Organizational Behaviour - an Introduction
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Lecture – 09
Perception - Part 4

Warm welcome to this lecture series on Organizational Behaviour. I am Doctor M. P. Ganesh, we are in the second chapter which is on Perception. We are in the last and final section on this chapter. So, I will quickly summarize what happened in the previous lectures in this chapter.

So, we defined what is perception. So, perception is the process of giving meaning to sensory stimulus through organizing and interpreting it. So, perception is subjective in nature, which means a same thing different people can perceive it differently.

We also looked at why it is important to understand perception in workplace.

We also looked at the basic elements of perception. The steps involved in sensory perception which are two steps; one selection and screening of information and organization of stimuli.

We also looked at what are the sub processes or what are the techniques people use in selection of stimuli. Selection of stimuli depends on various factors and these factors can be classified into internal and external factors. So, we looked at both these internal and external factors.

We also looked at the techniques humans use to organize perceptual stimuli. We also looked at how these principals or these techniques humans use to organize and interpret or select and in organized stimuli can lead to illusions or error.

The second part of the lecture of this chapter, we spoke about social perception which is about how perception is relevant in social context. So, social perception more specifically we spoke about identity and attribution.

The idea of identity is trying to understand someone based on their ah, try to understand someone in terms of who they are identity also involves identity of one self. So, we also try to understand whom we are; most specifically we use social identity to understand personal identity.

So, social identity theory says in personal identity we use both personal characteristics and also the social group in which we belong to this holds true for others also, when we try to understand who is this person. We will use personal qualities of that person and also the social group in which this person belongs to make sense out of the identity of the other person.
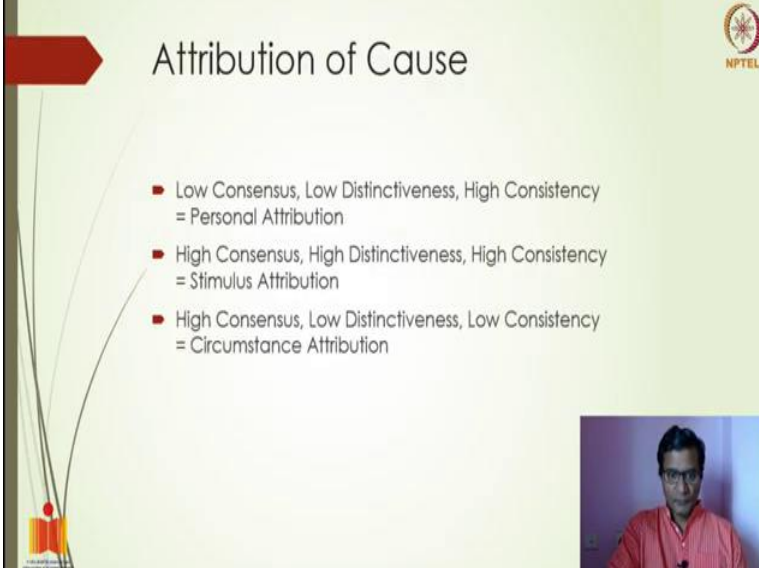
We also looked at attribution of causality, we looked at the Kelley's theory of causal attribution which talks about three criteria humans use to understand whether a certain behaviour is caused by internal factors or external factors.

In fact, in the last class we had an elaborate discussion about you know attribution theory using an example ok.

So, we also looked at in the previous class what are the problems we might encounter because of perceptual biases or what are the kind of perceptual biases which can happen in social perception. If you remember we looked at you know halo effect, team halo effect, attribution error.

So, attribution error is when we try to understand or attribute others behaviour we use internal causes, with if somebody goes wrong we attributed to themselves. But if we do wrong or if something those wrong in our behaviour, we attributed to external causes.

So, these are some of the biases we looked at. We also looked at in the power of perception which means even though perception is a very subjective thing, it has the power to create realities.

In other words, when we when we perceive someone or something in a certain way, there are more chances that it will become real. So, we looked at Pygmalion effect and Golem effect. Pygmalion effect is also called as self fulfilling prophecy; which means when we have a certain kind of expectation on others, that expectation tend to become real.

In other words, if you consider someone as a good person or a bad person if you perceive them as a good person or a bad person in spite of what the person really is; over a period of time that person becomes either good or bad depending on your perception. Why it happens? Because of our perception or our subjective judgments, we tend to react to that person in a certain way and over a period of time the other person also response to the way we react to them.

So, the reaction can the way we interact with them can be in the form of verbal communication, non verbal communication, body language, the kind of prejudices we show and things like that.

So, Golem effect is when we set lower standard or lower goals to subordinates or students, they tend to underperform those standards which are already low. So, which says when we set goals it is always better to set higher goals to people. So, that they will

perform to their optimal level, instead of setting lower goals where they underperform ok.

So, this is where we stopped in the previous lecture. In the previous lecture if you remember, I asked you to read about stereotype, more specifically job stereotype. Did you read? Did you, able to find and find something in the internet where you able to understand and comprehend? Anyway, I will explain ok.
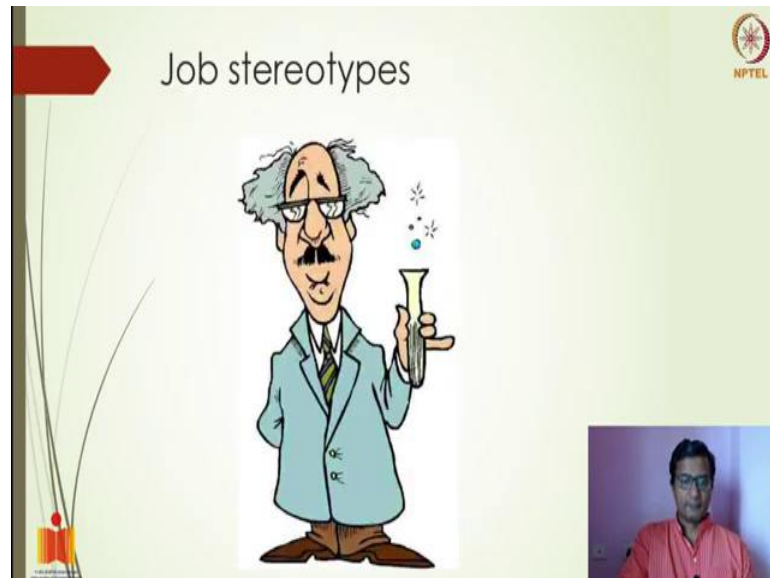
Just think, I will give you a word, just visualize this job title ok. So, the job title is scientist ok. So, how do you visualize a scientist? Just take a minute, how will a scientist look like? How old will be a scientist? Try to visualize more descriptively ok. Give a I mean give an identity to this scientist, personify this word ok.

So, many of us visualize scientist as someone who is of middle age, bald, a male individual, someone who is wearing a lab coat, somebody who looks very you know uptight you know, someone who never smiles, maybe somebody with a spectacle, things like this ok.

So, this is like when you here this word doctor, how will you personify a doctor? How will you visualize a doctor? Let us say if I give you more specific detail someone who is a neurosurgeon ok, how will you personify this doctor? May be around in is 50s, male, you know maybe bald, maybe you know without mustache and you know someone who looks very brisk, someone who looks very intellectual, is not it, someone who wears a stethoscope, things like that.

So, these are job stereotypes. Why they are job stereotypes? Because these are gender stereotypes, but we use these criteria when we talk about certain jobs. These are also job stereotypes. So, why this is a job stereotype? Because when you say doctor especially, a neurosurgeon or a scientist we visualize someone who is of a typical nature or a typical person, which many a times may not necessarily be true ok.

For example, scientist, I will show you in the next slide. Many of you would have seen this picture is not it, these are our ISRO scientists and most of them are women and they are not like wearing a formal wear, are or a lab coat, they are they are like as similar as anybody else you know, they are like as normal as anybody else.

But when you visualize scientists, if I give you detail like female scientist, you will visualize female scientist as someone you know who is wearing a modern dress, may be a European, fair skinned or you know someone who whose very tall and you know all these associations we make.

Why do we make these associations? This is how we see these job roles in our popular media is not it? For example, in advertisements, you know many of this advertisements you get to see these doctors ok. So, these doctors if they are related to small children, these are female doctors. If these are or these incidences are related to you know germs and all those stuff or you know dental and all those stuff you seeing male doctors.

So, the popular media describes or even in our day to day narratives, the way we talk, the way we ah you know understand or narrate something, we use certain qualities for

certain jobs is not it? For example, in this picture we narrate a scientist or when we talk about scientist usually, we talk about male scientists. One there also very few female scientists in certain areas like STEM education, I mean STEM in Science Technology Engineering and Medicine.

There are very few women compared to men, but even then you know the kind of understanding or attitude we have towards these women scientists or scientists who are in minority, from minority groups we do not actually take them into consideration. If they are minority they are less, but they are also a significant part of that group, but when we see the category the larger category of scientist or doctor, these people do not come to our visual field, we do not actually pay much attention to them.

For example, mathematician; so, there are quite a number of female mathematicians. Even though they are minority, there are very reputed female mathematicians, but many of us do not know who are these mathematicians, why? Because like I said in popular media in you know in in our day to day discussion they do not figure in our discussions.

So, these are job stereotypes. I will give another example. When I say nurse ok, which is a very gender stereotyped job you know, which is a very gender loaded job, in India especially. When I say nurse who should be a nurse? A female, more most probably from a certain state in India and may be very young, is not it, why?

Because thus, nurse is a gender loaded word? No, it is a gender neutral word, but there can be male nurses also nurses of different states, nurses of different age groups, but for us even though we have seen male nurses that particular visualization does not come to our mind ok. So, these are job stereotypes.

I will quickly define what is stereotyping? Stereotyping means we give a certain in a very common understanding. Stereotyping means generalization ok.

In fact, in earlier section also I spoke to you about stereotyping, I will repeat again when you talk about a particular social group, it can be a professional group or it can be a you know people of certain region or it can be people of a certain gender or it can be people of a certain religious background. So, these are groups you know we encounter.

So, when we talk about a certain group, we associate that group with certain qualities and we generalize that qualities to all the members of that social group ok. Let us say if I say like a like I said earlier nurse, I you know visualize this nurse as a female, young you know, from a particular state, this is of the general characteristics, I give to this group and I believe all these nurses in this you know whoever encounter should be like this.

If someone is not fitting into that generalization, it becomes a you know disturbance for us, there is a cognitive disturbance ok. So, to in order to avoid that cognitive disturbance, we try to only perceive or try to put ourselves to encounter only those social situations where our assumptions synchronized with the reality, I mean this is again you know the consequence of stereotyping ok.

Like the example which I gave politicians or teachers or marketing representative, all those things or driver, so these are professional stereotypes or job stereotypes. It can be other things also you know, if you talk about Gujarati's; many a times we think they are business people, when we say you know Punjabis; we talk about you know probably they

are like you know very jovial people or someone whose like very athletic kind of people ok. So, these are some of the assumptions we make based on gender stereotyping.

The major negative impact of stereotyping is selective perception like I said earlier, so we tend to not see people who do not comply to this stereotyping we have already made. For example, driver, let us say there is a female driver, many a times if you thing about driver, professional drivers, we think about male drivers, but let us say if the female drivers, we do not even pay attention to them.

Similarly, mathematicians they are very good you know female mathematicians, but we never register those you know female mathematicians. Selective perception also involves, let us say I assume these are the qualities of a person from the social group; I tend to see only those qualities in that person, other qualities which may not align with the other social group which will not align with my understanding of that social group I will reject it, I will not select that information.

For example, like I said, Gujarati's are business people so, but let us say there is a Gujarati you know who whose probably you know a scientist or who is probably a language expert. In fact, there are many people Gujarati's for language experts and scientists, but we have certain qualities which we think are Gujarati qualities.

So, this person is a Gujarati. So, I will try to see if it in all the qualities in that person. Some qualities that that person is not exhibiting or newer qualities that person is exhibiting which is not fitting in to my understanding, I will not perceive those qualities.

For example, let us say sales person, we assume all the sales people are you know they trying to persuade as and try to sell things without telling of the truth. Let us say if some sales person is a very you know honest sales person, we will not see those qualities.

The second negative impact of stereotyping is bias and prejudice. So, bias means wrong judgement or inclining in a certain way or being not being balanced. So, for example, you assume let us say there is an interview, you assume people of a certain state or a certain background or people from certain collage are highly intelligent.

So, even without probing more even without getting more information, we assume this person will be intelligent ok. So, let us say in an interview somebody says I am from IIT

Bombay ok, so with we assume that this person should be intelligent. I mean I am not saying it is wrong, but in real sense we need to probe more is not it. So, this is positive bias, there can be negative bias also. Negative bias means the bias will become or it becomes bad for the person whom we are judging.

So, for example, let us say you are doing an interview, this person whose is you know look looks in a certain way, you know looks very shabby or not shabby I mean not well dressed or someone from a certain low socioeconomic status, his or her English is not very good. So, we assume that this person may not be very intelligent. So, this is what is bias. Bias against a certain social group.

Prejudice is prejudgment. So, even without so, bias and prejudice are interrelated. So, even without understanding someone, even without getting more information we prejudge ok. So, for example, let us some let us say someone you know looks in a certain way and you have a certain kind of a stereotype towards that particular social group or the person who looks like that, we tend to prejudge, we tend to judge even before we collect more information.

So, how was this important in job context? There are many different ways. This is a very important phenomenon, these biases or these consequences of job stereotyping or even stereotyping has lot of consequences in human resource management, but one thing I would like to stress or which I would like to discuss is gender stereotyping in workplace ok.

So, not just workplace, Like I mentioned earlier stem education science technology engineering and medicine like I said earlier, there are very few women in these disciplines at higher levels ok, levels in which like senior researchers or senior professors or senior technicians, engineers, we find very few women in these fields. Especially, you know there are assumptions that women do not fit into these kind of jobs.

I mean again which is like a very biased opinion and it is a very politically wrong opinion which is untrue. But many people assume that why there are very few women in these fields? Because all these ideas of you know right brain left brain and all those stuff, women are very good in arts related fields, creative fields, men are very good in rational or you know logical related fields, which is not very scientifically proven ok.

So, these kind of assumptions what happens, because of these assumptions is one in terms of recruitment to top level fields many a times these people from minority groups like gender or certain social groups, they are not selected. So, bias in terms of selection and appraisal plays a very strong role in due to stereotyping especially for women and minorities ok.

So, we called it glass ceiling effect. Glass ceiling effect means there are many women at the bottom and middle level of management or even in stem fields, but there are very few women who go to the top. So, this is what is glass ceiling. Why it is glass ceiling? Because you think there is no barrier, but there is a barrier.

So, what is this barrier? These barriers like stereotyping, bias, which many of us may not even acknowledge, you know many of this managers who are involved in selection and recruitment or promotions, they may not even be aware that these biases operate in their mind when they are doing selection and appraisal.

So, you know many of these glass ceiling effect are, because of stereotyping related issues. Impression management techniques is people can use these stereotype or you know biases in a positive way also. Like I said you know people are trained to face interviews, they are trained to you know say certain things in a certain way, how to set you know; how to look at your interviewer; how to shake hands and all those things.

So, these things are very superficial. They may not even you know mean their confident, they are trained to interact in a certain way, that does not mean that you know these people are capable enough to resolve the issues in real life work situations.

But, because of these techniques and there are issues related to you know perceptual bias we tend to label them as good performers or good candidates. So, these are some of the problems which can happened, because of perception related biases and also stereotyping in HR related decisions.

Just another example, when you see this instrument stethoscope, what comes to your mind ok? Many a times if it is you know certain areas of medicine like gynecology, with we think about women gynecology or pediatrician we think about women doctors. When we think about neurosurgeon or you know psychiatrist, we think about male doctors which may not be true.

Sewing machine

Similarly, if you look at this instrument a sewing machine, who will you associate with this particular picture? Who will use this sewing machine? We think you know if it is hobby or if it is used in home it must be a woman? If it is used in a professional context it must be a male or male or female, but many a times if who will use this at home? It will be a female.

So, these are some of the problems perception perceptional biases are related to ok. So, this is the end of the chapter. So, I will quickly summarize what happened in the todays lecture. So, we looked at job stereotypes and we defined what is stereotyping and we also looked at what are the key issues in stereotyping and also why stereotyping happens and more specifically in HR what are the problems associated with stereotyping and perceptual biases.

I will stop here. The next chapter we will look at this idea called personality. So, it is a very interesting topic, we will look at personality in the next chapter. Till then have a good time and see you in the next lecture, see you, bye.