inventory assessed masculinity and femininity. The difference of the masculinity and femininity scores served as a continuous independent variable of gender role orientation. Only participants with feminine gender role orientation suffered from stereotype activation with regard to mental rotation and math performance. In contrast, participants with feminine gender role orientation profited from stereotype activation with regard to emotional sensitivity performance. These results demonstrate a generally higher susceptibility to gender stereotypes of women with feminine gender role orientation. Higher self-relevance of stereotypes was associated with stronger stereotype threat, but also stronger stereotype lift or boost.

Craig McGarty, Vincent Y. Yzerbyt and Russell Spears in 2002 gave an explanation for the Formation of Meaningful Beliefs about Social Groups. So, they developed from a series of interactions between social psychologists at the Australian National University, the Catholic University at Louvain-la-Neuve and the University of Amsterdam. The key ideas were consistent with the classic work of Bruner and had figured prominently in social psychology

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in work inspired by self-categorization theory and by social judge ability theory, which made the point about the link between stereotyping and meaning in a more general way.

Hřebíčková M1, Graf S1, Tegdes T2, Brezina(2017 Jan 27) aimed to explore mirroring effect, a phenomenon whereby individuals rate their in-group characteristics as opposite to characteristics typical of a relevant out group. In three intergroup contexts-in national, regional, and ethnic stereotypes. In Study 1, 2, 241 participants rated national in-group stereotype and outgroup stereotypes of five Central European countries. In Study 2, 741 Czech participants rated regional in-group and outgroup stereotypes of people living in two distinct parts of the Czech Republic. In Study 3, 463 majority and Hungarian minority participants in Slovakia rated ethnic in-group and outgroup stereotypes. The results showed a clear presence of mirroring in all three contexts.

Florian Arendt<sup>1</sup>, Franziska Marquart<sup>2</sup> and Jörg Matthes<sup>2</sup> (2015, Vol27 issue 4 pg.178-189), Worked on The Formation of Meaningful Beliefs about Social Groups effects of antiforeigner political advertisements on implicit and explicit stereotypes. While stereotypical associations may become their study concentrated on automatically activated (implicit stereotypes), whether individuals can restrain these thoughts and decide not to use them for an expressed judgment (explicit stereotypes). They hypothesized that even if individuals negated stereotypical content, commercial programs and advertisement might affect implicit stereotypes. This hypothesis was tested using an experiment where participants (N = 186) were exposed to zero, two, four, or six stereotypical advertisements. The results showed that stereotypical advertisements did not influence explicit stereotypes but did influence implicit stereotypes, even in critical recipients who negated the stereotypical content.

Florian Müller<sup>1</sup> and Klaus Rothermund<sup>1</sup> 2014, vol 45) Replicated stereotype activation based on the work of Banaji & Hardin, 1996; Blair & Banaji, 1996). They Conducted a study to find out if appropriate categorical cues regarding stereotypes are processed. Blair and Banaji (1996) demonstrated that subjects were faster to arrange first names as male or female if those were preceded by gender congruent attribute primes.

The objective of the study was to retroflex the finding of stereotype activation (Banaji & Hardin, 1996; Blair & Banaji, 1996) that activation of stereotypically of both genders ease processing of targets denoting category membership. Each participant completed two tasks. A gender classification task (male vs. female names) corresponding to the Banaji and Hardin (1996, Exps. 1 & 2) study, and a semantic classification task (name vs. town) that was orthogonal to gender, corresponding to the semantic priming design used by Banaji and Hardin (1996, Exp. 2). The variation in the target task constitutes the within-subject factor Task Type (gender categorization vs. semantic categorization). Their findings suggested that automatic stereotype activation is not a reliable but is restricted to more specific conditions.

Lee, Yueh-Ting; Vue, Sandy; Seklecki, Richard; Ma, Yue in 2007 studied, How Did Asian Americans Respond to Negative Stereotypes and Hate Crimes? This study used the EPA (evaluation, potency and accuracy) to test two assumptions. First, stereotypes would produce a differential impact on Asian Americans and inaccurate negative stereotypes may offend Asian Americans more than accurate negative stereotypes. Second, Asian Americans may be more sensitive or responsive to a hate crime situation in which Asian Americans are racially targeted as the only victims. The results from the two studies strongly corroborate these two

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assumptions, which provide more support for the EPA model of stereotypes and stereotyping.

Jack Levin and Jack Mcdevitt (2001) found the increase in bigotry and bloodshed based on stereotypes. The work introduces a typology that differentiates various kinds of hate offenses. Hate crimes are actually many different types of offenses with a common offence in bigotry and offers a solution to ease the targets.

### **METHODOLOGY**

All the data is collected via secondary sources. Many research papers were reviewed to assimilate the factors that pave way to bias and negative stereotypes that lead to hate crimes and bigotry.

#### *Activation of stereotypes*

Stereotyping is a cognitive construct based on the processing of perceptual information (e.g., Y.-T. Lee, 1994b, 1995, 2000; Y.-T. Lee, Albright, & Malloy, 2001; Malloy, Albright, Diaz-Loving, Dong, & Lee, 2004; Ottati & Lee, 1995). Although there is no agreed-on definition of stereotyping or stereotypes, most researchers agree that stereotypes involve ascribing characteristics to social groups or segments of a society (e.g., Banaji & Bhaskar, 2000; Fiske, 1998; Haslam, Turner, Oakes, McGarty, & Reynolds, 1998; Y.-T. Lee, Jussim, & McCauley, 1995; Y.-T. Lee, McCauley, & Draguns, 1999; Y.-T. Lee & Ottati, 1995; Mackie & Hamilton, 1993; Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1994; Ottati & Lee, 1995; Schneider, 2004; Steele, 1998; Zanna & Olson, 1994). These characteristics may include personality traits (e.g., industrious or workaholic), physical attributes, societal roles (e.g., occupation), or specific behaviors. Stereotypic characterizations of a social group are comparative by nature (e.g., Y.-T. Lee et al., 1995; McCauley, Stitt, & Segal, 1980).

Stereotypes can be studied in multiple ways. One is to examine the cognitive and the other to examine motivational reasons for relying on stereotypes for judgment. From the cognitive perspective, stereotypes are viewed as a type of mental shortcut we rely on to obtain information quickly and effortlessly (Khan, S. R., Benda, T., & Stagnaro, M. N in 2012).

Brain has the natural tendency to form patterns onto whatever we see, according to Gestalt. Principles such as proximity, figure and ground and similarity, is used to make it easier to perceive the world around us. The study of judgmental heuristics (see Gigerenzer, 2008; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974) says, Empirical research has uncovered a variety of mental heuristics that we depend upon for quick decisions. Stereotypes are therefore seen as a heuristic that enables us to simplify what we perceive and form judgments in a faster rate about other people based upon their group membership. Stereotypes can unintentionally lead to inaccurate judgments and discriminatory behaviour.

#### *Another way is Inductive reasoning (specific to general)*

Inductive reasoning is the process of arriving at a conclusion by critical analysis based on a set of observations, i.e. critical analysis of some specific information which leads to generalization that is considered to be probable, allowing for the fact that the conclusion may not be accurate. Inductive reasoning allows us to form ideas about groups of things in real life. (For example, there are a lot of computer science graduates in India and Indians are the CEO's of Google, Microsoft and Adobe. one may observe that every Indian is good at coding and hacking computers. The person observing this pattern could inductively reason that every Indian is good with computers. Just because a person observes a number of

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situations in which a pattern exists doesn't mean that that pattern is true for all situations, as there are many Artists, Poets, Doctors, Sportsmen/Sportswomen or be good at any other normal profession like every other normal country. Another example is, Raj who just moved to America from India who has greasy black hair, one of his non-Indian friends who doesn't have any other Indian friends may conclude that all Indians have black oily hair. Therefore, it is a method of reasoning from particular to general.

### ***Just as in deductive reasoning (general to specific)***

It is just the opposite of inductive reasoning. i.e, we take a general scenario and narrow the focus to be more specific. As an example, our deductive reasoning would suggest that according to the media, there is a particular community which is responsible for cow slaughters So, whenever someone encounters an incident of cow slaughter his/her attitude towards that specific community will reflect this reasoning.

### ***Stereotypes can also be studied using an EPA model***

According to the EPA model (Lee, Yueh-Ting; Vue, Sandy; Seklecki, Richard; Ma, Yue Oct 2007) of stereotypes which are negative and false are more prone to bias and prejudice. Specifically, in the EPA model, three dimensions of stereotypes (e.g., Jussim, McCauley, & Lee, 1995; Y.-T. Lee, 2002; Y.-T. Lee, Albright, & Malloy, 2001; Osgood, 1974, 1979) are identified and emphasized. E represents evaluation or valence (e.g., stereotypes can range from positive to negative). P represents potentiality/potency or latency of activation (e.g., stereotypes can range from automatic activation to little or no activation). Finally, A represents accuracy (e.g., stereotypes can range from accurate to inaccurate). (Fiske, 1998; Moskowitz, Li, & Kirk, 2004; Schneider, 2004) mentions how it works in a 3step process. First, a person is identified to be a member of a particular group, these characteristics may include personality traits, physical attributes, societal roles or specific behaviors which lead to evaluation. Example, Indians are more likely ,to be associated with a different accent ,which is more negative than positive (i.e., valence).Second, traits associated with this category are activated For example, before an American meets an Indian he/she may automatically assume that person has an Indian accent based on media's influence I.e. showing raj from Big Bang theory or Apu from Simpsons saying- 'thank you , come again ' which is related to potency or activation .And, third, judgment of the behaviour toward the target person are influenced by these activated traits . The degree to which the Indian has a non-American accent is only a matter of accuracy.

Stereotypes are activated automatically if appropriate categorical cues are processed. The activation of a stereotype is an automatic and inevitable consequence of encountering the object of that stereotype. It's continues in nature.

### ***Hate crimes: negative and inaccurate stereotypes***

According to Cunneen, Fraser, and Tomsen (1997, p. 1), hate crimes can be defined as crimes most commonly violence m motivated by prejudice, bias, or hatred toward a particular class or group of which the victim is presumed to be a member. Also, a hate crime is generally directed toward a class of people; the individual victim is not significant to the offender and is most commonly a stranger to him or her (Mason, 1993, p. 1). Is there a reason behind why human groups hate or dislike others? Research has demonstrated that one of the reasons might have much to do with power, privilege, and human differences (e.g., Boeckmann & Turpin-Perrosino, 2002; Johnson, 2001; Y.-T. Lee et al., 1995; Y.-T. Lee, McCauley, Moghaddam, & Worchel, 2004; Levin & McDevitt, 1993; Levin & Rabrenovic, 2004a; McDevitt, Levin, & Bennett, 2002). Also, Levin and Rabrenovic (2004b) recently

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provided a monograph of explanations of why we hate. According to Levin and Rabrenovic (2004b), hate is related to our human nature, fear, revenge, politics, culture, and economy. It is also related to annoyance and frustration which may lead to violence and bloodshed. People who aren't capable of fulfilling their goals and who are dissatisfied with their lives may decide to strike back against those they regard as a cause for their plight. Yet, "violence is often aimed not at the true source of the frustration, but at an innocent target" (Levin & Rabrenovic, 2004b, p. 25). Psychologically, it is referred to as "displacement aggression" or "scapegoating."

For example, on September 12, 2001, in Collingswood, NJ, vandals attacked two Asian Indian-owned businesses and spray painted the words "leave town." On September 19, 2001, in Washington, DC, Satpreet Singh (a South Asian American), a 21-year-old Web designer, was shot by a White truck driver. These are just two of the numerous hate crimes or racially violent cases against innocent Asian. Apart from that honour killings and cow related violence which are common instances of alleged hate crimes seen in India. Uttar Pradesh was the state with the most such incidents in 2016 and 2017. In 2016, 237 alleged hate crimes were recorded. Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Gujarat recorded the most incidents.

*Therefore,*

Only negative (probably inaccurate) stereotypes may lead to bias or prejudice, which may cause discriminative behaviour or violence against certain innocent group members (i.e., hate crimes).

### ***Reducing and Intervening Stereotypes***

Providing solutions to real life social problems is what makes the study of stereotypes and prejudice so prominent in psychology. There are various theories and interventions which have emerged regarding how to reduce stereotyping and its impact on others. The Contact hypothesis, the recategorization process and the bookkeeping model all provide models for how social interactions between groups can decrease negative stereotypes and even hate crimes.

### ***Contact Hypothesis***

Gordon Allport popularized the Contact Hypothesis in his book, the Nature of Prejudice. This hypothesis proposes that just simple contact between groups is enough to improve intergroup relations.

Subsequent empirical research has shown support for Allport's ideas (Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2005; Ellison & Powers, 1994). Developing familiarity with outgroup members gives people a chance to see each other as individuals not just representatives of their groups which reduces anxiety and promotes trust. Furthermore, heterogeneity that exists among outgroup members can be understood if an opportunity is provided. For them to interact. Cross cultural studies have shown that intergroup friendships can really play a vital role in the reduction of prejudice towards those specific outgroups (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005).

### ***Recategorization Process***

According to this model, intergroup communications allows the onlooker to change their cognitive perspective, so that they no longer see themselves distinctly belonging to one group while another person is classified as being part of a different group. Now the mental categorisation process operates in such a way that perceivers encompass the out-group

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members. With this common in-group identity model, intergroup bias, bigotry and conflict is reduced because in-group favouritism is now extended to people previously not considered part of the in-group category. (Khan, S. R., Benda, T., & Stagnaro, M. N. (2012).

### *The bookkeeping models*

The model assumes that negative stereotypes about a certain category will diminish as the perceiver encounters each new target person who moderately contradict the group stereotype. However, if a perceiver meets someone who wildly disconfirms their stereotype, then the danger is that they will categorize the target as the exception to the rule and the original category will remain unchanged. Therefore, the bookkeeping model works so long as the target group members encountered represent reasonable examples of the group. (Khan, S. R., Benda, T., & Stagnaro, M. N. (2012).

In conclusion, all of these situations demand people to overcome their defensiveness and anxiety and actually interact with different people, only then one can overcome prejudice and stereotypes

## CONCLUSION

The goal of this research was to provide insight into understanding of stereotypes and hate crimes in the light of an Indian perception. Both stereotypes and hate crimes are complex issues. Stereotypes have both a positive view and a negative perspective based on some kind of generalisation. Negative stereotypes may lead to bias or prejudice which may lead to hate crimes against those of ethnic, racial, religious, or sexual backgrounds (Y.-T. Lee, Kleinbach, Hu, Peng, & Chen, 1996; Y.-T. Lee & Ottati, 2002; Y.-T. Lee, Ottati, & Hussain, 2001; Y.-T. Lee, Pepitone, & Albright, 1997; Y.-T. Lee, Quinones-Perdomo, & Perdomo, 2003; Y.-T. Lee & Seligman, 1997). Over the past few years, the number of attacks against people because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnic origin has increased at an alarming rate. Historically, immigration and economic hardship have inspired racial tension and violence. The reason why stereotypes are born and its emergence could be because of inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning, cognitive perspective and EPA model was used to explain its activation. The reason for hate crimes rise because of negative and inaccurate stereotypes. However, it can be reduced using bookkeeping model, recategorizational process and contact hypothesis.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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