Course Name: Organizational Behaviour: Individual Dynamics in Organization

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Week – 01

Lecture – 04

Lecture 4: Understanding individual differences-1

Hello all. Welcome back to the organizational behavior class specified on individual dynamics in organization. This is lecture number 4 and today we will dig deeper into understanding individual differences.

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So, if we look into the previous lectures, we have looked into what an organization is, how behavior is established, how organizational behavior as a discipline has emerged, how OBM, Organizational Behavior Management is understood with respect to systematic approach, with respect to evidence-based management and also with respect to the intuition.

We have also seen the contributions of different fields like sociology, psychology, anthropology towards the body of knowledge of what organizational behavior is and we have also seen individual as the building block in an organization.

Today, we, part of lecture 4, I will look deeper into what individual difference is or understanding or comprehending individual difference to a greater extent. Now as we start with a phrase or a quote every time, every individual has a role to play. I repeat, every individual has a role to play.

You might think that every single individual need not be relevant to an organization. You can take the hierarchy. There might be the CEO to the person who is just an office attendant. Every single individual has a certain role to play. Every single individual is relevant. Every single individual is critical and every single individual makes a difference in the organization.

Let's start this OB session specifically with some ancient wisdom, understanding organizational behavior in the Indian context. There has been lot of deliberations on this

topic and there are lot of issues that pertain to what we have found, what our ancestors have found already. But the scope here is to look into some of the tenets, some of the aspects which our Vedas, which our Puranic thoughts have already enshrined, already underscored with respect to organizational behavior.

Let's start with understanding of what our Vedas have taught us, Gunas and Doshas. Every single individual is pertained to have certain Gunas. Every single individual is pertained to have certain Doshas. Now this is specific when you understand and this is critical when you understand or try to understand organizational behavior per se. There are individuals who tend to be very useful to the organization, be it in terms of their individualistic characteristics, interpersonal relationships, associations, the way they mingle, interact within the organization. Then there are individuals who are very much critical to what you are.

Whatever you do they find a doubt, whatever you do in a perfect manner they find a mistake, there are individuals. So, you tend to understand or at least think in your mind that there are people who are having certain Gunas, there are people who are having certain Doshas. This was already enshrined in our Puranic thoughts, in our Vedic thoughts, in our ancient wisdom. There are also snippets, there are also thoughts or tenets that are enshrined for diversity because India that is Bharat is a land of people coming from different states, regions, different caste, creed, sex, tribe etc. So, this is an amalgamation, this is a ground of the diversity.

This is where we understand, where we have seen the effects of diversity, how diversity has existed, how pluralism has existed over the period in harmony. So, this is a thought that fits in or that we can actually take in to any organization set up and establish it without any doubt. We have also seen the importance of collectivism. There is no doubt that organization specifically which has a certain level of Indian background would work on something like a collectivistic scenario. Organizations in Japan are highly revered, highly respected for their collectivistic approach, whereas organizations which are in US, they have altogether different approach pertaining to their individualistic cultural orientation.

So the collectivism is yet again another important quality which our ancient wisdom has given us. We have seen that there is a level of social fabric attached to every single individual. This social support or this social fabric gives us a strength to perform, to excel in whatever we are. Sometimes we feel that individuals coming into an organization they lack the required confidence, they lack the required, though they have the particular skills, their expertise, the qualifications, everything is perfect, that's why they made the cut and they are into the organization. But the moment they are in the organization they see that they are not able to perform well, they are not able to strive well, they are not

able to excel in whatever duties or tasks they are assigned.

Then comes in the social support, people from different departments, people even from different functional departments, they try to pitch in, they try to help her and help him to bring the best out of them, to take them to what Maslow's hierarchy calls to understand or take them to the self-actualization to realizing the total potentialities of the particular individual. So, collectivism is yet again a thought which has come to an ancient gurus and we have imbibed a lot from them as part of the ancient wisdom and we are using it even today in the OB literature without any doubt.

The fourth aspect would be coexisting contradictions and this is critical. When there are, let's say it's generally said that there are three people from three different contexts, definitely there will be three opinions. There are 20 people from 20 different contexts, there will be 20 different opinion and undoubtedly, I can raise it to n number of contexts, n number of contradictions.

There are let's say 100 people, 100 people in the class will definitely have 100 opinion about something specific. And this is critical as I have already always tried to ascertain that single person in two different contexts and two different people in the single context will have difference of work structure, work style etc. So, let's understand this coexisting of or coexistence of contradictions in our Indian philosophy. Coexistence of contradictions is very much relevant even in organizational behavior, very specific to what we are. We work in a diverse platform within any organization.

If you are working in MNC, you will appreciate that you are there in a multi diverse platform. You are interacting with a person from Chinese origin, you are interacting with an American, a European, it is difficult to understand that from where he or she is coming from. That is the level of complexity in terms of diversity that has emerged. So, in this understanding, coexisting contradictions, the coexistence of contradictions is vital and very critical for the organization.

And finally, during the phase of G20, what we are seeing is the reincarnation of the thought that Vasudeva Kudumpakam, one earth, one future. This is what our G20 presidency has shown us. When world leaders come to India, recognize India as a power to reckon with, consider India as a big power in the south, then definitely we are also pitching in the Vasudeva Kudumpakam. As an earth, we are all one family, we are one earth and we all have one future. You try to extrapolate this larger macroscopic phenomenon to any organization in a microscopic way, you will understand that this is very much relevant in any organization. We as an organization, you go back, you introspect, you try to understand with respect to your organization, you might have an enmity with any functional counterpart in your organization.

You might disagree with many of the opinions and aspects or thought process of another colleague who is in a different department but in the same organization. But in the end of the day, you will see that all of them, all of them belong to same organization which is essentially the same family, which is essentially the same world you have to work every single day. So, this is something which is very critical and I thought I will bring the ancient wisdom of understanding organizational behavior and still it is all the more relevant in the Indian context especially and also to the entire OB context specifically.

Now I would always try to mix our class with research outputs, recent research trends, cases, etc. So let us look into a very dated case but very interesting one.

In a diverse and dynamic organization, there were three employees named John, Sarah and Alex. Each of them had their own unique perspectives and approaches to their work much like the blindfolded people encountering an elephant for the first time.

Now John, an analytical and detail-oriented individual, approached his task with a laser focus. He was very much focused; he was like the blindfolded man who touched the elephant's tail and concluded that it was a rope. John believed that the organization was all about following established processes and adhering to procedures. To him success meant aligning every action with the rule book.

Sarah on the other hand was a creative thinker. So, when we are going through the case you have to understand who John is, who Sarah is and who the other counterparts are also. Sarah on the other hand was a creative thinker and always open to new ideas. She saw the organization as the blindfolded man who touched the elephant's trunk and thought it was a snake. Sarah believed that innovation and change were the keys to progress. She embraced new approaches and saw the potential for growth through adaptation and creativity.

Alex, a people-oriented and empathetic colleague, was more concerned with the well-being of his co-workers and the overall workplace atmosphere. Like the blindfolded person who touched the elephant's side and perceived it as a wall, Alex believed that a harmonious and supportive workplace culture was the foundation of success. He focused on building strong relationship and ensuring that everyone felt valued and heard.

So this is a case specifically. So, what we understand from this case in this diverse organizational context, the blindfolded employees are much like John, Sarah and Alex, only had partial knowledge of the elephant. So, they are given a particular task, they are looking into or they are touching on or they are embracing one particular dimension of the job which is drastically different from the entire job. So, it's like the partial knowledge they are having with the elephant, they were all touching different parts of the

same entity but forming vastly different conclusions every time based on their unique perspectives. So, somebody who is going and touching the tail, he's having a different opinion, somebody is still going and touching the side, he's having a different opinion. So, this is specifically to the organization. Somebody who's engrossed in their HR department will have a different understanding or perspective towards the organization. Somebody who is working for the finance department will have a different proposition or different understanding of revenue generation. Somebody who is working for the operations part would be always trying to optimize the things at their end. So, these are the similar or different approaches people follow.

In organizations, individuals with distinct backgrounds, experiences and viewpoints may interpret the same situation differently. This is what I always try to underscore. Even you take two similar people but they have their own individual differences. This is the theme of the class also.

Individuals matter. If you recall in my first lecture, it takes all types of people to make the work. There are different individuals within the organization. You go back and see that within the organization you will see that there are individuals who are more extrovert. Individuals who are more introvert on the other hand. There are individuals who tend to be very much calculative. There are individuals who tend to keep no restraint on themselves. They are very much talkative. They talk whatever comes to their mind. They don't have a filter between the mind and the mouth. So, there are such individuals also existing.

So these are the diversity that you have to deal. These are the individual differences within an organization which is basically existing. Understanding individual differences like those exhibited by John, Sarah and Alex is crucial in organizational behavior context. It is not about declaring one perspective as right and the others as wrong. Instead, it is about recognizing that diversity in thought, approach and perception can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of complex issues.

You are a part of a system which is having different elements. You are a part of the system who is different in terms of your thought process, in terms of the approach, in terms of the perspectives. They are all there in the system. You have to work with them, work together with them. So, it is not like you are working in silo.

You are working together with them and for that you need to appreciate their differences. And to appreciate the difference, the first thing as is always said, to solve any problem, the first thing is to acknowledge that there exists one. So, this is similar. There are differences. You have to understand that person A is coming from a different diverse

background. Person B is coming from a different socio-economic setup. Person C from a different culture. Person D from a different language or different child rearing practices he had.

All these have to be accommodated and it has to thrive as a single unit system. In that case those differences should be acknowledged, should be appreciated and the differences should be made as a point of strength rather than as a determinant to create differences.

Organization that encourages open dialogue and value these individual differences can harness the collective wisdom of their employees much like the blindfolded men who all came together to see the picture which is the elephant in the room. Organization is quite complex. With his all-different functional units, with his all-different functional departments, different people existing within different groups, the organization exists as a single giant. For that existence every single unit, every single individual has to do his or her part job in a very good fashion but also trying while doing the job he or she has to acknowledge the fact that you are working with a group member, with a team member who is slightly different from you, slightly different from you in terms of your, in terms of the cultural orientation or in terms of the socio-economic background, in terms of the difference in the food they eat, in terms of the way they dress etc. So, all these differences have to be understood and this is where the relevance of individual difference comes into picture.

Please don't consider it as a weakness. It has to be taken as a strength. You are getting different sort of understanding of different culture. He or she can bring in different set of ideas to your project. He or she can bring in different context which you might not have even seen, you might not have even imagined. So, these are the thought process that could rectify your whole thought or make the task more convenient.

So we look into rather than taking one by one model in the introductory class itself, I would prefer to make a basic OB model and thanks to the text book which I have already given as reference for you. This is a basic model which has the inputs, the process and the outcomes. So let us look into, though we are looking into the individual level mechanism here, our focus would be to understand any organizational behaviour model will largely follow this process. This is what sort of an umbrella model which brings in all the different aspects and it is easily available in any text book. So, the first individual level would be as I have already seen diversity, personality, values.

So all these aspects happen at the individual level. I had detailed emphasis on lecture number 3 about the personality and values and I will deal with every single theory of personality in the coming modules. So, I am not going deeper into that, but individual

level you have to appreciate that there is a certain level of distinction that happens with respect to the diversity, with respect to the personality and with respect to the values associated with every single individual.

At group level the inputs are little bit different. You are looking into the group structure. Group structure means how the organization or how the group has been delivered or formed or how it is structured. Every single element or every single individual how they are placed which is more of a horizontal structure or they are at a different level, there is a hierarchy being maintained etc.

Look into the group roles. Let's say what the role of that particular group. You are in an execution group. Let's say you are in an operations group. You are in a commissioning group. What exactly is your characteristic or what exactly is your contribution? Remember, we are looking at the input phase. We are looking at the input phase and this makes things very much subtle when you are looking into group roles. You are also focused on the team responsibilities because you have to be clear what is to be delivered as a team.

What is to be delivered as a team for the final project. From your team this is the deliverable. Let's say take an example of a boiler light up. So, you are part of the BTG and you are part of the firing flow. So, you might be your interest or your team would be to require install and commission all the guns.

It could be that you are in a manufacturing plant. You are let's say in the painting section. So, it would be to check the overall paint quality or to check the completion of the painting of the entire vehicle structure. So, this could be some of the input. So, what is your team responsibility that has to be clear. At organization level again the structure is very much critical.

Here more than the group what is your organization structure whether it is a flat organization structure whether it is a hierarchy base. Whether it is a matrix type organization structure everything becomes relevant everything becomes critical and also the culture.

Every single organization will have a different culture. Trust me you will find that an organization let's say headquartered at let's say California will have a different organizational culture and not necessarily American because the dominant culture if you go through the cultural literature the dominant culture need not be the culture of that particular country.

Let's say you have crude example would be you have 100 people as your workforce. Let's say 80 of them it's basically an Indian company but it's situated in let's say working in

let's say Paris. So basically, that organization out of 180 are Indians. So, the dominant culture is necessarily Indian. It need not be French. So, this is the difference you have to understand when it comes to organizational culture.

It does not mean that your organization is in country X and you will have a culture which is resonating with the country X. No, it might not be the case. So, these are the input level at individual group and organization. You look into the process which again becomes very critical.

Process as individual level would be emotions and moods. The emotions speak a lot as the behavior itself when I pitched in the certain aspects of behavior, I already clarified that it's not only the cognitive element it's the affect element also. It's also the emotion which becomes critical. So, emotions and moods are a driving factor in the process. The motivation, motivation need not be only intrinsic. As I've already mentioned there could be some factors like let's say the organization offers very lucrative salary.

The organization offers you a good position. These are extrinsic motivators. Whereas let's say you get the job satisfaction or the previous class we discussed about the person job fit. This is the most important part. My qualifications are exact fit to that particular job, the demands of the job and I am able to deliver if not more in a better fashion for what is required or what is asked from me. So, this becomes all the more critical in terms of motivation specifically intrinsic motivation.

Again perception I've already discussed in the previous class. The way you perceive the attention you are giving to a particular stimuli that becomes critical with respect to your performance in an organization. Decision making is again vital. It could be evidence-based management that is driving. But what is to be a successful decision making is that you always tend to work in bounded rationality. If you recollect lecture number two, I had mentioned the term bounded rationality.

Bounded rationality is when you don't have all the information in the world. You are working and you are supposed to take a decision with a limited set of information. So that is where the decision making becomes critical. Decision making has to come at a point or at a scenario where it could be based on scientific evidence. Remember in the previous sessions I have already mentioned that modern day problems require modern day solutions and the modern-day solutions emerge when scientific evidence of modern level or modern tone and tenor are available. So your decisions if it could be based on scientific evidence rather than intuition and gut feeling, you will soar higher, you will scale better heights. This is what the process tells you.

When you come to group level specifically you have communication as one of the critical process because within the group it's the interpersonal relationship that matters. Within the group it is how you communicate within the individuals that is critical. Within the group the leadership becomes critical. Whether you are having a very passive leadership and you tend to oversee it, you tend to neglect it, ignore it, it affects the overall productivity of an organization. If there is a leadership that actually demands a certain level of authority and the leadership is not able to take it, then it also affects the organization in a longer term. There is no doubt about it. The organization leadership is such that it is very critical. Whatever you do for the betterment of the organization you are being looked down or you are being ridiculed that also affects the organization output.

Power and politics is yet again which we deal in detail in the coming module, the ability to get things done in a way that you deem fit. The politics is nothing but the way you are manipulating somebody to get your ends. So here the ends become very critical, the means do not exist. The ends become very critical; the means do not exist. Organizational level HRM practices are very critical, what the organization takes up, how the human resource practices are followed, whether you are following the best practices of the industry, whether you are following the good strategies of recruitment and selection or is it like just based on your intuition and gut feeling that is going on.

Also the change practices are similar to changing environment. COVID made us rethink about the entire work structure. We had to bring in new work contracts. This is part of the change practices that has happened in the organization level. So specifically, you are looking at the process here.

You are looking at the process here. We had the inputs, we had the process, then comes outcomes. First and foremost, at the individual level there could be attitudes and stress. You have different diversity, different personality values, emotions, motivation as a process. There could be different attitudes and stress levels that are being achieved or attained which have to be managed.

There could be different level of task performance. Some groups perform in a much better way, much efficient way, taking least resources but in a highly productive manner. There could be task performance which are sometimes beating the industry standards, beating the average, the world global scenarios, global standards. There are then certain groups which are underperforming. So, all these aspects have their effects on what the inputs and processes are. Citizenship behavior is again what we will deal in detail in the coming modules but again for your understanding it is the call which I have already mentioned in the previous lecture.

Over and above what you are asked for, what you are looked for, what you are paid for,

this is citizenship behavior. At the time when you are not paid enough, you are not satisfied with the job, there is a bit of inconsistency with what you are and what you wanted to do in the job. There is that inconsistency you tend to feel that you are not the right person, you are not the right fit, you certainly exhibit a certain level of withdrawal behavior. You also in terms of group level, very critical you will see that group cohesion. As we have seen in terms of the group level as the processes follow, communication, leadership, power and politics become the critical element.

In group level all this leads to group cohesion. How you are indulging with your group members? Is there a group think that is existing? We will discuss that in the coming modules. Is there a certain level of group cohesion? Is, the decisions being made unanimously or is the decisions being coercive? Somebody is taking the shots and all others have to just agree to that. Is a group happening or group decision happening like this? Are the group decisions not scientific? Are the group decisions not based on the evidence that is allowing them that this previously didn't work out, we should not go in that way or is it just that one man or one-woman whims and fancies are being guiding the whole process. Again, group functioning is critical in that level with respect to the result analysis.

Coming to organizational level productivity and survival. These are the entire scope of the organizational behavior, these two. If you look into why we need to study organizational behavior, we looked into what organization is, we looked into what behavior is, we looked into different approaches of organizational behavior, OBM, Organizational Behavior Management also, but why? For productivity of the organization, for survival of the organization, to be the best in the industry, to be the best in the revenue generation capacity, to be the best in the world in the global scenario, to conclude individual differences include different aspects, traits, the conditions which you are, I have already mentioned this session of organizational behavior, this whole class of organizational behavior is not an attempt to just fuse or just dump on concepts. We are here to take you through the different context. So the condition becomes relevant, the environmental condition, physical, the psychological conditions, everything becomes critical, demographic characteristics, where you belong to, where you are coming from, the age, the sex you are, the basically the division in terms of demographic characteristics you represent, cultural features, again the national culture could be different, the organizational culture that has emerged over time could be different, intellectual capacity, every single individual, every single individual who is coming to the organization will have a certain level of different individual capacity. It could be different based on the analytical skills, it could be different based on your exemplary oratory skills, it could be different based on your ability or uncanny ability to perceive things, to generate solutions,

to understand what is the root cause problem, all these are different aspects which can be synthesized to form a common solution, but these different aspects, these different elements of every single individual, they contribute to what is known as individual differences.

This individual differences have to be appreciated, these individual differences have to be understood, behavioral characteristics that set one human being apart from another such as displaying more proactive behavior than others could be yet another aspect. There could be situations where you are seeing a bunch of people within your group, there are somebody who is very active, there are some individuals who are very critical, so there are some individuals who tend to fall in line easily, there are some individuals who raise a flag every time for good reasons, bad reasons, whatever the reasons be, but in the organization trust me you are dealing with all kinds of people in the world, as it takes all kinds of people to take the world, you see your neighbor might be different from you in terms of the culture which he or she represents, in terms of the specific predisposition of attitude, in terms of their food, in terms of their dressing, in terms of the level of communication, in terms of the language they communicate, in terms of the verbal and nonverbal communication they have, everything might be different, but still you live in harmony, but still you live in harmony and this is what you have to take to your organization also, that's your family.

As I have already mentioned in the previous lecture, in the spirit of G20 when we are looking into Vasudeva Kudumpakam, we are looking into one earth as one family which is having one future, then why not one organization as one family which is having one future. On that note we will end the class today, lecture number 4.

Thank you all for listening to me patiently. Namaskar. Thank you.