

PMIR-SEMESTER-II [e-Content]

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UNIT-II [PART-1]

ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

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In this unit, the discussion on individual behaviour will continue. We will examine one of the factors that influence individual behaviour.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the causes and categories of individual behaviour
- Describe the characteristics of human behaviour

2.2 FACTORS INFLUENCING INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOUR

It has been established that certain characteristics of behaviour are genetic in nature, and a human being inherits a certain degree of similarity to other individuals, as well as uniqueness in the form of genes and chromosomes. Some of the characteristics such as physical traits including physical height, slimness, dexterity, intellectual capacity and the ability to learn and logicalize are all inherited and have a wide impact on behavioural patterns.

According to R.S. Dwivedi, the structures of the nervous system play a significant part in the emerging pattern of behaviour thus bringing about the integration of human behaviour and personality. Some psychologists believe that some aspects of human behaviour can be explained in terms of neural activity and neuro-physiological processes.

These responses result in behavioural activity ranging from simple reflex action to the complex creative activity. Behaviour is sometimes easily explained by laymen as a reflection of the state of the nervous system. This causal relationship is referred to continuously during our daily routine impressions and conversations. For example, when somebody loses patience quickly, we tend to brand him as 'stupid', and the behaviour is explained by a lack of intelligence where intelligence reflects a state of neural system. Similarly, a person whose behaviour is depressive is considered to be having a 'nervous breakdown'. In other words, it is implied that a man exhibits a certain type of behaviour because he was 'born that way', again pointing to genetic structure.

Causes of Human Behaviour

As discussed earlier, both scientific thinkers as well as behaviourists have always been interested in finding out the causes for a given human behaviour. Science has always been involved in explaining a phenomenon by looking at its causes and then establishing a relationship between a cause and its effect.

Categories of Human Behaviour

There are two categories in which the causes of human behaviour can be classified. These are: (1) inherited characteristics and (2) learned characteristics. Let us explain each of these two in more detail.

Inherited characteristics

Some of the inherited characteristics that may or may not be changed by external forces and may or may not be important determinants of performance are as follows:

Physical characteristics: Some of these characteristics relate to physical height, slim body, vision, dexterity and stamina and have some bearing on performance. Manual dexterity, for example, results in quality performance in such jobs that require artistic maneuvering. Similarly, tall and slim people are expected to dress well and behave in a sophisticated manner, and fat people are assumed to have a jovial nature.

Intelligence: Intelligence is primarily an inherited trait, even though children of some very intelligent parents have turned out to be less intelligent and vice versa. It is also known that intelligence can be enhanced by proper environment or by proper motivation. Einstein was not considered very intelligent during his earlier years. In any case, intelligence as a trait is related to certain behaviour. Intelligent people are easy to convince if the point is right and they can be expected to be much more stable and predictable.

Sex: Being a male or a female is genetic in nature and can be considered as an inherited characteristic. However, it is highly debatable whether being a male or a female in itself is indicative of any behavioural patterns. Man is expected to be tough while a woman is expected to be gentle. Men 'never cry' and women are 'highly

emotional', are some of the stereotyped assumptions that have no basis in genetic influences. This behaviour are developed, if at all, due to differences in treatment that boys and girls receive in the family environment.

Age: Since age is determined by the date of birth, it is a kind of inherited characteristic. Age may affect the behaviour in physiological as well as psychological ways. Psychologically, young people are expected to be more energetic, innovative risk taking and adventurous, while old people are supposed to be conservative and set in their ways. Physiologically, with age, older people experience waning of some of their faculties such as memory, stamina, coordination, and so on, and hence the related behaviours change as well. According to Lehman, the peak of creative ability is among people between the ages of 30 and 40.

Religion: Religion and cultures based on it play an important role in determining some aspects of individual behaviour, especially those that concern morals, ethics and a code of conduct. Highly religious people have high moral standards and usually do not tell lies or talk ill of others. They are highly contented and thus strive for achievement and self-fulfillment. Additionally, religion and culture also determine attitudes towards work and towards financial incentives.

Learned characteristics

Some of the behavioural characteristics that account for enormous diversity in human behaviour are a product of our exposure to various situations and stimuli, both within the family and the outside environment. These characteristics are acquired by learning where learning is defined as a *'relatively permanent change in behaviour resulting from interactions with the environment.'*

These characteristics involve an individual's attitudes, values and perceptions about the environment around him. They are the result of parental values and expectations and the values and norms of our culture and sub-cultures. Children learn the need and values of being honest and truthful and the value of love and affection from the family environment. If the parents are always fighting, if the father is always drunk or if the mother resents the child, it is most likely that the child will grow up lacking the warmth of love and respect. Similarly, a loving family instills certain positive values about life in the minds of the children.

The physical environment itself has a profound effect on the individual behaviour. Persons who have come through the rigorous routine of the armed forces or students who have been active sportsmen may have learned the spirit of competition as well as cooperation. Similarly, students who have studied in religious schools and convents may have learned different values about truth and human decency.

Since inherited behavioural characteristics are more difficult to change or modify, it is the learned characteristics that the managers want to study, predict and control. Hence these will be discussed in more detail in the following units, but a brief familiarity with this factor is necessary here. Some of these learned characteristics are as follows:

Perception: Perception is the process by which information enters our minds and is interpreted in order to give some sensible meaning to the world around us. It is the result of a complex interaction of various senses such as feeling, seeing, hearing etc. Sayings and proverbs like *things are not what they seem* or *all that glitters is not gold*, reflect a sense of perception. *One man's meat is another man's poison*, is in a psychological sense an indication that different people see and sense the same thing in different ways.

Perception plays an important part in human as well as organizational behaviour. For example, if a manager perceives a subordinate's ability as limited, he will give him limited responsibility, even if the subordinate, in fact, is an able person. Similarly, we lose a lot of good friends due to our changed perceptions about them.

Attitude: Attitude may be defined as the organization of a perception within a frame of reference. It can also be described as the manner in which an individual behaves, reacts, thinks or perceives a particular object in a given situation. It is a tendency to act in a certain way, either favourably or unfavourably concerning objects, people or events. For example, if I say that 'I like my job,' I am expressing my attitude towards my work.

Attitude has three elements in it that lead to measurable outcomes. These are feelings, thoughts and behaviour. Feelings and thoughts can be measured by simply asking individuals about their feelings and opinions. Behaviour can be measured either by actual overt actions or simply by asking the person how he would act in a

certain situation. By measuring and integrating these three elements, a person's attitude towards a given situation can be established.

In general, a person may have a positive attitude that is good outlook of life, or negative attitude that means continuous complaining about problems in life. Organizationally speaking, an employee's negative attitude about work may be reflected by substandard work performance, excessive absenteeism, excessive complaining about work environment or disobedience to rules of authority. These attitudes can be changed either by simple persuasion or by training and coaching. Kelman has identified three processes that act as instruments of change. The first is compliance that is application of subtle pressure either through reward or punishment in order to change the behaviour, and expecting this change to be lasting.

The second process is that of identification with the person who is affecting the change and is acting as a change agent. This change agent could be a close friend who wants you to change and you respect and love him enough to do so to please him. The third process is the process of internalization that is more permanent in nature. This means that the new attitude is integrated with the other attitudes and becomes a part of the person's total personality. This change may occur through internal soul searching and the desire to change that comes from within.

Personality: When we describe people as quiet and passive or loud and aggressive or ambitious, we are portraying an aspect of their personality. A set of traits, habits and characteristics comprise the personality of an individual. This may also include conditioned responses that an individual may express to a set of given stimuli which in a way also contribute towards creating an impression of an individual upon others. This personality may come out as warm and friendly, or arrogant and aggressive. Many psychologists contend that personality traits develop in the early childhood years and very few personality changes can be made after the childhood years. There are different types of personality traits. Some of them can be biological in nature while others may be learned over a period of time. Examples of biological traits include physical build and intelligence. The traits which are learned over a period of time are patience, open mindedness, outspoken nature, introvertness or extrovertness in behaviour, etc.

Some of these personality traits are highly influential in certain organizational operations from organizational behaviour point of view. For example, Tedeschi and Lindskold propose that people who are open-minded seem to work better in bargaining agreements than people who are narrow minded. Similarly, people who are extroverts and outgoing are more likely to be successful as managers than those who are introverts.

2.3 SUMMARY

1. Human behaviour, a complex phenomenon as it is, is most difficult to define in absolute terms. It is primarily a combination of responses to external and internal stimuli.
2. It has been established that certain characteristics of behaviour are genetic in nature, and a human being inherits a certain degree of similarity to other individuals, as well as uniqueness in the form of genes and chromosomes.
3. There are two categories in which the causes of human behaviour can be classified. These are: (1) inherited characteristics and (2) learned characteristics.
4. Attitude may be defined as the organization of a perception within a frame of reference. It can also be described as the manner in which an individual behaves, reacts, thinks or perceives a particular object in a given situation.
5. When we describe people as quiet and passive or loud and aggressive or ambitious, we are portraying an aspect of their personality. A set of traits, habits and characteristics comprise the personality of an individual.
6. The behaviour approach is used for controlling and modifying the behavior of individuals and groups for effective performances

*****GOOD LUCK*****.