



MOUNT CARMEL COLLEGE

Department of Psychology

PSYCHED



7 Cognitive Biases We Are All Guilty Of—Shreya Bose, III PyES

When we are born, our mind is a blank slate- free of any biases, prejudices. In our 20s (or 30s!), as we are navigating the world on our own, it would be helpful to know what influences our behavior and our attitudes towards the world.

Blind-spot bias

Failing to recognize your own cognitive biases is a bias in itself! People notice biases much more in others than themselves, leading to the false belief that they themselves are less biased than others around them. As a result, you may probably question the validity of advice someone has given you.

Availability heuristic

People overestimate the importance of information that is available to them. This is a mental shortcut that makes use of instances or anecdotes you already know, and present them as real arguments to make a case. A person might argue that smoking is not unhealthy because they know someone who lived to a hundred and smoked 3 packs a day.

Bandwagon effect

The probability of one person adopting a belief increases based on the number of people who hold that belief. Basically, people love to *jump on the bandwagon* that others are on. For eg., when you start watching a TV show just because everybody's talking about it.

Choice supportive bias

When you choose something, you tend to feel positive about it, even if that choice has flaws. Essentially, the attitude of 'tedha hai, par mera hai' (it's crooked, but it's mine!)

Confirmation bias

We tend to listen only to info that confirm our preconceptions- which is probably why it's so

hard to have an intelligent conversation about politics!

This extends to how we interpret or even seek new info- it will likely be heavily biased towards what we already believe.

Conservatism bias

This is where people favour prior evidence over new info that has emerged (that conflicts with the old one!). eg. People were slow to accept that the Earth was round because they maintained their earlier understanding that it was flat!

This affects how we process information and probably should be actively avoided if we want to maintain an open mind on anything!

Ostrich effect

The decision to ignore dangerous or negative info by "burying one's head in the sand" like an ostrich. eg. Investors who check the value of their holdings much less during bad market conditions. We may choose to shield ourselves from a problem by choosing not to tackle it directly, instead "burying" our head in the sand.

By the way, ostriches don't even do that!



