**How was out-group and the in-group formed?**

The movie highlights one of the important aspect of life that is cultural difference and how it affects the dynamics of a cultural group. This was done by Jane Elliott by experimenting with children. Both the out-group and in-group had concrete reality in the classroom when Jane Elliott divided the children based upon a random physical trait: eye color. During her first day of teaching, she went into her classroom and told them that the blue-eyed children were smarter, cleaner, and more able, in contrast to the brown-eyed children, who were slow, dishonest, and less bright. The statement quickly created two groups of children that previously considered one another to be equals (PBS, 1985). By placing one particular set above the others and condemning the former by being less capable, Elliott placed the cornerstones of social separateness, wherein none existed.

Divisions were rationalized by the benefits that were rendered on each side. Playtime was allotted to blue-eyed children by additional means, front-row seats, and special compliments, while the brown-eyed children were restricted, commented upon, and treated suspiciously. The external authority of the teacher rationalized such partitions, making it not easy for the children to rebel and resist the labels that were being implemented. The children began acting outside the role assigned to them, with rapid identity formation in groups when it was facilitated through authority.

This experiment showed that social categorizations don't necessarily have to be deeply ingrained in history or culture in order to be perceived as real. Judgement through eye color was, with reinforcement and power relationships, sufficient to instill into the youngsters a strong sense of "us" and "them" (PBS, 1985). The fact that they settled so readily into their assigned roles is

an indication of how easily social categorizations can be instilled, particularly in settings wherein those at power reinforce ideals to a group.

**Why did the children accept the groups? Consider some of the benefits they derived from their membership**

The children accepted the divisions of the groups outside of the influence of the teacher. They embraced these divisions in a classroom; the kids automatically followed the rules and expectations of the teacher. It was when Elliott announced that it was better to be in one of the sections of the groups rather than another that the kids accepted her when she said it and conformed to the new packing order (PBS, 1985). Their youth didn't leave much sense to question the reason that eye color was the test of merit, so they fell easily into the system that was instructed for them. The blessing of the figure of authority made the sections not only acceptable but necessary.

Besides blind obedience, the children accepted the groups because concrete benefits were credited with membership. Kids recognized as superior by reason of membership in it were treated to concrete objects such as additional recess, reduced detention, and positive recognition (PBS, 1985). They received intangible psychological benefits too: increased self-confidence, sense of belongingness, and thrill of belonging to the "right" group. The out-group even took comfort in common persecutions that bound it as one, though at the cost of a crippling sense of inferiority.

Group membership also supplied the children with social standing and identity. The classroom was therefore stratified to the extent that social relationships, access to resources, and behavior came to be regulated by the group's status. According to social identity theory, individuals seek self-esteem through identification with a particular group even if the imbalance

is senseless (PBS, 1985). Membership of their in-group for the children yielded pride and superordination for them, and those from the out-group adhered to their status to the extent that it mirrored real-world relationships of persecution.

**When and how did the Us-vs-Them attitude start?**

The us-them mentality began almost daily after the children were divided by Elliott into teams. When the blue-eyed children were announced to be superior to the others, they at once began to act in such a manner that they separated themselves from the brown-eyed children. They insulted, rejected, and passed judgment over the others, all of which they never used to do prior to the division being made (PBS, 1985). The brown-eyed children felt poorly about themselves, agitated, and less qualified, all of which served to enforce the notion that two different teams were now competing.

Hostility was not only emotional, it was practical. The larger group's boys had prerogatives that made them privileged in day-to-day activities, such as going first in the lunch line or using the playground equipment. Perks of that sort make the inequality real and visible, casting resentment and competition among groups. Over time, even the boys came to view behavior through the eyes of either belonging to one of those two groups, placing failure or error into the supposedly weaker personality of the out-group.

Reversal of fortune within the second day extended the divide by revealing how quickly the equilibrium of power could be upended. When the previously privileged brown-eyed children started behaving similarly in discriminatory fashion to the blue-eyed kids just had, it was proof that the Us-vs-Them mind was not connected to actual eye color itself, but to the favored state that power provided (PBS, 1985). The quick change of behavior demonstrated how quickly

human beings internalize separations of groups after they are taught and how power instigates prejudice.

**How can it be prevented from arising that way?**

An alternative to the Us-vs-Them mode of operation would have been to emphasize togetherness over separateness at the start. If non-competitive cooperation of groups over competitions had been encouraged by Elliott, then the children would indeed have remembered their collective identity of classmates (PBS, 1985). If interdependence had been made part of activities at the level of the classroom, e.g., by making it compulsory that kids work in mixed groups to common goals, she could have avoided tracing out of rigid boundaries.

An alternative strategy was to switch up more frequently and emphasize their haphazard nature. Rather than maintaining one's own clique at the top for the entire day, it is possible that every hour or every activity, Elliott switched. That would allow constantly going to and from the role to blur the in-group and out-group difference and make kids feel they are not necessarily better all the time or worse. Complementary to that, explicit discussion related to equity and the CMS's haphazard nature of allocation to groups would have made kids question the labels as opposed to internalizing them.

Lastly, the teacher may also have encouraged early self-reflection of the emotional effects on the students. If she asked the students to talk about the manner by which they felt excluded from, as well as privileged by, something, she may also have encouraged sympathy between inter-groups. Relabeled communication of sentiment and equity may have blurred the cleavages and challenged the adolescents to note injustice before it crystallized into resentment. Preventive actions thus demonstrate that deconstructing groups is simpler than assembling them through taking deliberate steps toward knowledge and co-operation.

**Application of the experiment to practical problems that you are experiencing.**

This experiment translates directly to the classroom, in which groups typically become fractionalized among pupils. Those who are academically advanced, for example, are considered more qualified or head groups, and those that don't are omitted. Just as in Elliott's classroom, these omissions can be harmful to self-confidence and inspire unwarranted rivalry. After instructing on the experiment, teachers and even pupils can be sensitive to celebrate many divergent strengths and convert opportunities so that all are included and capable (PBS, 1985).

In the workplace, the experiment translates to favoritism and caste. Employees of a particular section or those who have stronger personal ties to managers become prominent, forming an in-group of "favored workers." Those omitted can be made to feel less important for similar labor. Transferrable to the workplace, managers can do much to even out recognition, promote inter-departmental cooperation, and stay transparent over decision-making so that workers never feel arbitrarily omitted. On the personal level, the experiment translates to social groups and communities.

Peer groups, neighborhood, or even establishments tend to divide according to wealth, background, or superficial traits. An example is that not having today's phone or not dressing in the trendy brand of clothes is omitted. Comprehending that such divisions are arbitrary, people can choose to be less exclusionary, question the peer-group regulations, and be respectful outside of their immediate peer circle. Personal actions like these, mirror the bigger truth: divisions are arbitrary, and moving beyond them creates healthier communities.

## Reference

PBS (1985). A Class Divided. Retrieved From: https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/class-divided/ [Retrieved On: 19-09-25]