

## Unit 4

### **Organizational Behaviour – an Overview**

It is not uncommon to observe that people behave differently in different situations or environment. A child behaves calmly in the presence of guests; once the guests are out, he/she will show his/her true colours of behaviour. A youth appears to be quite pious while praying in a temple, but the same youth with his friends in a party in an inebriated mood will behave quite differently. An IPS officer will not behave in the same way in the IPS- IAS officers' meeting with the Chief Minister as he behaves in a departmental meeting with his subordinates. Though an individual's basic characteristics do not change appreciably when he/she is on his/her own, he/she tends to react differently depending on the situations. It is a common phenomenon to note that a particular individual may be quite obedient and desires to obey all the instructions of his/her superior, but as a member of a group, such as a functional department or a trade union, he loses his individuality and follows the group's norms whether the group strikes work or adopts 'go slow' tactics to coerce the management. Hence, as a business manager, it is of paramount importance to understand how people behave as a member of a group. But in fact, not only business managers, every individual who heads a group of people such as principal of a college, chief medical officer of a hospital, district collector, self-help group leader or the chief engineer should need to understand organizational behaviour of people. But ironically, understanding how people behave in a group or organization is a Herculean task as people's behaviour changes frequently due to various environmental factors. Nevertheless, for an effective and efficient management a thorough understanding of the rudiments of organizational behavior of employees comes a long way.

### **Meaning of organizational behavior**

Organizational behaviour is the study of what people think, feel and do in and around organizations. It is also a systematic study of individual, team and organization-level characteristics in an organization.

## Definition of Organizational Behaviour

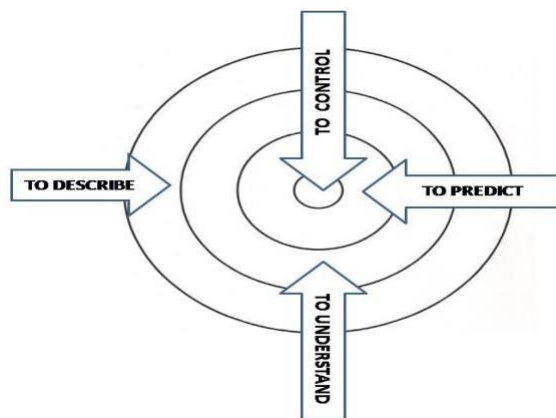
According to Stephen P. Robbins, organizational behaviour is a field of study that investigates the impacts that individuals, groups and structure have on behaviour within organizations for the purpose of applying such knowledge toward improving an organization's effectiveness.

Fred Luthans defined organizational behaviour as the understanding, prediction and management of human behaviour in organizations.

### Goals of organizational behaviour study

The goals of understanding organizational behavior are

- to describe [how people behave under a variety of conditions /environments?]
- to understand[why people behave as they do in different situations?]
- to predict [how people behave in future?] and
- to control [how their behaviour is controlled or managed for productive activity]



**Fig: Goals of O.B Study**

For example, in a particular organization the employees strike work very often. Before tackling the problem, the manager first tries to know the details of strike or describe as how often the employees strike work? What is the duration of each strike? During which period of the year they strike? What are the losses? What measures had been taken earlier? Secondly, he attempts to understand who are the

employees who strike work? What are the primary causes? Who are the people behind the scene? Is it instigated by trade union, rival company or disgruntled employees? Thirdly, he examines to predict the future scenario. If the same trend continues how many man- days will be lost? What will be the delivery schedule? What will happen to the quality? Will the employees intensify their strike or slow down? Will good employees leave the organization? What will happen to the image of the organization? Finally, after describing, understanding and predicting the behaviour of the people, he tries to control or manage the situation / behaviour of the striking employees to the advantage of the organization through appropriate remedial measures.

A good understanding of the behaviour of people in organizations helps managers, to a large extent, in managing the organizations efficiently and effectively.

#### **Nature of organizational behaviour study**

- It is a part of management study representing behavioural approach to management.
- It is a human tool for human benefit.
- It is interdisciplinary. That is, it is a field of study involving the integration of behavioural sciences such as psychology, sociology, anthropology etc., It is not a discipline in the usual sense.
- It is an applied science seeking to fulfill employees' needs and organizations' objectives.
- It involves individual / group behaviour and behaviour of organization itself.
- It is humanistic as well as optimistic.
- It is normative and value centered. While positive science suggests only cause- effect relationship, normative science prescribes how the various findings can be applied to get organizational results which are acceptable to society.
- It is mostly oriented towards organizational objectives.
- It is a total system.

## **Disciplines similar to organizational behaviour**

There are a few disciplines which are similar to organizational behaviour.

**Behavioural science:** It is the study of human behaviour to establish generalizations that are supported by empirical evidence

**Human relations:** It broadly applies to interaction and co-operation of people in groups.

**Organization theory:** It is the study of structure, functioning and performance of organizations and the behaviour of individuals and groups within them.

## **Contributing disciplines to organizational behaviour**

Organizational behaviour is an applied behavioural science that is built upon contributions from a number of behavioural disciplines.

**Psychology:** It seeks to measure, explain and sometimes change the behaviour of humans and other animals.

**Sociology:** It is the study of people in relation to their fellow human beings.

**Social Psychology:** It is an area within psychology that blends concepts from psychology and sociology and focuses on the influence of people on one another.

**Anthropology:** It is the study of societies to learn about human beings and their activities.

**Political Science:** It is a study of behaviour within a political environment. It includes structuring of conflict, allocation of power and manipulation of power for individual self-interest.

**Summary of contributions of various disciplines to the study of organizational behaviour**

<b>Behavioural Science</b>	<b>Contribution</b>	<b>Unit of Analysis</b>	<b>Output</b>
Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning</li> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Personality</li> <li>• Perception</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Effectiveness</li> <li>• Job satisfaction</li> <li>• Performance</li> <li>• Attitude</li> </ul>	Individual	Study of organizational behaviour
Sociology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group / Team</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Power, Conflict</li> </ul>	Group	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational change</li> <li>• Organizational culture</li> </ul>	Organizational system	
Social Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour change</li> <li>• Attitude change</li> <li>• Group processes</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Group decision making</li> </ul>	Group	
Anthropology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparative values</li> <li>• Comparative attitudes</li> <li>• Cross-cultural analysis</li> </ul>	Group	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational climate</li> <li>• Organizational culture</li> </ul>	Organizational system	
Political Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict</li> <li>• Intra-organization politics</li> <li>• Power</li> </ul>	Organizational system	

### **A Study of OB is Important in Several ways:**

**Roadmap:** OB study is almost a roadmap to employees' lives in organizations. OB study takes people to the right destination in their worklives. The knowledge gained through OB suggests people what to do, when to do, where to do and how to do the various activities in an organization.

**Scientific knowledge:** An OB study is based on scientific research and people feel confident in understanding and predicting their lives in any organization.

**Influence:** OB study helps people influence organization events such as managing conflicts, decision making, communication etc.,

**Understanding self:** OB study makes one understand himself/herself and others better through improved interpersonal relations, attitudes, perception, leadership, communication etc.,

**Managing business:** The job of a manager is to get things done effectively and efficiently. This is achieved through motivating employees. OB study helps managers understand the concept and techniques of motivation better.

**Industrial relation:** The field of OB is useful to maintain cordial industrial relations through understanding the cause of the problem, predicting its course of action and controlling its consequences.

**Career in management:** A successful manager must have good 'people skills' such as understanding employees' knowledge / experience and utilizing them for efficient management through motivation. For this, a good knowledge of OB is essential.

### **Individual Dimensions of Organizational Behaviour**

#### **(Biographical Characteristics and Ability)**

Individual human behaviour is caused by instincts, genetic background and personality traits that are formed at an early stage. Behaviour is mostly learnt through interactions with environment. Present events are more important than past events.

#### **Determinants of individual behaviour:**

The following are the important determinants of individual behaviour.

- a. Biographical characteristics [Age, Gender, Race, Tenure and Religion]
- b. Ability [Intellectual and Physical Abilities]
- c. Attitudes
- d. Values
- e. Personality
- f. Perception
- g. Learning
- h. Emotions and Emotional Intelligence

In this chapter the influence of biological characteristics and personal abilities on behavior is discussed.

**MARS model of individual behaviour and results:**

MARS [Motivation, Ability, Role Perception and Situational Factors] Model explains that individual characteristics decide the motivation, ability and role perception which in turn combine with situational factors ultimately deciding one’s behaviour.

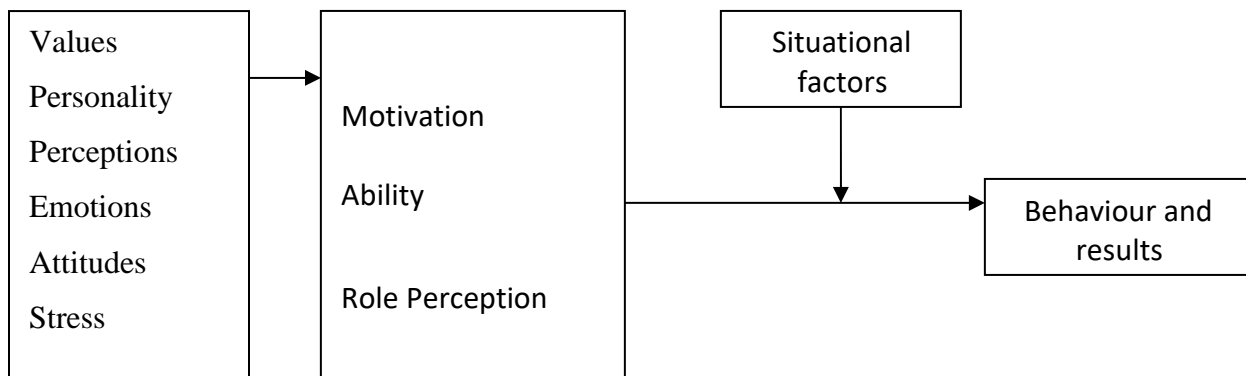


Fig: MARS model of individual behaviour and results

**Influence of biographical characteristics on behaviour:**

Biographical characteristics: These are personal characteristics such as age, gender, race, etc., which are subjective and easily obtained from personal records.

**Age:**

Though there is a widespread belief that job performance declines with

increasing age many see a number of positive qualities that older workers bring to their jobs, such as experience, judgement, a strong work ethic and commitment to quality. Nevertheless, older workers are perceived as lacking flexibility and being resistant to new technology. Age does not appear to bring in any negative influence on job related factors.

**Quitting jobs:** Older workers are less likely to quit their jobs as quickly as young workers since they have experienced many a work situation.

**Absenteeism:** In general, older workers have lower rates of avoidable absence than do younger employees. However, they have higher rates of unavoidable absence probably due to poorer health associated with aging and longer recovery period.

**Productivity:** There is a widespread belief that productivity declines with age, as it is assumed that skills such as speed, agility, strength, coordination etc., decay over time and prolonged job boredom and lack of intellectual stimulation contribute to reduced productivity. But many studies showed that age and job performance were not related. Demands of most jobs, even those with heavy manual labour requirements are not extreme enough for any decline in physical skills attributable to age. Even if there is some decline due to age, it is offset by gains due to experience.

**Job satisfaction:** While most studies indicated a positive association between age and job satisfaction, at least upto 60 years, some studies showed a U-shaped relationship. This type of relationship results could be due to intermixing of professional and non-professional employees. When these two groups were separated and studied it was found that satisfaction tended to increase with age in the case of professionals and it decreased among non-professionals during middle age and increased in the later years.



**Gender:**

Some of the work-related differences between men and women are pointed out below:

- Practically there are no differences between men and women that will affect their job performance.
- There are no consistent male – female differences in problem-solving ability, analytical skills, competitive drive, motivation, sociability or learning ability.
- Psychological studies have shown that women are more willing to conform to authority than men do.
- Men are more aggressive and have higher expectations of successes than women. However, the differences are minor.
- One issue that seems to matter is employees having preschool–age children. Working mothers are more likely to prefer part-time work, flexible work schedules and telecommuting in order to accommodate their family responsibilities.
- While there is no significant difference in quit rates between men and women, women have higher rate of absenteeism possibly due to more of family responsibilities. Pre-and postnatal absence is not avoidable among married women.
- Due to physiological differences certain jobs are more suitable to men than women.
- Continued sexual harassment of women impacts job performance significantly.

**Race:**

As race is a controversial issue, discussion on it is generally avoided. But it cannot be denied that race does affect work life. Though there are no distinct racial categories, some Governments classify people based on race [African, American, Asian etc.] Race has been studied to some 'extent' in Organizational Behaviour, particularly as it relates to personnel selection decision, performance evaluations, pay and workplace discrimination .

- There is a tendency for individuals to favour colleagues of their own race in performance appraisals, promotion decisions or pay raises.
- There are substantial racial differences in attitudes towards affirmative action.

- Some people (African Americans) receive lower ratings in employment interviews, get low pay and are not promoted frequently.
- Employers are concerned that mental ability tests may have negative impact on racial and ethnic groups.
- The issue of racial differences in cognitive ability tests continues to be debated.

#### **Tenure:**

Tenure is the work experience. Longer tenure seems to have positive impact on job.

- People with more work experience (senior employees) have less problem of absenteeism.
- There is positive relationship between seniority and job productivity.
- The longer a person is in a job, the less likely he or she is to quit.
- Tenure on an employee's previous job is a powerful predictor of the employee's future turnover.
- Compared to age, tenure appears to be more consistent and stable predictor of job satisfaction

#### **Religion:**

Religion is a touchy issue and conflicts exist between religious and non-religious people and among the various religious faiths. Type of prayers, food habits, respect for elders, dress code etc differing from religion to religion, affect work culture and job performance in one way or other.

Ability refers to an individual's capacity to perform the various tasks in a job. It is a current assessment of what one can do. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses in terms of ability that make him/her relatively superior or inferior to others in performing certain tasks or activities. From management's point of view, it is not whether people differ in their abilities; their issue is knowing how people differ in their abilities and how that knowledge could be used to put the right people in the right jobs for higher productivity.

An individual's overall abilities are made up of two sets of factors viz. intellectual and physical.

#### **Intellectual abilities**

Intellectual abilities are the capacity to do mental activities such as thinking,

reasoning and problem solving. People in most societies place a high value on intelligence.

Intelligence is defined in various ways.

Wells: Intelligence is the property of recombining one's behaviour pattern so as to act better in a novel situation.

## **Personality and values**

### **What is personality?**

The term 'personality' has been derived from the Latin word 'persona' which means 'to speak through.' This Latin term denotes the masks which the actors used to wear in ancient Greece and Rome. Thus, personality is used in terms of influencing others through external appearance. However, just external appearance, though important for personality characteristics, does not make the whole personality.

-Personality should include:

- external appearance and behaviour
- inner awareness of self as a permanent organizing force and
- particular pattern of measurable traits, both inner and outer.

-There has not been universal agreement on the exact meaning of personality. The reason for the controversy is that people define 'personality' from different perspectives. Most people tend to equate personality with social success [i.e.] good personality or popular personality and to describe personality by a simple dominant characteristic [strong, weak or polite].

### **Definition of Personality:**

Personality is the sum total of characteristic pattern of thinking, feeling and behaving that constitutes the individual's distinctive method of relating to environment."

### **Determinants of personality**

The determinants of personality are:

- Biological factors
- Family and social factors
- Cultural factors and
- Situational factors

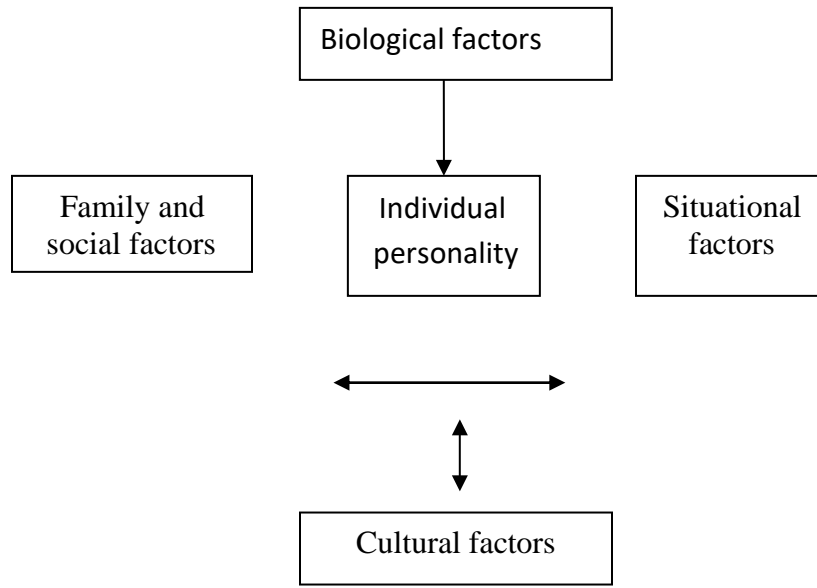


Fig: Determinants of Personality

Out of the various factors of determinants, only biological factors have one-sided impact while other factors have interactive impact as the individual himself can also have some impact on these factors.

#### **Influence of biological factors on personality**

The general characteristics of human biological system influence the way in which human being tends to sense external environment, interpret and respond to them

**Heredity:** It is the transfer of the qualities from ancestors [great grand parents, grand parents and parents] to the descendants [children] through a mechanism lying primarily in the chromosomes of the cells. Heredity decides certain physical, mental and emotional qualities. It has been proved that physical and psychological characteristics can be transferred through heredity. Heredity plays an important role in the development of personality. That is, one's personality is influenced by the characteristics of parents / ancestors to some extent.

**Brain:** Physiologists and psychologists have divided the brain into two parts, i.e. left hemisphere and right hemisphere. It is claimed that right-side brain is related to creativity and left side to analytical or managerial ability. The type of development of brain decides the personality to some extent.

**Physical features:** A person's physical features have some influence on others as well as on himself. People with appreciable physical appearance tend to be more confident and behave confidently in some cases. The way others interact with person of good physical features also differs. Physical features do affect one's personality.

### **Influence of family / social factors on personality**

The personality of an individual develops under the influence of many socializing forces and agencies. It starts right from the nuclear family to the distant global groups. Family and social groups have significant impact on personality development through socialization and identification process.

**Socialization:** It is a process by which a child acquires behaviour patterns that are customary and acceptable according to the standards of his family or group. Socialisation starts with the initial contact with mother / father and later on with family members and social groups.

**Identification process:** This process occurs when a person tries to identify himself with some person whom he feels ideal in the family or in the social group. Identification can be viewed as the similarity of feelings, attitudes, motives or desires.

Socialization / identification process is influenced by home environment, family members and social groups.

**Home environment:** Total home environment is a critical factor in personality development. Children brought up in charity homes by paid employees tend to be emotionally maladjusted compared to children raised by parents in warm and loving environment.

**Family members:** Members of the family, particularly, parents, have strong influence on one's personality. High correlations have been found between attitudes of parents and that of the children. The conduct of brothers /sisters/cousins also influences personality.

**Social groups:** Similar to family members, the behaviour of the members of the social groups such as social club, friends' circle, work group etc. influences one's personality.

## **Cultural factors and personality**

The points to ponder over are:

- Culture is the underlying determinant of human decision–making. It generally determines attitudes toward independence, aggression, competition and co-operation.
  - Each culture expects and trains its members to behave in the ways that are acceptable to the group.
- To a greater extent, the child’s cultural group decides its values / characteristics through group learning.

## **Organizational Applications of Personality:**

Understanding of personality has a number of implications for effective managing of organizations. Managers will be in advantageous positions in efficient management of employees whose real personalities are made known.

### **Matching jobs and individuals:**

Every job in the organization requires certain characteristics of the person who does the job. One of the basic characteristics is personality of the job performer. Any organization can do well if it is able to match the characteristics of the persons and their job requirement. Workers are more satisfied in work environments that are congruent with their particular profiles. Congruence refers to the extent that someone has the same or similar personality type as the environment in which he works. Research has shown that high congruence leads to better performance, satisfaction and longer tenure in that job.

### **Designing Motivation System:**

All people cannot be motivated by offering the same incentives because of their personality differences. Some are motivated by financial incentives and others by non- financial incentives such as responsibility, authority, independence etc., An analysis of personalities of individuals helps in designing motivation system to suit individual needs.

### **Designing Control System:**

Controlling is one of the main functions of management. Managers use

different methods of controlling. Whether the controlling system is tight or flexible it must be adjusted to suit the individual's personality. Efficient workers may not relish tight control. Lazy workers do better job under tight control only. Appraisal of personality of workers helps in designing appropriate control system.

**Attitude:**

“An attitude is how positive or negative or favourable or unfavourable a person feels towards another person, an object or event. This views attitude as a feeling or an evaluation reaction to objects.

- “Attitudes are learned predispositions to respond to an object or a class of objects in a consistently favourable or unfavourable way”. This incorporates the notion of readiness to respond towards an object

In simple terms, attitudes are evaluative statements or judgment concerning objects, people or events.

**Components of attitude**

According to Stephen P. Robbins attitude is cognitive, affective and behavioural.

Cognitive = Evaluation

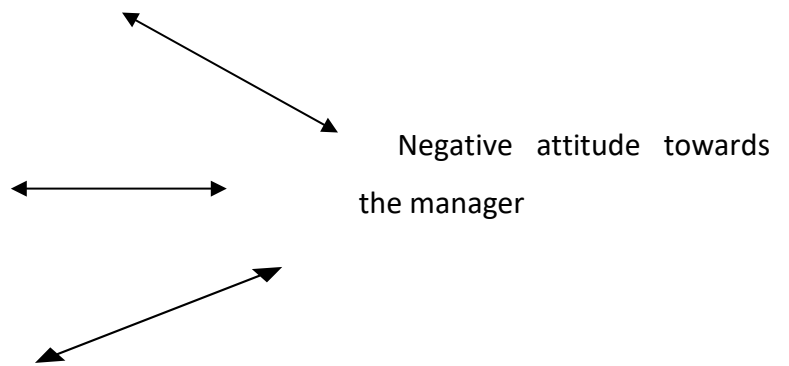
[eg. My manager promoted my colleague who is in no way better than me . He is biased]

Affective = Feeling

[e.g. I dislike my manager as he is biased]

Behavioural = Action

[I am leaving the company. I have complained against my manager to the management]



All the three components of attitude viz cognition, affect and behaviour are closely related.

According to Fred Luthans, the **components of attitude** are:

**Emotional:** It involves the person's feelings or affect i.e. positive, negative or neutral about an object.

**Informational:** It consists of the beliefs and information an individual has about the object irrespective of the type of information, whether it is empirically real or not.

**Behavioural:** This is a person's tendencies to behave in a particular way towards an object.

### **Characteristics of attitudes:**

- Attitudes have an object, tangible (e.g. a car) or intangible (e.g. consumerism).
- Attitudes have direction (favourable or unfavourable), degree (how much one likes /dislikes) and intensity ( the level of sureness / confidence of expression)
- Attitudes have structure (consistency and interattitudinal centrality.)
- Attitudes affect behaviour of an individual.
- Attitudes are invisible (cannot be observed directly; observed through behaviour.)
- Attitudes are pervasive. (every individual has some attitudes towards the environment.)

### **Functions of attitudes:**

The functions of attitude are manifold:

- Instrumental or adjustment function: This serves as a means to reach a desired goal or avoid an undesirable.
- Ego-defensive: This is to protect one's self-image from threat.
- Value –expressive: This enables expression of one's centrally held values.
- Knowledge function: It is based on a person's need to maintain a stable, organised and meaningful structure of the world.

### **Factors in attitude formation**

- Personal experience, perception or personality.

Example: A person has a negative attitude towards alcoholic drinks because he had experienced certain bad effects of alcoholic drinks or he perceives that alcoholic drink is injurious to health or his



strong personality does not allow him to take alcoholic drinks.

- Group associations, Family, Peer groups, Culture / Sub-culture and Reference groups.

Example: A person may develop a negative feeling towards alcoholic drinks as none of his family members or his peer group members take alcoholic drinks or the culture to whom he belongs or the members of his reference group look upon taking alcohol drinks as a sinful act.

### **Methods to change attitude**

Attitude could be changed in social as well as organizational context. Social context:

- (i) Communication of additional information.
- (ii) Approval or disapproval of a particular attitude.
- (iii) Group influence and
- (iv) Inducing engagement in discrepant behaviour.

### **Organizational context:**

- (i) Group action
- (ii) Persuasion through leadership
- (iii) Persuasion through communication and
- (iv) Influence of total situation.

### **Job Attitude**

Attitude affects various components of job:

- Job Satisfaction: It is a positive feeling about one's job which results from an evaluation of its characteristics.
- Job involvement : It is the degree to which a person identifies with a job, actively participates in it and considers performance in the job is important for self – worth or self – growth
- Psychological empowerment: It is the degree of employees' belief to what extent they affect their environment, their competence, the meaningfulness of their job and their perceived autonomy in the work.
- Organizational commitment: It is the degree to which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals and wishes to continue in the organization.

## **Dimensions of organizational commitment**

**Attentive commitment:** It is an emotional attachment to an organization and a belief in its values.

**Continuance commitment:** It is the perceived economic value of remaining with an organization compared to leaving it.

**Normative commitment:** It is an obligation to remain with an organization for moral or ethical reasons.

## **Guidelines to enhance organizational commitment**

The management has to follow certain guidelines to make the employees committed to the organization.

- Commit to people-first values.
- Clarify and communicate the organization's mission
- Guarantee organizational justice.
- Create a sense of community
- Support employee development.

**Perceived organizational support:** It is the degree to which employees believe the organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being.

**Employee engagement:** It is an individual's involvement and satisfaction in job. It also involves the employees' enthusiasm in carrying out the job.

## **Values:**

Values defined in Organizational Behavior as the collective conceptions of what is considered good, desirable, and proper or bad, undesirable, and improper in a culture.

## **Characteristics of values:**

These are extremely practical, and valuation requires not just techniques but also an understanding of the strategic context.

These can provide standards of competence and morality.

These can go beyond specific situations or persons.

Personal values can be influenced by culture, tradition, and a combination of internal and external factors.

These are relatively permanent.

These are more central to the core of a person.

Most of our core values are learned early in life from family, friends, neighborhood school, the mass print, visual media and other sources within the society.

Values are loaded with effective thoughts about ideas, objects, behavior, etc.

They contain a judgmental element in that they carry an individual's ideas as to what is right, good, or desirable.

Values can differ from culture to culture and even person to person.

Values play a significant role in the integration and fulfillment of man's basic impulses and desire stably and consistently appropriate for his living.

They are generic experiences in social action made up of both individual and social responses and attitudes.

They build up societies, integrate social relations.

They mold the ideal dimensions of personality and depth of culture.

They influence people's behavior and serve as criteria for evaluating the actions of others.

They have a great role to play in the conduct of social life. They help in creating norms to guide day-to-day behavior.

The values of a culture may change, but most remain stable during one person's lifetime.

Socially shared, intensely felt values are a fundamental part of our lives. These values become part of our personalities. They are shared and reinforced by those with whom we interact.

Since values often strongly influence both attitude and behavior, they serve as a kind of personal compass for employee conduct in the workplace.

These help to determine whether an employee is passionate about work and the workplace, which in turn can lead to above-average returns, high employee satisfaction, strong team dynamics, and synergy.

### **Types of Values**

The values that are important to people tend to affect the types of decisions they make, how they perceive their environment, and their actual behaviors.

There are two types of values;

1. Terminal Values.
2. Instrumental Values.

## Terminal Values

These are values that we think are most important or most desirable.

These refer to desirable end-states of existence, the goals a person would like to achieve during his or her lifetime.

They include happiness, self-respect, recognition, inner harmony, leading a prosperous life, and professional excellence.

## Instrumental Values

Instrumental values deal with views on acceptable modes of conductor means of achieving the terminal values.

These include being honest, sincere, ethical, and being ambitious. These values are more focused on personality traits and character.

There are many typologies of values. One of the most established surveys to assess individual values is the Rokeach Value Survey.

This survey lists 18 terminal and 18 instrumental values in alphabetical order.

They are given below:

Terminal Values	Instrumental Values
A comfortable life (a prosperous life)	Ambitious (hardworking)
An exciting life (a stimulating, active life)	Broadminded (open-minded)
A sense of accomplishment (lasting contribution)	Capable (competent, efficient)
A world of peace (free of war and conflict)	Cheerful (lighthearted, joyful)
A world of beauty (the beauty of nature and the arts)	Clean (neat, tidy)
Equality (brotherhood, equal opportunity for all)	Courageous (standing up for your beliefs)

Family security (taking care of loved ones)	Forgiving (willing to pardon)
Freedom (independence, free choice)	Helpful (working for the welfare of others)
Happiness (contentedness)	Honest (sincere, truthful)
Inner harmony (freedom from inner conflict)	Imaginative (daring, creative)
Mature love (sexual and spiritual intimacy)	Independent (self-reliant, self-sufficient)
National security (protection from attack)	Intellectual (intelligent, reflective)
Pleasure (an enjoyable, leisurely life)	Logical (consistent, rational)
Salvation (saved, eternal)	Loving (affectionate, tender)
Self-respect (self-esteem)	Obedient (dutiful, respectful)
Social recognition (respect, admiration)	Polite (courteous, well-mannered)
A true friend (close companionship)	Responsible (dependable, reliable)
Wisdom (a mature understanding of life)	Self-controlled (restrained, self-disciplined)

### Sources of values

- **Family:** Family is a great source of values. A child learns his first value from his family.
- **Friends & peers:** Friends and peers play a vital role in achieving values.
- **Community or society:** As a part of society, a person learns values from society or different groups of society.
- **School:** As a learner, school and teachers also play a very important role in introducing values.

- **Media:** Media such as – Print media, Electronic media also play the role of increasing values in the mind of people.
- **Relatives:** Relative also helps to create values in the minds of people.
- **Organization:** Different organizations and institutions also play a vital role in creating value.

### **Beliefs:**

A belief is an idea that a person holds as being true.

A person can base a belief upon certainties (e.g. mathematical principles), probabilities or matters of faith.

A belief can come from different sources, including:

- a person's own experiences or experiments
- the acceptance of cultural and societal norms (e.g. religion)
- what other people say (e.g. education or mentoring).

A potential belief sits with the person until they accept it as truth, and adopt it as part of their individual belief system.

Each person evaluates and seeks sound reasons or evidence for these potential beliefs in their own way.

Once a person accepts a belief as a truth they are willing to defend, it can be said to form part of their belief system.

### **Perception**

#### **What is perception?**

Perception is a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions to give meaning to their environment. Perception could be explained in various ways.

- It is the process of receiving information about and making sense of the world around people.
- It is also the process of deciding which information to notice, how to categorize the noticed information, and how to interpret it within the framework of one's existing knowledge.
- In simple terms, perception is how one looks at the world (e.g.) An American couple visits India for the first time. Both of them notice the open filthy gutters, beggars/lepers, narrow roads with pot holes, rickety autorickshaws, cheating cab-

drivers as well as the beautiful Taj Mahal , the enchanting Mohal gardens, the magnificent Fateh-Pur-Sikhri, the quiet Santhi Niketan etc., That is, both of them see the unpleasant as well as the pleasant things. The wife is more affected by the unpleasant things and she perceives that India is not a pleasant country, whereas the husband, who is more influenced by the pleasant things, perceives that India is a beautiful country. This shows that perception differs.

### Factors that influence perception:

Individuals look at the same thing yet, perceive it differently. A number of factors operate to shape and sometimes distort perception. The factors can reside in the perceiver, in the object or target being perceived and in the context of the situation in which the perception is made.

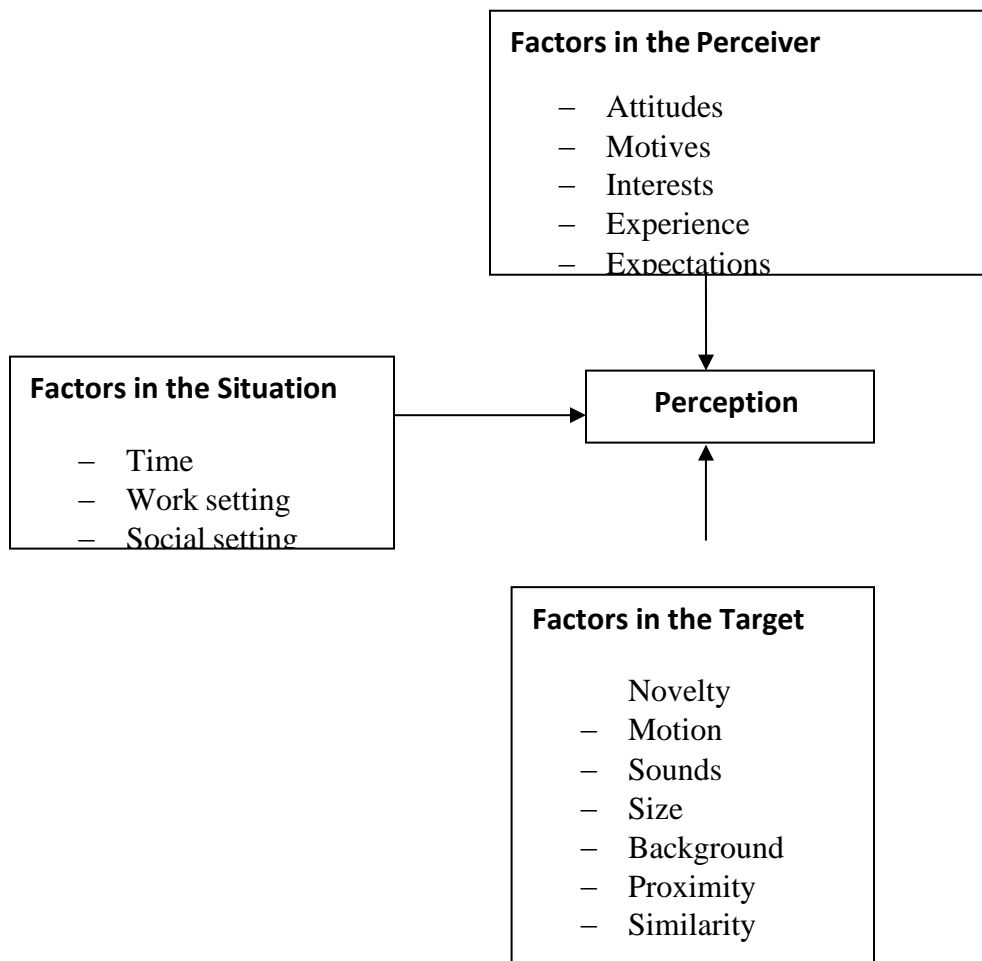


Fig: Factors that influence perception

## Perceptual process

Perceptual process consists of several sub-processes. It is an input-output process. Here, the stimuli, namely, the environment, subject, events or people can be considered as inputs. These inputs are 'processed' through selection, organization, and interpretation. The outcomes are opinions, feeling and attitudes etc. which ultimately decide the behaviour of the people.

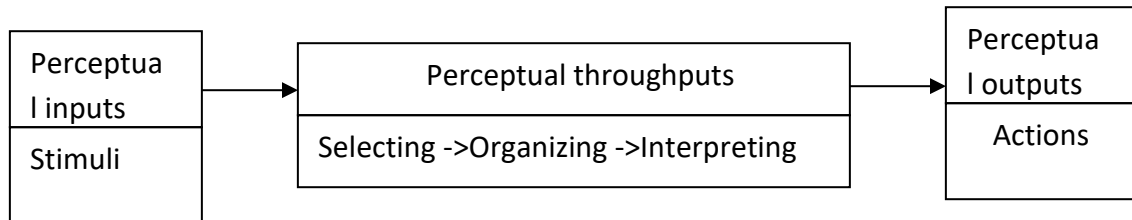


Fig 24a: Simplified Process of Perception

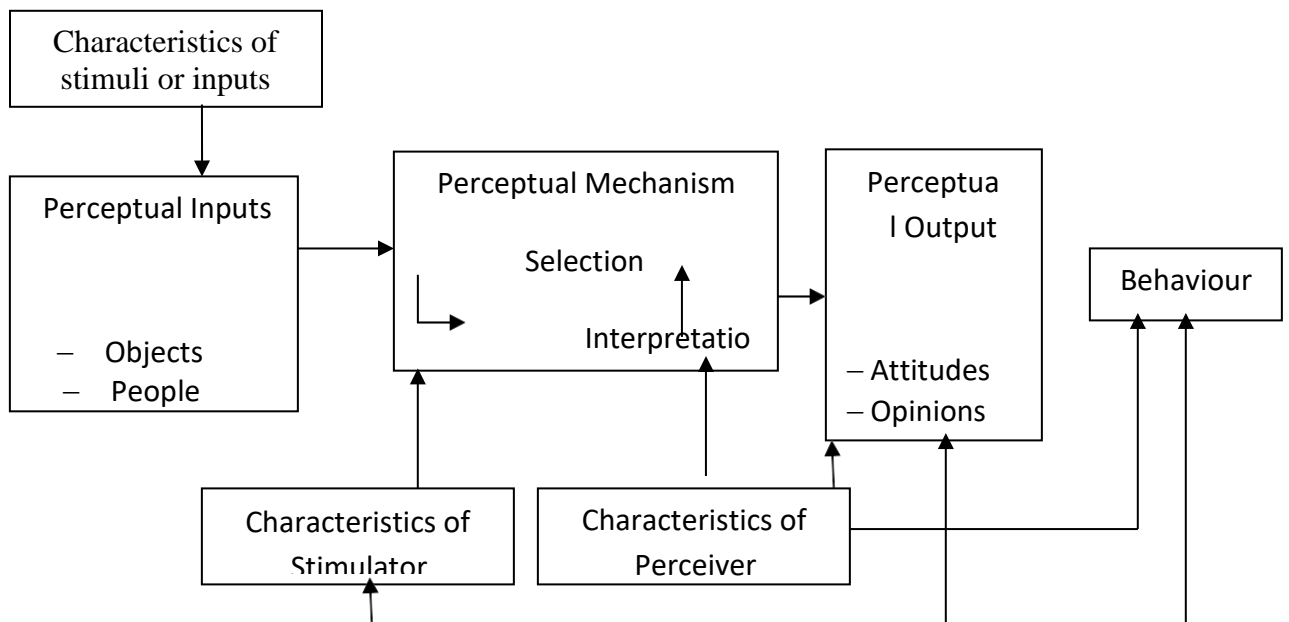


Fig: Complex Process of Perception

**Perceptual inputs:** Stimuli may be in the form of objects, events or people. [Taj Mahal, filthy gutters, cheating by cab drivers, beggars or Santhi Niketon as mentioned in the example]. Every thing in the environment where events occur or which contribute to the occurrence of events can be termed as perceptual inputs. Characteristics of stimuli



are important as these affect the perceiver. When the perceiver interacts with a stimulus, sensation takes place which starts perception process.

**Perceptual mechanism:** It involves three elements viz. selection of stimuli, organisation of stimuli and interpretation of stimuli.

**Selection of stimuli:** As it is not possible for a person to use all the stimuli which he sees in the environment, only some are selected for further processing while others are screened out [As the wife of the American visitor in the example who sees only the unpleasant things and the American who sees only the pleasant things] . These stimuli are classified as internal and external factors.

**Organization of stimuli:** The stimuli are organized in some form to make sense out of that.

**Interpretation of stimuli:** People interpret the meaning of what they have selectively perceived and organized in terms of their own assumptions of people, things and situations. They become judgemental and tend to interpret the things as good / bad, pleasant / unpleasant etc, in relative terms. Interpretation is affected by characteristics of stimuli, situations under which perception takes place and characteristics of the perceiver.

**Perceptual outputs:** Perceptual outputs emerge based on perceptual mechanism which ends with interpretation of stimuli. These outputs may be in the form of attitudes, opinions, beliefs or impression. These outputs along with other factors result in actual behaviour. As in the example of American couple visiting India, the wife interprets that India is not a pleasant country and may not visit again. She may even tell her relatives / friends not to visit India. But the husband who has interpreted that India is a beautiful country is likely to visit again and may recommend to his people to visit India.

Though perceptual outputs are important to affect behaviour, perception alone is not adequate. For example, when a person is impressed with the advertisement of a product and also recommend by his friends [stimuli], he may perceive that the product is good, but this perception alone may not be enough to make him purchase the product [behaviour] because purchasing depends on his capacity to spend, availability of the product and the need for the product.

## **Factors influencing perceptual selectivity**

Perception is a selective process as people can select only a limited amount of information in the environment. Through selection, certain aspects of stimuli which are admitted /accepted remain in the minds of people for interpretation. For example, when people read newspapers, they do not read all the columns; they concentrate on the items in which they are interested. Perceptual selectivity is caused by two categories i.e. external and internal

### **External factors in perceptual selectivity:**

**Size:** Size affects attraction of the perceiver. Generally bigger the size, higher is the probability of getting attracted. Bigger letters in the newspapers, large screens, tall and hefty people, big buildings etc, attract people's attention easily. Many a time miniatures such as replicas of buildings, books etc also get noticed by people.

**Intensity:** The intensity principle of attention suggests that higher the intensity of the external stimulus, the more likely it is to be perceived. A loud voice, strong odour or bright light is noticed more as compared to feeble voice, weak odour or dim light.

**Repetition:** Repeated external stimulus is more likely to get noticed. Repetition increases people's sensitivity or alertness to the stimulus. Advertisers use this principle to attract consumers' attention. In organizations also repeated instructions will have more effect than one-time instruction.

**Familiarity:** Familiar situation or events in familiar situation, familiar jargons or familiar people draw attention. E.g. Same sales-persons in a departmental store draw the attention of the customers. Familiar or known faces in a crowd or a foreign land certainly attract one's attention.

**Novelty:** Novel events and situations attract attention. People who do things differently such as sculpturing on rice granules, preparing the smallest bible, "fire eaters", people with long hairs or long moustache definitely draw the attention of people. In organizational context, job rotation draws the attention of people because of the new jobs.

**Contrast:** When someone looks different from others, such as a tall man in a crowd or a dwarf among the tall, draws attention. When the entire crowd is in white and white, the only man in black suit certainly draws other's attention.

**Motion:** A moving object draws more attention as compared to a stationary object. People look curiously at a bullet train when it speeds at 500 km / hr rather than when it idles in the station. A fountain or waterfall draws more people than a calm water body. Signboards with flickering lights are easily noticed than normal signboards.

**Internal factors in perceptual selectivity:**

While external factors are related to environmental stimuli, internal factors are concerned with the mental makeup of individuals. Generally, people select those stimuli from the environment which appeal to their personality and compatible with their thinking. There are many internal factors which influence selection of stimuli.

**Self –concept:** The way a person looks at the world is influenced by, to a large extent, his self-concept or self-image. It can be considered as an internal form of getting attention and is largely based on an individual's psychology. Knowing oneself makes it easier to understand characteristics which they are likely to see in others. People select only those aspects in others which match their characteristics.

**Beliefs:** An individual's beliefs have profound impact on his perception. Thus, a fact is understood not on what actually it is but what a person believes it to be. The individual normally avoids the stimuli inputs which are likely to disturb his existing beliefs. According to psychologists, an individual indulges in self-censorship of communication or inputs to protect his own beliefs and practices and seeks out information which supports his beliefs and practices.

**Expectations:** Perception is influenced by individual's expectations. Generally, people opine that University rank-holders are sincere, studious and hardworking. The managers perceive that these people would do well in their jobs also and give them responsible jobs.

**Inner needs:** Need is a feeling of tension or discomfort. Need arises when a person feels that he is not possessing certain things. Hence, to fulfill their needs people select stimuli to suit their needs.

**Response disposition:** It refers to a person's tendency to perceive familiar stimuli rather than unfamiliar ones. Thus a person will select the stimuli which are familiar to them. In an experiment persons having more orientation towards religion were able to recognize 'priest' 'prayer' etc compared to the terms such as 'cost' 'price' etc.,

**Response salience:** It is the set of preconceived ideas which are not determined by the familiarity of the situations but by the person's mental makeup. In an organization, the effectiveness of functioning or profit may be viewed by the marketing people as a result of marketing strategy while the HR personnel may feel that it is because of good HR management practices such as

training, incentive etc., This happens because people are accustomed to think only in a particular angle of their interest.

**Perceptual defense:** It refers to the filtering out of those elements which are expected to create conflict or threatening situation in people. It is done by denying the existence/ importance of the stimuli, distorting the additional information to match their views or treating the disturbing stimuli as non-representative.

**Perceptual organization:**

Perceptual organization deals with the manner in which the selected stimuli are organized in order to make a sense out of them. While coming to a conclusion, people do not look into the stimuli individually or in groups; they look at the whole picture to draw any conclusion. They try to compare the available stimuli. People organize the stimuli based on several principles.

**Figure – Ground:** This is a tendency to keep one or two stimuli as the main focus and other stimuli in the background. That is, concentrating on a particular stimulus in relation to other stimuli. The stimulus which receives the maximum attention is called 'figure' and the other stimuli which form the background are known as 'ground'. In a text book the printed letters are the 'figure' and the pages on which the letters are printed are taken as the 'ground'. The effect of 'figure' depends on the 'ground'. That is, if the pages are light in colour and the letters are darker, the letters look prominent. Suppose the pages are also dark in colour, the letters lose their importance. Similarly, a lady standing among a crowd of men gets noticed easily whereas the same lady in a crowd of ladies does not get noticed easily.

**Grouping:** People tend to group many stimuli into recognizable category based on similarity or proximity. For example, the opinions of workers about the management are grouped together irrespective of individual differences as workers appear to be similar in their general attitude. Similarly, a group of stimuli that are close together is seen as one. The employees in a particular department, which is not showing adequate progress, may be termed as ineffective though there are a few intelligent and hardworking people because all are working together in the same department which is not making any perceptible progress.

**Simplification:** When people are overloaded with stimuli, they try to simplify them by selecting the important ones and ignoring the rest. Simplification makes things easier

for meaningful interpretation. For example, when there are many customers complaining regarding a particular product/service, the customer relationship manager tends to pay more attention to the few customers who are more likely to cause damage to the brand image than the other customers.

**Close-up:** When the available information is inadequate people tend to fill up the gaps by themselves to create meaningful information. They may fill the gaps based on their knowledge, past experience or hunches. In a simple example, the customers will be able to read the signboard of a particular firm or product even if a few letters are missing. In organizational context promotions are based on certain important criteria. Many a time all information is not considered due to paucity of time or unavailability of the information.

### **Stress and Stress Management:**

Stress is defined differently by different researchers/authors.

Steven L. Mcshane: Stress is an individual's adaptive response to a situation that is perceived as challenging or threatening to the person's well-being.

Stephen P. Robbins: Stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, a demand, or a resource related to what the individual desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important.

Ivancevich and Matteson: Stress is an adaptive response, mediated by individual differences and / or psychological processes, that is a consequence of any external action, situation or even that places excessive psychological and / or physical demands on a person.

The above definition has three critical components:

- Stress is a reaction to a situation or event, not the situation or event itself.
- Stress can be impacted by individual differences.
- Stress is produced only because of special or unusual situations.

Beehr and Newman: Job stress is a condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning.

In a nutshell, stress can be defined as an adaptive response to an external situation that results in physical/psychological and/or behavioural deviations for organizational participants.

**Distress:** Stress is usually thought of in negative terms. It is thought to be caused by something bad such as a loved one being seriously ill, failure in exam / job interview or poor performance appraisal report.

This is known as distress.

**Eustress:** There is also a positive, pleasant side of stress caused by good things such as getting a university rank, job promotion or even getting married. This is eustress.

**Stressors:** These are the factors responsible for causing stress.

Techno-stressors: Loss of privacy, information inundation, erosion of face-to-face contact, continually having to learn new skills, being passed over for promotion because of lack of knowledge are some of techno-stressors..

**Hindrance stressors:** These are organizational politics, red tape, role ambiguity and hurdles to personal growth and goal attainment. These have negative effect on motivation and performance.

**Challenge stressors:** These are high workload, time pressure, high responsibility and disaster management. These have positive effect on motivation and performance.

Stress is associated with demands and resources. Demands are responsibilities, pressures, obligations and uncertainties faced. Resources are things within an individual's control that can be used to meet the demands. Adequate resources help reduce the stressful nature of demands when demands and resources match.

### **Potential Sources or Causes of Stress.**

Stressors, the causes of stress, include any environmental conditions that place a physical or emotional demand on a person. There are many stressors.

**Extra-organizational stressors:** Job stress is not limited just to things that happen inside the organization during working hours. There are many extra-organizational stressors which are related to job stress. They are social and technological change, globalization, economic uncertainty, political uncertainty, family problems, relocation of family due to transfer and age related factors.

**Organizational stressors:** Though the organization is made up of groups of individuals, there are many macro level dimensions that cause stress.

Administrative policies and strategies: Stressors are downsizing, competitive pressures, merit pay plans, rotating work shifts, bureaucratic rules and advanced technology.

**Organizational structure and design:** Stressors are centralization and formalization, line- staff conflict, specialization, role ambiguity and role conflict, no opportunity for promotion, restrictive and untrusting culture.

**Organizational process:** Stressors are tight controls, only downward communication, little performance

feedback, centralized decision making, lack of participation in decisions and punitive appraisal systems.

Working conditions: Stressors are crowded work area, noise, heat and cold, polluted and strong odour, unsafe and dangerous conditions, poor lighting, physical or mental strain, toxic chemicals or radiation.

Workplace violence and sexual harassment: Stressors are physical attack / abuse, verbal abuse, vulgar comments / gestures.

**Group Stressors:** Group has tremendous influence on individual behaviour. The group can be a potential source of stress.

**Lack of group cohesiveness:** Cohesiveness or “togetherness” is very important to employees, particularly at the lower levels. Denial of opportunity for cohesiveness due to job design, supervisors’ partiality and other members’ refusal is very stress producing.

**Lack of social support:** Employees are greatly affected by the support of one or more members of a cohesive group. They feel better off by sharing their problems and joys with others. If this type of social support is lacking, the situation becomes stressful. Further, group-level dynamics such as organizational politics, conflicts with co-workers / supervisions or social dislikes / ill wills can lead to depressive symptoms over a period of time.

#### **Individual stressors.**

**Types A personalities:** Type A employees work for long hard hours under constant deadline pressure. They take work home and are unable to relax. They constantly compete with themselves setting high standards. They tend to become frustrated by work situation and get irritated with work efforts of others. They finally experience considerable stress.

**Personal control:** People’s feelings about their ability to control a situation are important in determining their stress level. If employees feel that they have little control over the work environment and over their jobs, they will experience stress. In many cases, it may not be job control as such, but the employees’ perception of fairness that has the resulting impact on stress.

**Learned helplessness:** Some employees just seem to have given up and appear to accept stressors in their work environment, even when a change for the better is possible. Some people are more apt to experience helplessness when they perceive the causes of lack of control are (i) related to their own personal characteristics (ii) stable and enduring, rather than just temporary and (iii) global and universal cutting across many situations.

**Psychological hardliners:** Some people “break down” at the slightest provocation, whereas others remain “solid” in the face of extremely stressful situations. Those who cope successfully with extreme stressors

seem to have a “hardiness” disposition. Once an individual becomes “tough”, he is likely to experience a greater variety of situations as challenging rather than threatening or stressful.

### Consequences of Distress

Stress shows itself in a number of ways. The symptoms are grouped into three categories.

#### Physiological symptoms

- Heart disease and high blood pressure
- Ulcers and headaches
- Sleep disturbances
- Increased illness

#### Psychological symptoms

- Job dissatisfaction and low commitment
- Anxiety and depression
- Moodiness
- Burnout: It is the process of emotional exhaustion, cynicism [depersonalization, i.e. getting detached from others] and reduced efficacy resulting from prolonged exposure to stress.

#### Behavioural symptoms

- More accidents
- Faulty decisions
- Higher absenteeism / turnover
- Workplace aggression
- Lower job performance

Low to moderate stress stimulates the body and increases its ability. But too much stress results in lower performance.

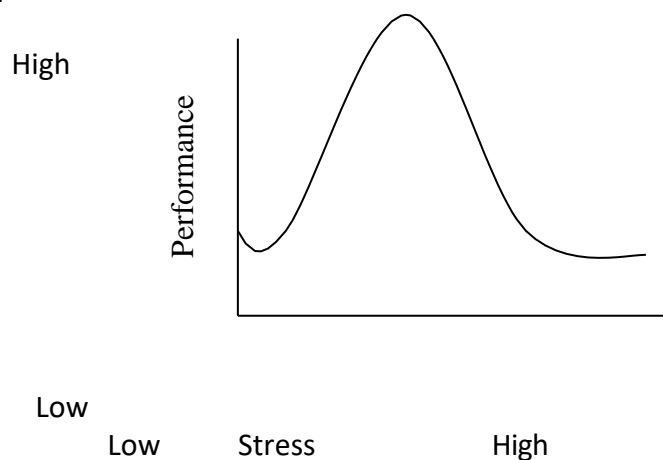


Fig: Stress vs Performance



## **Stress Management Strategies**

There are well tried-out strategies to overcome stress.

### **Removing the stressor**

The best way of effectively managing stress is by removing the stressors that cause unnecessary strain and burnout. Other strategies may make the employee “stress – fit” but will not solve the basic problem. It begins by identifying the areas of high stress and determining its causes.

- Monitoring stress i.e. changing the corporate culture to support a work–life balance rather than dysfunctional workholism.
- Giving employees more control over their work and work environment
- Selecting and assigning employees to positions that match their competencies.
- Minimizing noise and safety risk.
- Reducing workplace harassment through clear guidelines and feedback system.
- Removing role ambiguity.
- Breaking large tasks into smaller ones for easy accomplishment
- Developing interpersonal skills.

### **Work – life balance initiatives**

**Flexible work time:** Nowadays many firms, particularly in IT and IT–enabled industries, are flexible on the hours, days and amounts of time employees work.

**Job sharing:** Job sharing splits a career position among people so that the employees experience less time – based stress.

**Telecommuting:** This reduces the time and stress of commuting to work. This helps to attend to family obligations.

**Personal leave:** Extended maternity, paternity and personal leave to care for a new family or to take advantage of personal experience.

**Child care support:** On-site or subsidized child care facilities reduce stress as employees need not rush to drop off or pick up children. They need not worry about the well-being of their children during working hours.

### **Withdrawing from the stressor**

Though removing the stressor is the ideal solution, it may not be feasible always. An alternative strategy is to permanently or temporarily removing the employees from the stressor. Permanent withdrawal is carried out by transferring people to jobs that fit their competencies and values. Temporarily withdrawing

from stressors is the most frequent way. Personal leave, vacations and sabbatical assignments are temporary withdrawals for a longer period.

### **Changing stress perceptions**

Employees often experience different levels of stress in the same situation as they have different levels of self-confidence and optimism. Confidence and self-esteem are to be strengthened so that job challenges are not perceived as threatening. Self-leadership practices and positive self-talk can boost self-confidence.

### **Controlling consequences of stress**

Coping with workplace stress also involves controlling its consequences. Fitness centers help employees to keep fit. Physical exercise reduces physiological consequences of stress by helping employees moderate their breathing and heart rates, muscle tension and stomach acidity. Physiological consequences of stress can also be reduced through relaxation and meditation. Wellness programmers educate and support employees in better nutrition and fitness, regular sleep and other good health habits.

### **Employee assistance programmes**

These are counseling services that help employee overcome personal or organization's stressors. They improve the coping mechanism of stress. Some companies offer post trauma stress counseling. Counseling for family problems is common. Counseling helps employees to understand the stressors and acquire stress management skills.

### **Receiving social support [Networking]**

Social support refers to a person's interpersonal transactions with others. It involves providing emotional or informational support to reduce stress. Social support from co-workers, supervisors, family members, friends and others is an important stress management practice. This benefit occurs only when the stressed individual asks for support and not when the support is imposed by others. Social support reduces stress in three ways:

- Employees improve their perceptions that they are valued and worthy.
- Social support provides information to help employees interpret, comprehend and remove stressors.
- Emotional support from others can directly help to reduce the stress experience.

Organizations can facilitate social support by providing opportunities for social interaction among employees as well as their families. Mentoring relationships with more senior employees may help junior

employees cope with organizational stressors.

In addition to the above, stress could be reduced through **counseling** and **mentoring**.

### **Counseling:**

Counseling is a discussion between an employee [Counselee], who is having an emotion-oriented mental problem, with an expert or senior employee [Counselor], who helps the employee to cope with the stress.

- Counseling helps improve employees' mental health and well-being such as feeling comfortable about themselves, having good opinion about others, and possessing ability to meet the demands of life.
- It is an exchange of ideas, opinions and feelings between two people and hence it is an act of communication.
- Counseling makes employees more cooperate and employees try to forget their personal problems. This may improve organizational performance.
- Counseling may be performed by both professionals and nonprofessionals. A HR manager, a supervisor and even a friend may provide counseling. Therapists and personal physicians offer counseling in complicated cases.
- As counseling is confidential, employees feel free to discuss openly about their problems, both personal and job-oriented. Employees who experience stress in the new job and those who suffer mental agony due to the death of dear ones may also attend counseling.

### **Need for counseling**

- People seek counseling for a variety of problems, including stress. Old employees who feel insecure about retirement, those who are hesitant to take up additional responsibilities on promotion and new employees who find it difficult to settle in their jobs need counseling.
- Though emotions, given by nature, make people human, there are chances that, emotions can get out of control and cause workers to indulge in certain activities which are harmful to themselves as well as to the organization. When employees get emotionally upset due to trifling conflicts, they may even leave the organization. Managements want their employees mentally stable to engage in constructive work.

### **Functions of counseling**

The general objectives of counseling are to help employees:

- develop more self confidence
- understand the situations and act accordingly
- improve self-control and

- enhance ability for effective execution of work.

The objectives are achieved through one or more of the following functions: **Advice:** It is telling or coaching a person what to do and what not to do. Giving advice is not an easy task. Before offering advice the counselor must understand the problems faced by the counselee thoroughly and should have a plan of action. Sometimes the counselee, who gets advice, may feel inferior and dependent on the counselor. Nevertheless, advice occurs in routine counseling because counselees expect the same.

**Reassurance:** Reassurance is a method of giving the affected employees some courage to face the problem and making them confident to pursue a suitable course of action. It is more of encouragement. However, the problem is that the counselees do not accept reassurance as easily as they may feel that the counselor has not understood the problem in depth. Initially reassurance may give some sort of temporary self-confidence but it may fade away when the problem recurs. Sometimes the false sense of confidence may lead the counselee to make poor decisions.

**Communication:** It is providing information and understanding the problem for effective solution. Counseling helps both downward and upward communication.

**Release of emotional tension:** It is an important function of counseling. The emotional release of tension is sometimes called emotional catharsis.

- People tend to feel free whenever they get an opportunity to tell someone about their problems.
- The tension begins to subside when the problem being faced by the stressed person is narrated to a sympathetic listener. They feel relaxed.
- Though release of tension does not necessarily solve a problem it enables the affected person think coherently and take constructive decision.
- Sometimes the problem may disappear along with the release of tension.

**Clarified thinking:** It is to encourage a counselee for coherent, rational and mature thought. Though clarified thinking tends to be a normal result of emotional stress, a skilled and experience counselor can accelerate its process. Here, the counselor only clarifies a thought and does not tell whether it is right or wrong. Clarified thinking occurs during the course of counseling relationship. The end result of clarified thinking is making the counselee accept responsibility for emotional problems and to be more realistic in solving them.

**Reorientation:** It is more than emotional release and clarified thinking. This involves encouraging an internal change in goals, values and and mental models. It helps people recognize and accept their own limitation. Reorientation is quite useful in helping alcoholics return to normalcy or to treat a person

with the potential for violence. Reorientation is normally done by trained professional counselors who know its uses and limitations.

### Types of counseling

Depending on the amount of direction given by a counselor, counseling is classified into three types. At one end there is full direction known as directive counseling. The other end, where there is no direction, is nondirective counseling. Between the two extremes is participative counseling.

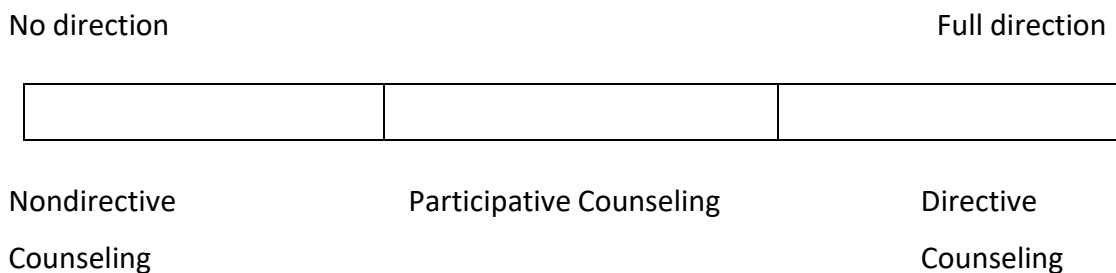


Fig: Types of counseling

### Directive Counseling

- Directive counseling involves listening to the counselee's problems, deciding the course of action by the counselor in consultation with the counselee and telling and motivating the counselee to do it.
- Though advice is the major function, it includes reassurance, communication and emotional release and to some extent clarifying thinking process. Generally, there is no reorientation in directive counseling.
- As advice alone is not liked by counselees, the directive counselor must be a good listener to help counselee release his / her emotions.
- A good communication gives reassurance to counselee.
- A combination of advice and reassurance gives more courage to take a helpful action that may support the counselee.

### Nondirective counseling

It is the process of skillfully listening to the counselee and encouraging him / her to explain the problems, understanding them and determining appropriate action. As this focuses on the

counselee rather than on the counselor to judge and take advice it is also called client-centered counseling.

## Understanding work teams in Organizational behavior

Work teams imply a high degree of coordination among their members, along with a shared belief that winning (achieving team goals) is not only desirable but the very reason for the team's existence. Any team is therefore a group, but only some groups have the high degree of interdependence and commitment to success we associate with a team.

Although the desire to achieve high levels of commitment and coordination is common among organizations using teamwork, the nature of specific teams varies considerably.

Two major dimensions along which teams differ are differentiation of team roles and integration into the organization.

- i. **Differentiation:** is the extent to which team members are specialized relative to others in the organization.
- ii. **Integration:** is the degree to which the team must coordinate with managers, employees, suppliers and customers outside the team.

### Types of Teams

Based on their objectives teams may be classified as problem-solving teams, self-managed teams and cross-functional teams.

1. **Problem-Solving Teams:** Problem-solving teams consists of groups of 5 – 10 employees from the same department who meet for a few hours each week to discuss ways of improving quality, efficiency and the work environment. These members share ideas or offer suggestions on how work processes and methods can be improved. Problem-solving teams meet regularly to discuss their quality problems, investigate causes of the problems recommend solutions and take corrective actions.
2. **Self-Managed Work Teams:** A self-managed team includes collective control over the pace of work, determination of work assignments, organization of breaks, and collective choice of inspection procedures. Fully self-managed work teams even select their own members and have the members evaluate each others performance. As a result, supervisory positions take on decreased importance and may even be eliminated. These teams do their own scheduling, rotate jobs on their own, establish production targets, set pay scales that are linked to skills, fire coworkers and do the hiring.
3. **Cross-Functional Teams:** Cross-functional teams are made up of employees from about the same hierarchical level, but from different work areas, who come together to accomplish a task. Cross-functional teams are an effective way to allow people from diverse areas within an organization (or even between organization) to exchange information, develop new ideas and solve problems and coordinate complex projects. These teams are not easy to manage. Their early stages of development are often very time consuming as members learn to work with diversity and complexity. It takes time to build trust and teamwork, especially among people from different backgrounds, with different experiences and perspectives.

There are two types of cross-functional teams. They are: -

**Task force:** It is nothing other than a temporary cross-functional team.

**Committees:** Composed of groups made up of members from across departmental lines.

## **Conflict Management**

### **What is Conflict?**

Conflict is a process in which one person/group/organization feels/perceives that its interests or needs are opposed/challenged or negatively affected or about to be affected by other person/group/organization. Conflict occurs at different levels viz organizational, intergroup, interpersonal and intra personal.

### **How Conflict is viewed?**

- \* Traditional view: Any conflict is harmful to individual/group/organization and must be avoided
- It is seen as a dysfunctional outcome resulting from poor communication, lack of openness, trust and failure of managers to attend to the needs and aspirations of their employees.
- It emphasizes that causes of conflict must be identified and corrected to improve performance.

This view is not supported by many researchers and practicing consultants.

- \* Human Relations View:
  - Conflict is natural and occurs in all groups and organizations.
  - As conflict is inevitable it must be accepted.
  - It cannot be eliminated.
  - Sometimes conflict may improve the group's performance.
- \* Interactionist View:
  - Conflict must be encouraged as peaceful and cooperative group becomes static and nonresponsive to change and innovation.
  - When there is no conflict, things are taken for granted and only routine work continues.
  - There must be a minimal level of conflict to keep the group viable, self-critical and creative.

This view does not suggest that all conflicts are good. Some conflicts are functional i.e. they support

the goals of the group and improve its performance. There are some conflicts, which hinder group performance; these are dysfunctional or destructive.

### Types of Conflict

Whether a conflict is functional or dysfunctional depends on the type of conflict. There are different types of conflict.

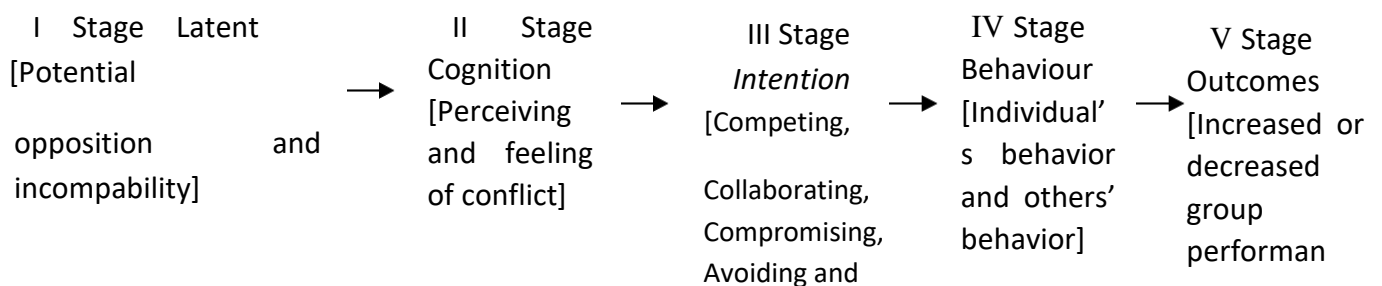
**Task Conflict:** It is related to the content and goals of the work. Low to moderate levels of task conflict increases group performance as it stimulates discussion and generates new ideas to perform certain tasks.

**Process Conflict:** It is concerned with how the work gets done. For process conflict to be functional and productive, it must be kept at low level. When there is intense argument about who should do, what should be done or when to be done it becomes dysfunctional.

**Relationship Conflict:** It focuses on interpersonal relationships. This conflict is always dysfunctional. Friction and interpersonal animosity inherent in relationship conflicts increase personality clashes and decrease mutual understanding hindering completion of organizational tasks.

### Stages of Conflict

Five stages have been identified in conflict process viz. Latent, Cognition, Intention, Behaviour and Outcomes.





### *I* stage: Latent and Potential Opposition of Incompatibility

This is the initial stage where conditions prevail to create opportunities for conflict. The conditions or causes or sources of conflict are goals, values, tasks, resources, rules, communication, structure of organization and personal variables. When individuals differ in their ideas/perceptions toward goals, values, tasks, rules, allocation of resources and structure of organization and when the communication is not open there is potential for conflict.

### *II* Stage: Cognition (perceiving and feeling of conflict)

At the second stage, the parties perceive that there is conflict as one's statements and actions are not compatible with others. When the parties feel there is conflict they get emotional leading to anxiety, tension, frustration or hostility.

### *III* Stage: Intention

Knowing one party's intentions is essential to understand how he/she responds to other's behavior. Many conflicts arise merely by one party attributing the wrong intentions to the other party

The five conflict handling intentions are:

Competing: It is one person seeking to satisfy his own desire regardless of other's interest.

Collaborating: Here parties try to solve a problem by clarifying differences rather than by accommodating various views.

Compromising: It is sharing of interests. There is no clear winner or loser. Each party gives up something.

Avoiding: It is trying to ignore a conflict and avoiding others in the conflict.

Accommodating: It is self-sacrificing i.e. supporting the opponent's views inspite of not liking them.

### *IV* Stage: Behaviour

Conflicts become visible at this stage. It includes statements, actions and reactions. Behaviour ranges from minor disagreements through challenging, verbal attacks, threats, and physical attacks to destroying the opponent.

### *V* Stage: Outcomes

Positive: Positive outcome leads to improvement in quality of decisions, stimulation of creativity,

encouragement of curiosity, better communication, releasing of tension, self-evaluation and change.

Negative: Negative outcomes are discontent, reduced group effectiveness, retardation of communication, subordination of group's goals to individual's goals, threatening group's survival. There will be more of absenteeism, turnover and stress.

### **Sources of Conflict in Organizations**

In organizations there are many sources which manifest conflict.

Incompatible goals: Differences in personal goals or vast variation between the individual's goals and that of the organization lead to conflict.

Diversity of human resource: Different values, beliefs, experiences and training due to diversified cultures, gender difference, generation gap etc may result in conflicting ideas.

Interdependence of tasks: When group members are to share common inputs, interact with each other at every stage for completion of a process, receive rewards determined by other's performance or wait for other's output to initiate a process there will be conflicts. Higher the interdependence more will be the chances for conflicts.

Limited resources: When resources are limited and parties struggle to get the scarce resources, there will be conflicts.

Ambiguous rules: Absence of clear-cut rules and lack of demarcation of goals, responsibility or authority are potential sources of conflict.

Lack of communication: Many a time lack of opportunity, ability or motivation to communicate results in misunderstanding leading to conflicts.

### **General Categories of Conflicts in Organization.**

The major categories of conflicts are intraindividual conflict and interactive conflict.

#### **Intraindividual conflict**

Conflict due to frustration:

Frustration occurs when a person's motivated drive is blocked before he reaches a desired goal. The barrier may be physical or mental [socio-psychological]. The results could be aggression, withdrawal or compromise.

**Goal Conflict:**

In goal conflict two or more motives block one another. Types of goal conflict are.

(a) Approach-approach conflict: In this conflict the individual has two or more positive but mutually exclusive goals to decide. That is two or more good things are available but one has to choose only one. E.g. When an IIT graduate gets selected to do a master's programme in management in Harvard University as well as London School of Economics he/she will be in a dilemma to select.

(b) Approach-avoidance conflict: The individual is motivated to seek the goal but at the same time encouraged to avoid it. This occurs when the same goal contains both positive and negative consequences. E.g. The Indian parents want their only daughter to get educated in USA but they are worried about the American culture of freedom.

(c) Avoidance-avoidance conflict: Here, the individual has to avoid two or more negative but mutually exclusive goals. E.g. A HR specialist does not like to work in IT sector or Hospitality sector, but he has good offers from companies in these sectors.

**Role Conflict:**

Every person plays different roles [as manager, counselor, union leader, spokesperson, etc] and these roles carry different demands and expectations. These different roles lead to conflict. E.g. When a finance manager is elected as the secretary of employees' welfare association he faces a conflict. Will he ask for more salary for the employees or will he advise the management to curtail expenses.

Person-role conflict: It is the conflict between one's personality and the expectations of his role. E.g. An introvert appointed as a public relation manager. Intra-role conflict: It is created by contradictory expectations about how a role should be played. E.g. The chairman of a company wants the HR manager to deal with the striking employees with iron gloves whereas the M.D wants him to soft pedal the issue.

Interrole conflict: This conflict occurs due to differing requirements of two or more roles that must be played at the same time. E.g. A career woman is expected to be a caring mother of her new born baby all the time.

## **Interactive conflict**

Interpersonal conflict: This conflict is mostly attributed to personality problem.

Personal difference: As people differ in their family background, upbringing, socialization process, education, values etc there will be always disagreement leading to conflicts

Information deficiency: Lack of communication or misinformation creates conflict. Role incompatibility: Overlapping of roles and highly interdependent roles are major sources of conflict as everyone wants to do his own role adequately.

Environmental stress: Scarce or shrinking resources, downsizing, pressures due to competition, high degree of uncertainty etc are sources of stress-induced conflict.

## **Intergroup conflict:**

Competition for resources: Groups within the organization compete for budget allocation, space, supplies, personnel and support services.

Task interdependence: When two groups depend on one another in a mutual way or in one-way direction there will be conflicts. The more diverse the objective, priorities and personnel of the interdependent groups, the more conflict tends to be. Jurisdictional ambiguity: This arises due to overlapping of responsibilities. Conflict occurs when one group tries to take more control or take credit for desirable activities or give up its part for any responsibility for undesirable activities.

Status: Conflict arises when one group tries to attain a higher status which is seen as a threat to other group. When one group feels that it is being treated inequitably in terms of rewards, job assignments, working conditions, privileges or status symbols there tends to be conflicts.

## **Managing conflicts**

Conflicts can be solved through interpersonal approach as well as structural approach.

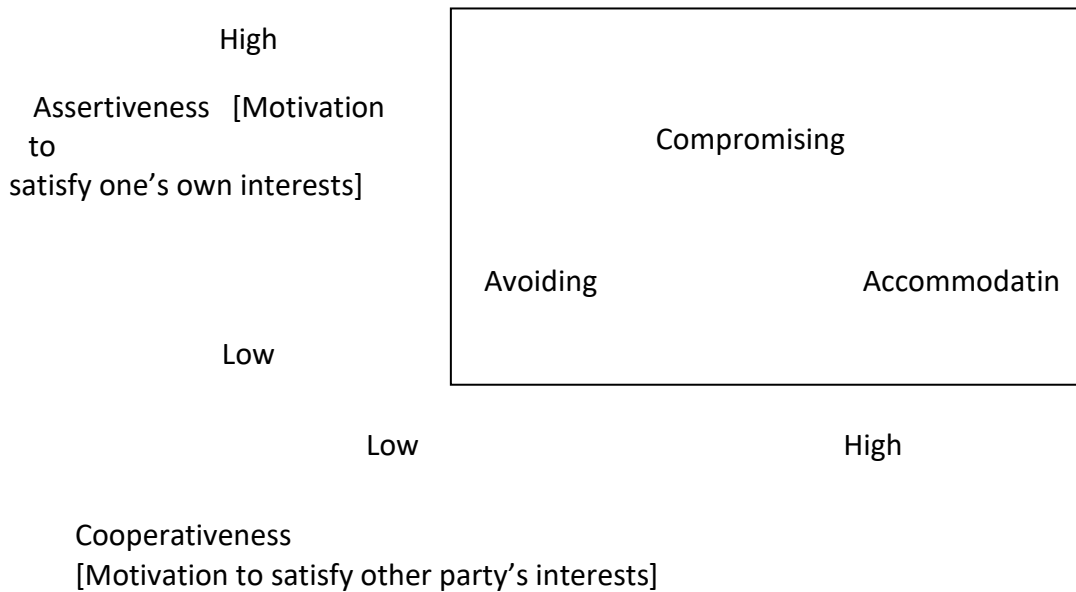
### **Interpersonal conflict management style**

In managing conflict, some attempt a win-win orientation. It is the perception that the opposing parties will find a mutually beneficial solution to their disagreement. The parties feel that the resources are expandable if they work together to find a creative solution.

Some others go in for a win-lose orientation. They believe that the resources are fixed and when one party gets more the other gets less. Conflicts tend to increase when a win-lose

orientation is adopted because people tend to rely on power and politics. Win-lose orientation may be appropriate when the goals of each party are not perfectly opposing.

Generally there are five styles of conflict managements based on the person's concern for his/her own interests and concern for other party's interests. Among the five styles, problem solving is the only style representing a purely win-win orientation. The other four types represent variations of win-lose orientation.



**Interpersonal conflict management styles:**

**Avoiding:** This approach is to avoid conflict situations altogether. It represents a low concern for both self and the other party. In short, the parties try to suppress thinking about the conflict. The parties may rearrange their work area or tasks to minimize interaction. As far as management is concerned it just ignores that there is conflict.

**Competing:** Here, the opposing parties try to win at the cost of each other. They try to be assertive to get their own way. It is a strongest win-lose orientation.

**Accommodating:** This involves accepting the other party's views/wishes without bothering for its own interest. There will be unilateral concessions and unconditional promises without any expectations. It is a total sacrifice of one party.

**Compromising:** It is an approach where a party's gains are affected equally by losses. It is searching

for a middle ground between the interests of the two parties. Both the parties lose as well as gain equally.

Problem solving: It is finding a mutually beneficial solution for both the parties. Information sharing is an important aspect of this style. It is purely a win-win solution.

### **Choosing the best style:**

The best style of conflict management is mostly decided by situational factors.

Problem solving style is the most preferred one in many situations as it optimizes the value for both the parties; it works well only when both parties have mutual trust and share information openly.

Avoiding though looks ineffective, is actually the best approach when conflict becomes socioemotional or negotiation is costlier than conflict resolution. However, avoidance should not be prolonged because it will increase the frustration of other party.

Competing style may be necessary when the party feels it is highly correct and confident and the dispute requires a quick solution. It is also necessary when the other party resorts to unethical behavior.

Accommodating style may be appropriate when the other party has more power and the issue is also not so important. But this may result in the winning party to seek more and more in future. In the long run, this style may lead to more conflicts.

Compromising is inevitable when both the parties have equal power and are under pressure to settle the issues. It is rarely a final solution as the parties always look for favorable solution.

### **Structural approaches to conflict management**

Conflict management styles are concerned with how the opposing parties approach a conflict. But conflicts can also be resolved through structural changes.

Concentrating on superordinate goals: Superordinate goals are the common goals such as for the very survival of the organization itself, which are more important than the conflicting goals of individuals or groups. By laying more emphasis on superordinate goals, the conflicts of individuals or the competing groups, can be minimized.

Reducing employee's diversity: As different backgrounds, such as education, experience, culture etc are the root-causes of many conflicts in an organization, reducing the differentiation through common experiences may help reduce conflict. It starts from selection of employees and training.

Increasing resources: As scarcity of resources causes conflicts, increasing the resources such as men, materials, machinery etc would help reduce disputes among the individuals/groups. Though the decision makers may not agree as it involves more money, a careful comparison is necessary between the costs of increasing resources and the costs of dysfunctional conflict.

Reducing task interdependence: Depending on others, generally, causes frustration resulting in conflict. To the maximum extent interdependence must be reduced to avoid conflicts.

Adequate communication: Though communication is the best way to resolve conflicts it is effective only when the differentiation between the opposing parties is low. Sometimes direct communication is a risky strategy as it threatens personal egos.

Clarifying rules and procedures: When rules, procedures, responsibilities and authority are clear without any ambiguity, the chances of conflict are less as everyone will try to work within one's boundary without trespassing into others.

- Throughout counseling, the counselor just accepts the feelings of the counselee, rather than judge them because judgment and evaluation may discourage the counselee to state the true feelings.
- The basic idea of nondirective counseling is to make counselee feel free to explain and decide for wise decisions.
- While counselor is the key person in directive counseling, counselee is the key person in non-directive counseling.
- In nondirective counseling, professionals accomplish most of the functions such as communication, emotional release, clarified thinking and reorientation.
- Unlike directive counseling, nondirective counseling emphasizes changing the person instead of dealing only with the immediate problem.
- Nondirective counselors follow an iceberg model of counseling, in which they understand that more feelings are concealed and they encourage the counsees to open up deeper feelings for better understanding.

#### Limitations of nondirective counseling

- It is time-consuming as just one employee with one problem may require many hours of counselor's time.
- It is costly because it requires professional counselors with professional education who charge heavily.
- Nondirective counseling depends on capable and willing employee who possesses a drive for well-

being, adequate social intelligence to perceive what problems need solution and sufficient emotional stability to deal with them. But many a time the counsees lack many of these qualities.

### Participative counseling

Since nondirective counseling requires professional counselors and is expensive and directive counseling is generally not accepted, nowadays, originations go in for participative counseling, which is a middle course between the two extremes. Participative Counseling (or cooperative counseling) is a mutually accepted

relationship between the counselor and counselee for cooperative exchange of ideas / suggestions to solve counselee's problems.

- It is neither counselor-centered nor counselee-centered. Here, both the counselor and counselee share their knowledge, perspectives, beliefs, values and assumptions for an appropriate solution.
- As participative counseling combines the ideas of both the counselor and counselee balanced compromise is achieved which generally includes the advantages of directive and nondirective counseling and excludes their disadvantages.
- To start with, participative counseling uses the listening techniques of nondirective counseling and gradually the participative counselor plays active role.
- The problem is discussed in a broader angle to enable the counselee take a different view of the problem.
- Normally, participative counseling involves communication, emotional release reassurance and clarified thinking.

**CASE STUDY:** In a factory, the male chief executive officer feels that women have an equal opportunity for advancement into top management, but the female assistant personnel manager feels there is no way she can break into top management's good old boy network. In another factory, the head engineer who tours the factory floor once a week in an electric cart feels this is a pleasant place to work, but a punch press operator thinks this place ranks right next to the State prison.

**Questions:** Q.1 Point out the reason for difference in perception in the first case? Q.2 Why does the engineer feel a pleasant place to work' whereas the operator regards it next to prison'? Explain the reason. Q.3 How do you visualize a relationship between sensory data and perception?

**CASE STUDY** In a large office an employee named Rozy may feel like a mere payroll number, but her informal group gives her personal attachment and status. With the members of her group she is somebody, even though in the formal structure she is only one of a thousand employees. She may not look forward to monitoring 750 accounts daily, but the informal group gives more meaning to her day. When she thinks of



meeting her friends, sharing their interests, and eating with them, her day takes on a new dimension that makes easier any difficulty or tedious routine in her work. Suddenly Rozy developed some interpersonal and intergroup conflicts with some powerful members of the group. The group did not accept her. Her work became more disagreeable and compelled her to a transfer, to absenteeism and to a resignation.

**Questions:** Q.1 Although informal groups may lead to several benefits, can these groups prove harmful? Q.2 Suggest some measures for Rozy to check the dysfunctions of informal groups?

**CASE STUDY** Management of your company has decided that a computerized control system is needed to make the company more competitive. It is now scheduled for plant wide installation in a few months. The purpose of the system is to facilitate planning and scheduling, improve material control, reduce inventories, evaluate labor utilization and better control maintenance operations among others. The introduction of the system will take a considerable amount of effort and work on the part of many people. However, resistance of some employees to accept it has arisen. Even without understanding the system, a few of the people seem to feel that in some way they will be hurt by it. Ashutosh Pandey, Manger of the Engineering and Maintenance Department, comes to you to discuss the problem. Well, Ashutosh, we should have the new system running in a couple of months if we don't run into some major delays may be, but I have already got some problems in my department. Two guys in the maintenance are really against it. Rajesh and Tarun never seem to miss an opportunity to badmouth it. What worries me is that they they will talk about the computerized system so much that others will begin to feel the same way about it. Is there anything we can do to counteract that? While you can't stop them from griping and complaining, you may be able to reverse their thinking if you handle them right. How would I do that? Ashutosh asks.

**Questions:** Q.1 What will you suggest to the manager, Ashutosh, whose people are resisting a company-wide procedure change? Q.2 What specific guidelines will you suggest for opponent employees to reverse their thinking and to seek their cooperation?