

## **Advance Course in Social Psychology**

### **Lecture 36: Group Behaviour- Part III**

Hello friends, a very warm welcome to all of you. Today, I will continue my discussion related to group behavior and today in this discussion, I will talk about the structural properties of group. In our previous discussion, I talked about different theories regarding development of groups, why people join groups and different kinds of groups. Today, I am going to talk about the structural dynamics of properties of group that what constitutes a group, what are the properties that makes the group behavior organized and predictable and effectively functioning. This constitutes the pattern of not only that how the group will function, but it also defines the structural properties of the groups also define the patterns of interpersonal relationship among members and that makes a group actually functioning in an overall basis. So, structural dynamics describes four properties of groups that is there are four main components of any group that makes the group highly functional, orderly and organized that makes a group functioning.

The first is roles, norms, status and cohesiveness. So, when these properties any one property is missing, then it leads to the destruction of the group or it makes the functioning of the group extremely ineffective due to which the members have to face the dire consequences. But if all the properties are in alignment, then definitely the group can become more effective in achieving the common goals and objectives. So, the first component or structural property of a group is the role, the hats we wear.

When people come together for a common objective, they have their own expertise, knowledge, skills and abilities and accordingly they are being designated a specific role in a group or specific function that they have to perform in the group which is headed heading towards the achievement of common goal. Now, this role is something which not only requires the knowledge, skills and abilities or expertise to perform any function, but it also entails the interaction that takes place among members. So, these are the tendencies of the members that any individual perform any behavior in a very specific manner and can be defined as a typical behavior that characterizes a person in a specific social context. Now, this role can be of a personal or professional role, can be of a teacher, it can be of a head of the family no matter what at what level you are functioning. For instance, the function or role of a teacher can be to deliver lectures and conduct exams.

Now, this role is very specific to a teacher who will deliver some good lectures to the students pertaining to her expertise in that subject area or it can be the head of the family who takes all the decision of the family, who is the breadwinner of the family and he is responsible to take care of each and every member of the family. Now, these roles are performed at personal level and at the same time professional level. So, these are the specific behavioral typical behavioral pattern that every individual performs in a group in day to day life which entails not only expertise, but day to day life interactions with the other members of the group. For example, some roles can be assigned by virtue of an individual's position within an organization, it can

be a boss, it can be a regional manager whose role is to take care of all the sales and marketing data regarding the sales of a particular product and it has to be informed to the head authority. So, this role as a regional manager has a specific role to perform and that performance is related and based on interaction with the head authority.

This is a role or it can be role of a teacher who may be expected to lecture and conduct exams. These are the behaviors expected of the individual in a particular position irrespective of the position irrespective of any group a person or individual belongs to. Now, this is a role which is a typical behavior that a person performs in a specific situation based on his expertise, knowledge, skills and abilities. At the same time social psychologists have also identified that a person who holds the role to perform a typical behavior is known as role incumbent and the behaviors expected of that role of that person are known as role expectations. A person who has expertise, knowledge to perform a specific task or perform certain behaviors in a specific situation that role has been assigned and the person who is holding that role that position is known as role incumbent and every role incumbent is expected to behave in a specific manner.

So, that expectations to behave or perform certain behaviors in a specific way is termed as role expectation. So, when we are talking about role as a most important structural property or dynamics of a group it is not only about role it is about role incumbent, it is about role expectations and when expectations are not clear when expectations are confusing or it is ambiguous this leads to some kind of dissatisfaction among members that leads to role ambiguity. Now, here role ambiguity is whenever any employee who joins any organization is not clear about his responsibilities about his roles to perform then this creates a sense of dissatisfaction and lack of commitment towards the organization as he or she is not able to realize his potential or the organization fails to realize the potential of the role incumbent and it leads to role ambiguity. So, the role incumbents recognition of the expectations of his or her role helps avoid the disorganization that surely would result if no clear role expectations are existing. Obviously, that when role expectations are not clear then it leads to role ambiguity this which makes the functioning of the organization ineffective to a larger extent.

So, the person holding the office for example, the president of India is the role of is the role incumbent that he is role incumbent who is performing the role of the president of India and he is expected to perform his roles responsibilities and duties in a very organized fashion and when a new president takes office then he or she also performs the same role and same formal powers as the previous president. So, this is role importance of role which is one of the most important structural property of any group. Next comes which I have already discussed just now that when the expectations are not clear it leads to lot of confusion it leads to lot of ambiguity and this leads to the breakdown of the mechanism of the group where the person does not realize what are his roles what are his responsibilities and this leads to another situation or tendency that is termed as role ambiguity. It is experienced by most of the time it is experienced by new members in the organization who have no who have only limited opportunities to learn the ropes. This is a specific term that has been used by social psychologist learn the ropes to understand all the nitty gritty of the job or role that they have

to perform which they can only understand when the role has been assigned to them and they are into performing that role.

So, high level of role ambiguity that means when the clarity is not there if the new members are experiencing vagueness in what they have to perform this leads to ambiguity and finally, results in job dissatisfaction, lack of commitment and intention to leave the job because that job creates a sort of disinterest among the new members. So, this is role ambiguity. Now, when we are talking about roles role incumbent, role expectations, role ambiguity then there is another aspect of role which is termed as role differentiation. Role differentiation is the various roles different roles that people play in any social structure. Now, these it is a tendency for various specialized roles to that to emerge as groups develop.

Every member has some different way to perform the role. It is not that only that everybody is performing the role based on some typical notions of behavior, but they have some innate way to perform their role in a very different manner. For example, any manager would crack a joke he has a tendency to crack a joke during board meeting. This is role differentiation that he or she has some tendency to perform the role in a very different manner which is basically a distinct way to perform the job. So, that is different people perform different functions in an organization and role differentiation can occur on a formal basis in the work group.

So, it is a tendency of various specialized roles to emerge as group develops. So, as the group members come together then only based on frequent interactions we will come to know and understand that maybe one of the member of the group has a way to perform his job maybe he will every time he will crack a joke or maybe any group member will only in track because he has some personal interest to satisfy. So, based on these functioning of the members in any organization social psychologists have identified this term as role differentiation. In keeping with this scientist have noted that many organizational roles are in fact, differentiated in some pre specified ways. Pre specified ways means we understand very well that the other member of the group has its own way in a to perform the role in a very different manner which is something very much acceptable even in formal way.

Social psychologists have identified three role differentiations they are task oriented roles, relationship or socio emotional roles and self oriented roles. For instance if I talk about task oriented roles the manager or member will perform this kind of roles that is role differentiation while being an initiator or contributor. This is his way to perform the job and he will be labeled as an initiator or a contributor, information seeker, opinion givers or energizers. It is something a natural way to perform the role. So, in the when a person or any member is performing this task oriented roles he has he recommends new solutions to group problems attempt to obtain the necessary facts, share own opinions with others and stimulate the group into action whenever interest drops.

So, the member who is task oriented will show his gestures his behavioral disposition in such a manner that every time the person will perform differently a particular role based on these traits or characteristics. The other is relationship oriented roles they are harmonizers they mediate the conflict they are compromisers they shift own opinions to create group harmony they can even compromise. So, as the group roles can be achieved they are encouragers they praise and they motivate the other members of the group and their expeditors that they channelize and operate in a smoothly and more fastidious manner. These are the role differentiations in form of relationship orientation. Now these traits or characteristics or roles that a person plays are not defined by any management.

It is only way to understand that what member will perform the role in a very different way in what manner. So, these are the role differentiations that make you different from the other person when it comes to performing a role. The other is self oriented roles which is very much related to an individual self interest only that is they are blockers they are recognition seekers they are dominators and they are avoiders. But ultimately their basic aim is to satisfy their own personal interest to act stubborn and resistance to the group while going against the group decision. They call attention to their own achievements they will they will boast about their achievements.

So, as to get maximum attention from the other members they would dominate they would try to seek for more authority and power and at the same time they avoid also because they want to maintain distance and isolate themselves from group members they avoid any extra ordinary interaction with the co workers. So, we can say that the task oriented roles based on role differentiation involves activities of an individual in a group who more than anyone else helps the group reach its goals no matter how. The relationship oriented role or the social emotional role involves the activities of an individual in a group who is supportive and a nurturing of other group members who helps them feel good. That means, they are supporters they are contributors and self oriented role this involves the activities of an individual in a group who focuses on his or her own good often at the expense of others. That means, they completely focus on satisfying their own personal interest.

The next property comes norms the unspoken rules. There are certain rules which are not defined by the management itself, but at the same time they set precedence in a way that every member would tend to imbibe those rules in a very informal fashion and they tend to perform accordingly. For instance that one has to follow a dress code at the workplace. It is something that in everyday routine people will tend to follow this norm. At the same time if any employee or member of the group attends the office in civil court then he or she will be expected and will be understood that he or she has breached the norm.

These are the unspoken rules which are very much imbibed and accepted by the group members and these norms in form of behaviors are something which prescribe that what should be done and it also it can also be prescriptive that describes what not to be done. For instance

for not sharing any secret of one's organization to the other organization. Now, these are the nitty gritty behavioral nitty gritty that is been expected based on unspoken rules. So, whenever we are talking about norms this enhances the orderly function of the existence of the group norms because there is a thin line base which operates within the group and if this thin line of rules is breached or broken then the group can disband or the functioning of the group can become ineffective. Norms can be defined as agreed upon informal rules that the group members behavior.

So, this is a guidance coming to the office well in time following the dress code not sharing the secrets of the organization with the other competitive organizations. So, these are certain informal rules which a person imbibes accept and at the same time performs at the workplace. They are they represent the shared ways of viewing the world and differ from organization goals in that they are informal and unwritten. At the formal place these are the informal unwritten rules it is not written in any rule book why how you should behave, but definitely these are unwritten and they are expected by every employee to perform in a specific way. So, norms the significance of norms in any group is that they regulate the behavior in such a way that it fosters employees honesty and loyalty towards the organization.

The more you are following or performing a normative behavior the more you are perceived as loyal dedicated and committed employed towards the organization. And this these norms actually regulate human behavior not only human behavior at workplaces, but also makes the functioning very orderly and effective. So, based on this so, social psychologists have identified two types of norms prescriptive norms which dictate the behaviors that should that should be performed. For example, following the dress code and other norms can be prescriptive norms which dictates specific behaviors which should not be performed. For instance not sharing the secrets of the organization to any outside employee or organization itself.

So, norms in itself can be prescriptive and prescriptive, but the most important feature is that they are informal and unwritten, but at the same time they are being performed at the formal platform. But the point is the question is that how do norms develop they are not written they are informal, but still they are being performed. So, there has to be a way that how norms develop. So, there are several factors responsible for formation of norms. Now, there are certain situational factors which determine that how norms are being formed.

The first is precedent set over time. For example, seating location of each group member around a table. The example is so simple, so simple that we can easily understand, but when we are understanding human behavior in different patterns. So, these simple examples will give us more in depth perspective of human behavior that how an unwritten and informal norm is being established and people tend to follow it in a very sincere and dedicated manner. So, the first factor that why norms are formed is precedence set over time.

Seating location of each group member around a table. So, whenever we are meeting people would take up their own seats which unofficially and informally are the designated seats of all the groups in the member. The other is carryovers from other institutes that is professional standards of conduct. Right from past certain behavioral patterns are being followed and till date and till present time employees do follow the same patterns of behavior or conduct.

For example, following the dress code. This is something which is unwritten, informal, but it has a carryover effect from one year to another from ages and ages and years and years and people tend to maintain that professional standards of conduct. The other is explicit statements from others. What others are doing the same pattern of working is also being followed by the next level of workers and it becomes a norm that we working a certain way because you are told that this is how we do it around here. For example, in any assembly line workers they would perform or assemble or manufacture any product in a similar fashion which older employees are doing accordingly. This is another way which sets the norm in performing your official or formal duties.

And the last is critical events in group history. After the organization suffers a loss due to a person's diverging company secrets a norm develops to maintain secrecy. There has to be some source that why this norm was established although unwritten and there is no existence of this rule in the rule book, but some incident can set a norm for not sharing the secret. May be in last 5 years or 10 years back any employer have done this act of sharing secret with the outside organization that person was also being expelled from the organization, but for the other members it has set a standard to maintain the secret of the organization. So, these are the factors which are responsible for developing norms which are unofficial, informal and unwritten, but very much acceptable by the group members.

So, these critical instances or expletive statements are some experiences that people tend to have at their workplaces and based on their understanding they tend to imbibe all the prescriptive and prescriptive behaviors which are unwritten again and in unofficial not mentioned anywhere in the management or by the management and people tend to set these rules as code of conduct. So, this is how norms develop which are responsible for maintaining orderliness and a sense of predictable behavior among employees or any members of the group. Next comes status, roles, norms, status. This is another property of the group which identifies and member identifies with that status based on his position. For instance, a very simple example can be that position of a director and what are the perks that are associated with it that assigns a status to an individual and based on this designation and position the person tends to make efforts to enhance his performance and raise his level to another level of status.

Therefore, we can define status. Status as various members are accorded different levels of prestige. This adds status in form of prestige. Associating yourself with any successful group, it can be any fraternity, it can be any group for example sorority, for example, it is a group of females with some success histories and other women would try to associate with these

organizations because it adds not only status but more prestige and platform to grow as a person and professionally. Therefore, we can say that status is likely to be recognized as being among the most important members of any respective group. This can be defined as the relative social position or rank given to a social unit.

It can be an individual group or any organization. Status of a person who holds a particular rank that attaches some dignity, some perks, some recognition to that person. It can be about association with any group which has a success history and people would rally around the success of that group or it can be any organization that people would like to associate themselves with those group or organization. So, within any group, status can be both formal and informal in nature. Formal status refers to attempts to differentiate between the degrees of formal authority given to employee by their organizations.

There is a hierarchy of authority in any organization and in every hierarchy every employee who is having a status also have his own rights, powers, roles and responsibilities to perform and those powers, authority, roles and responsibilities actually define an individual status in the formal hierarchy. So, this is a formal status where that recognition that status is being assigned to an individual by the authority itself. So, this is a formal status. It is typically accomplished through the use of status symbols, but how do we identify the status of an individual? It is based on the objects reflecting the position of an individual within an organization's hierarchy.

For example, job title. How do we come to know that this person is the most influential person or the top authority in any organization based on the job title such as the designation, the director, deputy director or the CEO or CFO, chief financial officer who is having the authority to handle all the financial responsibilities of the organization. So, the formal status can easily be identified based on job titles and the perks which are associated with it. For instance, in any organization there is a parking space assigned for the topmost authority. This identifies a formal status of one particular member of the group. This is how status symbols assigns or makes an individual understand the status of an individual, the formal status of an individual.

It can be a person, a high profile leader of any group or community based on his working conditions. We can easily understand that what is the status of an individual. Apart from this, status symbols help groups in many ways. It reminds organizational members of the relative positions in their companies that is that where a person is existing in the whole hierarchy, from top to bottom or bottom to top.

Every member has its own status. Based on those status, they have the rights, the powers and responsibilities and according to those job titles, every member in the group can easily identify the status based on the symbols because every person who is having a status has its not only a designation but has been given some perks to an every individual which identifies himself as

different from the other person at formal level based on symbols. In addition, they provide assurance to the various rewards available to those who perform at a superior level. That means, they reflect the advantages, the rights, power and authority that anybody has on a particular status where he or she is holding and what kind of efforts and expertise is required to reach to that status. So, based on the status symbols, people can understand the power and authority of an individual and most importantly, they also provide a sense of identification by reminding person of the group's values and at the same time that group values must be towards high levels of commitment and making people realize that what roles they have to perform as per their status. But all these understanding can only come when people has ability to identify and recognize not only the formal status but at the same time the symbols that designate an individual status and understand what roles they are performing to make the group or any organizational functioning.

Apart from this, there are some symbols of informal status. If there are symbols of formal status then based on job titles or symbols, then there are also symbols of informal status within organizations which are easily understood. For example, any senior employee irrespective of his designation or any formal status, if he is being one of the oldest employee in the organization and has lot of experience while being associated with that particular organization, then that person is also considered of a status with high formal status. Because of his experience, co-workers would offer lot of respect and consideration to their employee because that employee also has gained lot of expertise in performing his role.

That gives him an informal status of high stature. So, this is a symbol of informal status that irrespective that where a co-worker is having the formal status but based on his long association with the organization and developing expertise in a particular area, that gives him a high level status in any organization. So, this is an informal status in any organization. So, this is about the 3 most important elements structural dynamics of groups that is role, then we have norms and then we have status.

I will continue in the next lecture. Thank you so much. Thank you.