

**Advance Course in Social Psychology**

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**Lecture 52 : Group Leadership- Part XI**

Hello friends, welcome back. Let us continue with our discussion. In our previous discussion, I have talked about different leadership techniques and how different leadership techniques can transcend and transform any employee as an authentic leader. Today, I am going to talk about relationship between leadership and group decision making. Since the title of the module is group leadership, then definitely it is related to decision making as well and decision making becomes an important part of any leadership function. This is but obvious.

Therefore, group decision making is closely related to leadership functions and whenever any group is faced with any new or different circumstances, then group members have to decide or take any decision based on certain course of action. That course of action is very much based on the group norms and values and how those groups and norms and values enhance the behavior potential of group members. Behavior potential of group members means to what extent the members of the group tend to engage in appropriate decision making while not shunning their group norms and values and to what extent they are abiding with their group norms and abiding at the same time with their appropriate behavior in decision making. Therefore, when we are talking about leadership, it also becomes very important to talk about decision making.

Thus, the ways in which groups make decisions and the nature of the outcome will vary with the group value structure and the situation faced by the group. It is not only about the situation that the group faces and the outcome they get out of that situation. When decision making is being involved in between these two situations, that means the decision making style and the outcome in between comes the group values and the situation they face. To create an alignment between these two, then decision making style and the outcome is being balanced by the group values and the situation. To understand this mechanism, group scientists have identified certain value orientations.

Now value orientation means that what they focus on. Sometimes they focus on the decision of the leader, sometimes the members do emphasize or force or compel the leader to take any particular decision, sometimes their value compromise also that may be any decision making can

depend on any compromise. It can be about re-descriptions of significance or it can be about consensus. So when we are talking about group values, it has certain value orientations. These are consensus, value extremity shifts, majority rule, compromise or re-descriptions of significance.

It is not about integrity, morality, what we talk in terms of values. Here these values are related to any decision making process through any particular leader. Therefore leadership plays a very important role in decision making based on this group value orientation. Let us discuss about these orientations in detail that how consensus, how value extremity shifts, how majority rule, how compromise or re-descriptions of significance plays an important role in any leader's decision making style. The first is consensus.

As the term implies that any group member will confirm to any group based on or comply to the group decision based on the consensus. Every member would have strong opinion about one decision and every member would comply to it and that forms consensus. In groups where members are highly committed to a single set of group values and goals, there is strong pressure to arrive at a consensus on issues rather than to engage in formal discussion and vote taking. Any option that is available may be group members will value that option and that option becomes a consensus for the maximum number of group members irrespective that what can be the risk that is engaged in that option or maybe it is being not favoured by any other member and can attempt to vote taking. But whenever such kind of pressure is there, members do engage in that kind of risk taking decision and ultimately they avoid in understanding that what can be the long term impact of that decision on organisational performance.

While this may avoid the expression of differences of the conflict, maybe consensus is there and there is no conflict of interest among members. But at the same time, when they fail to think about the potential dangers that exist in that decision or consensus, then it leads to another kind of situation that is group thing. As we have already discussed about this term in group process, this process refers to groups that arrive at a premature decision consensus that overlooks or excludes important aspects of the group and its circumstances. So at this point, when any easy option is available without understanding the potential threats that can come with that decision or option that is group thing where decision consensus is there but members tend to overlook or exclude the important aspects of the group and its circumstances. For example, as this term was discussed by Janis, he has exemplified this value orientation in Kennedy's cabinet decision to invade Cuba Bay and its disastrous consequences were the product of group thing.

That means even the group leader that is Kennedy and its members fail to think about the potential dangers and negative impact of that invasion that led to some disastrous outcomes. This is the outcome of consensus as a value orientation. At the same time, Janis also outlined a number of

conditions that resulted out of group thing. That means high consensus was there which was converted to group thing and how it has impacted the other circumstances that is value orientation of consensus. The Kennedy cabinet was highly cohesive.

That is why they engaged in that risky decision and the members were strongly committed to the same values and to each other without understanding and knowing the potential threats. That means consensus leads to group thing. The cabinet insulated itself from other viewpoints. They were so much into compliance and highly consensus was there that they insulated themselves. Now here insulated means that they protected themselves for not being affected by any other external factors that can change their decision, that can change the level of the consensus.

So the cabinet insulated itself from other viewpoints. They stopped themselves to take the opinion from the other sources or members of the group. At the same time, the cabinet did not search out or appraise alternative course of actions and Kennedy used a directive form of leadership where particular meetings are discouraged and indulged in these particular meetings that discourage genuine discussion in that group. Now since the consensus was high, group members are highly cohesive and they had high consensus about a particular decision. Then ultimately they avoided to think about an alternative solution or action, course of action that could have been taken or avoided the disastrous impact of that invasion.

And to implement that course of action, Kennedy used directive form of leadership where all the decision was taken by him on his own shoulders and ultimately it was executed in a very unilateral fashion. So this is the outcome of one group value orientation that is consensus which generally happens when there is high cohesiveness among members. But sometimes this value orientation becomes heavily inclined. People tend to become heavily inclined even to the wrong course of action. This is consensus.

The other is value extremity shifts. It is about group shift. Suppose any decision has been taken and lot of consensus is there, then sometimes members tend to flow in that direction only without understanding that what impact it can have. Even though sometimes leaders are being compelled to change their decision. So where problems are discussed in groups with dominant value, it has been observed that the decision is even more extreme.

For instance, it has been found that French students who were initially anti-American became even more so following group discussions. Talking more and more about, against about some person or group of people, then people also develop some extreme opinion and tend to shift their opinion towards more negativity. This is value extremity shifts that people tend to exaggerate any particular opinion in one direction and people tend to support that extreme shifts of their opinion.

It has been observed that the decision is more extreme than the average of individuals before the discussion. This effect is first noted in decisions involving the value of risk.

For extensive research on topic, it appears that the extremity shift is in large part due to members decision moving in the direction of best expressing the group value. It means that even if members know that nobody is favoring a particular decision or opinion, then they would, everybody would prefer to expand that or express that negativity or any negative opinion in a more extreme direction. No member will try to alter that opinion. They would engage into more extreme, towards more extremist shift that the more they are having a negative opinion, the more they become stronger in their opinion as well as in their decision. That is value extremity shift.

That is valuing your shift in which direction the members are flowing. If the members are flowing while having a positive opinion, the more the opinion will become extreme, extremely positive. And if it is become going in extreme direction, the negative direction, then more the opinion will become extremely negative for that particular group of members. This is value extremity shifts.

The first was consensus. The other is value extremity shifts. It appears that the extremity shift is in large part due to members decision moving in the direction of best expressing the value, group value. The more the members are expressive, whether it is positive or negative, the more the members are expressive, the more members become more adamant and more strong enough to express the group value in that particular direction. They support each other's negative opinion. It has been reported that the value shift is typically in the direction most members initially lean towards.

That means, if it is opinion is leaning negative, then members will also lean negative. It is going more extreme. Thus, it leads to group shift related, which is related directly to the number of persuasive arguments made in favor of the group position. People would argue, they give all their support to take forward that extreme decision in that direction itself.

That is group shift. You compel members and the leaders to make their decision in that particular decision. This is involvement of any leader in decision making, which is very much held in the hands of the group members and represents the group value. Now once the leader takes forward that opinion or expression of the group value, that value extremist or that shift becomes a permanent group value for that group members. This is value extremity shifts.

The other is majority rule. If conflict of interest do exist in any group or related to decision making, it is unlikely that either premature consensus or value extremity shifts will occur. And

in such more likely a group debate discussion over value priorities and often the issue will be settled by a majority vote. When conflict of opinion is existing, maybe consensus is also not working or maybe value extremity shift as a value, group value is also not working to come to a common decision or to lead towards appropriate decision making. Then ultimately values are being subsided and more emphasis is made on majority rule or by majority voting. So the decision will be taken accordingly that which members have voted in major for a particular decision.

This is majority vote where group values are also not put at priority rather that conflict is been resolved based on majority vote. But sometimes what happens that even minority argues in a very strongly persistently and effective manner and even that even in the situation the shift will occur in form of minority rule decision. This can happen if majority rule wins over then sometimes minority also rules over the majority decision. Much of this research has involved both simulated and real jury decisions which strongly illustrate a majority rule procedure. This becomes a very normal procedure in decision making by any leader that if there are two parts of favour and against about any decision then it can only be resolved based on majority rule.

This is another group value that involves the leader in decision making. The other is compromise. There are some limits on the use of compromise. However if the conflicting values lead to incompatible courses of action for example budget restrictions then compromise is not possible and one value or another needs to be given priority in the group decision. Every time compromise is not the solution.

For example any budget where company is experiencing some scarcity in the financial budget for the company then ultimately the only compromise is that they have to cut down on their expenses so that appropriate budget policy can be established to take up the expenses future expenses of the organisation. So one value or another needs to be given priority in the group decision. So priority here can be that what is required. What is required is more important and this leads to a compromise. So this is another group value which leads to appropriate decision making based on a particular leadership style.

So this is the value group value that creates a relationship between leadership and decision making. There are limits when we have to put some limit on some issues and we have to give up on something for the other. This is another value that is compromise which is a result of conflicting values. When conflicting values are existing then conflicting values cannot be resolved but definitely what is more important can be decided and the leader can decide on that what is important and reflects in his own decision making. This is compromise and the other is re-description of significance.

When conflict is there and people tend to experience lot of problems based on their discussions also then people come up with new version of solutions to the problem based on the group value itself. Lot of conflict is there, lot of discussions are going on but as soon as when discussions take on for long then it is found that sometimes members come up with some new version of group values. They are deciding on some other aspects of the problems that leads to another kind of group value. There is more consensus to those new versions or new solutions to the problem and this new version is known as re-descriptions of significance that whatever group value was prioritized now it has been given a new face with some new novelty in the idea and there is re-description of any value that is re-description of significance. So through negotiation there is a high possibility of innovative decision making in the group.

So this is a positive aspect of leadership in decision making. When there is no consensus, when there is conflict among members then ultimately there will be a point when people have to come up in some other novelty to resolve that conflict and that new idea is re-description of significance that is a high possibility of innovative decision making in the group. So this is about the leadership and group decision making which reflects that how leadership styles, different leadership styles engage in decision making within the group based on its group value. So we are through with this module.

Thank you so much. We will meet in the next discussion. Thank you.