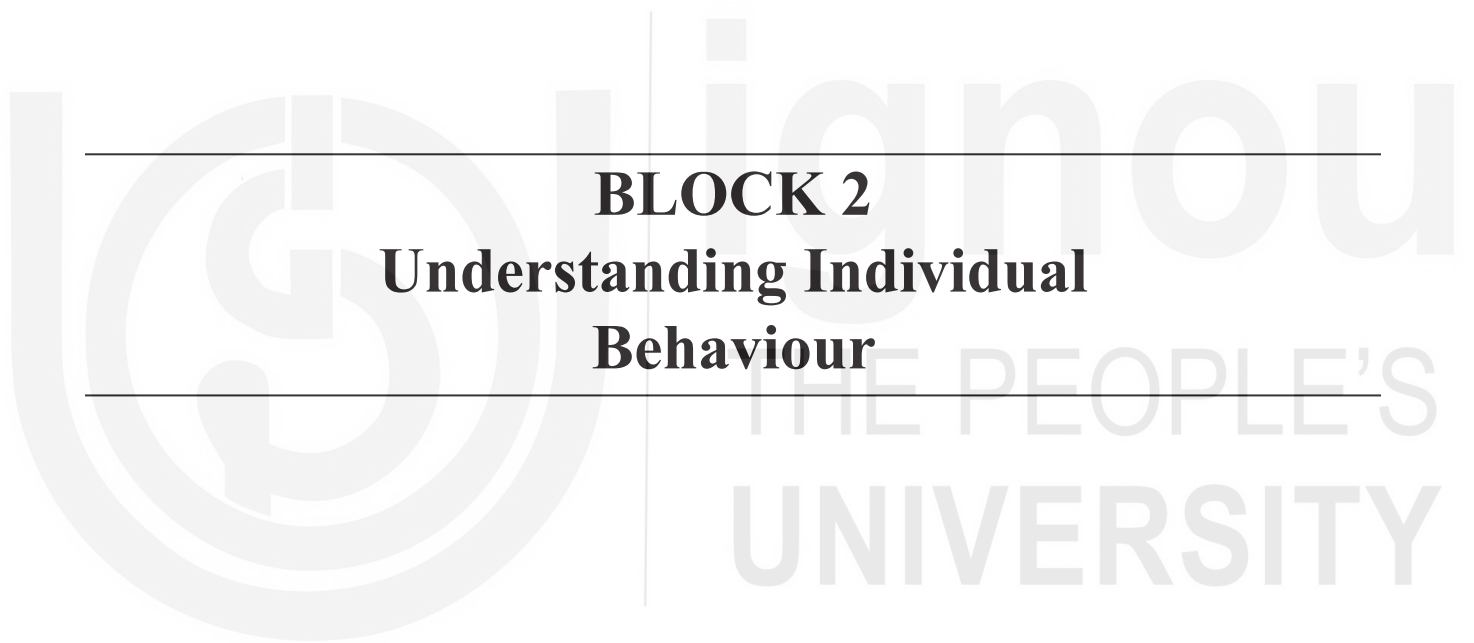

BLOCK 2
Understanding Individual
Behaviour



UNIT 3 EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES AND JOB SATISFACTION*

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Job Satisfaction
 - 3.2.1 Theories of Job Satisfaction
- 3.3 Commitment
- 3.4 Effect of Employees' Attitudes
- 3.5 Changing Attitudes
- 3.6 Conclusion
- 3.7 Glossary
- 3.8 References
- 3.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Acquire conceptual understanding of attitudes;
- Understand the relationship between attitudes and job satisfaction;
- List out the characteristics of a committed person;
- Understand different types of employee attitude;
- Explore the factors affecting employee attitude; and
- Discuss the barriers to change attitudes and adopt different ways to overcome them.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Attitudes refer to feelings and beliefs of individuals or groups of individuals. The feelings and beliefs are directed towards other people, objects or ideas. When a person says, "I like my job," it shows, that he has a positive attitude towards his job. Attitudes often result in and affect the behaviour and/or action of the people. Attitudes can lead to an intended behaviour if there are no external interventions. Attitudes constitute a psychological phenomenon which cannot be directly observed, but which can be observed indirectly by assessing its consequences. For example, if a person is very regular in his job, we may infer that he likes his job very much or is a disciplined person. Attitudes are gradually acquired over a period of time.

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Social psychologists give importance to both theoretical and practical aspects of attitudes because they have powerful effect on behaviour. It is very difficult to assess the type of attitude which causes a particular type of behaviour in different situations. Depending on the strength of an attitude, behaviour can be predicted to an extent. Attitudes have importance in one's life as they help a person to mediate between his own inner needs (expression, defence) and the outside world (adaptive and knowledge).

Attitude is the mental state of an individual who responds or is ready to respond for or against objects, situations, etc. with which his/her feelings, interest, liking, desire and so on are directly or indirectly linked or associated. During the course of his/her development, a person acquires tendencies to respond to objects. These learned cognitive mechanisms are called attitudes.

Meaning and definitions of Attitude

The word 'Attitude' is derived the Latin term 'Aptus' which means a subjective or mental state of preparation for action. Otherwise, an attitude is an effective byproduct of previous experiences and has its base in inner urges and influences of environment by which a person is surrounded. It can also be said that an attitude is the result of one's desires and group stimulation. It is a part of personality of human beings.

Herbert Spencer was one of the earlier psychologists who employed the term 'attitude'. Later, it was defined by different scholars in diverse ways. It is a concept of belief. An individual may or may not have any preference towards a particular object/thing/issue etc. One may accept a path, while others may reject it. All these beliefs and preferences are expressions of attitudes. Some of the definitions of attitudes are given below for your understanding (cited in Lakshmi, G.D., 2000):

"Attitudes are associated with likes and consequently have an emotional context" --- Norman Marries (1964).

The meaning of attitude is "behaviour of conduct regarding some matters" --- Fowler and Fowler 1968.

An Attitude, defined by Hariman in 1950, is 'A mental set to respond to a situation with a proper reaction; whereas sets may be temporary matters, attitudes are more or less stable.'

In 1994, Woodworth defined an attitude as "a set of dispositions (readiness, inclination, and tendency) to act towards on object according to its characteristics so far as we are acquainted with them".

Skinner (1966) defined an attitude as "a generalised disposition towards a group of people and it is promotionally tended".

Types and Components of Attitude

Further, attitudes are defined as "Complex of feelings, convictions, prejudices, fears and other tendencies that have given a set or readiness to act to a person because of varied experience" (Chave, 1928). These attitudes may be classified into four types:

- Positive attitude,
- Negative attitude,
- Neutral attitude, and
- Sikken attitude.

Let us discuss these attitudes.

1. Positive attitude: A person with positive attitude keeps a positive mind-set and thinks about the greater good, whatever may be his experiences or circumstances. One has to understand how much of positiveness of attitude is needed to keep a work progressing.

Persons with positive attitude generally do not care about the obstacles that they face in their personal and professional life. They tend to develop their talents and skills every day and try to overcome all the difficulties they come across to achieve their own goals. These people put efforts to identify their earlier mistakes rather than blaming others. And they try not to repeat them.

There are different personality traits which come under this category. Some of them are: Self-confidence, joyfulness, hardwork, sincerity and punctuality, decision-making, determination, satisfaction, cooperation, sharing, accepting responsibility for failures, etc. Some of these are elaborated below:

Joyfulness: Some people are always joyful. Self-confidence adds to joy and happiness. Happiness generates contentment and positive thinking. A happy mind-set is an abode for all good in one's life or organisation.

Punctuality and Sincerity: These personality traits are important to work with a positive mind set. Punctuality is discipline in time management, while sincerity is devotion to any task or mission.

2. Negative attitude: Some of the attitudes of an individual are harmful to total personality. Some of these attitudes are anger, frustration, dissatisfaction, doubting, jealousy, prejudices etc. In general, people with such negative attitudes focus on failures and limitations and ignore the positive dimensions of life. Negative people run away from tough situations. Negative attitudes always create hindrances to success even to optimum utilisation of capabilities. Let us discuss some of the personality traits that form negative attitudes.

Anger: Anger is an emotional state that adversely affects thinking and reasoning. A person with negative attitude will always be fault finding. Sometimes there may be no reason at all for getting angry, yet the habit of getting angry overpowers the man. This mindset is dysfunctional for constructive work.

Doubt: A person who has no confidence in himself is always doubtful and will have a negative mindset. This attitude will not let him progress in his work. Self trust and trusting others are essential for a positive climate for work.

Frustration: Frustration is the result of anger and lack of confidence. A negative person is a frustrated person. As said earlier, attitude defines the person. And the mood of frustration will create unfavourable results. A dying spirit cannot generate a living action.

3. Neutral Attitude: This is another type of attitude that is common. People with this attitude generally tend to ignore their problems in life, and wait for others to take care of their problems. They are generally victims of complacency and are often unemotional. They never feel the need to change themselves as they can simply live with the way they are. A person with a neutral attitude will feel disconnected quite often and that is why having neutral attitude is very bad and should be fixed as soon as possible. A person with neutral attitude succeeds only if he or she adopts a positive attitude. In most cases, it has been seen that the attitude adjustment mental therapies have led persons to a road filled with positivity.

4. Sikken Attitude: It is very difficult to deal with persons having Sikken attitude, because they find bad in everything and can change a positive idea into negative. Sometimes their negativity in thinking dominates others' thinking as well. In general, a person with positive attitude will be an inspiration for many in the team. Therefore, companies look for people with positive attitudes. People in general seem to stick around the positive vibration, as that will motivate them enough to progress in life. Bad or good, attitude has the power to change people's thoughts and therefore, their behaviour.

Components of Attitude

The composition of three aspects forms the bases of the attitude. The acronym for these three aspects is ABC: A- Affective (emotional), B-behavioural (conative) C- Cognition (information).

Information/knowledge which consists of beliefs, values and ideas of a person about the object form an attitude. This is known as cognitive/information component. This information in reality may or may not be correct. But this is used as key to an individual's attitude.

Emotional (affective) component involves our individual's feelings and likings. Behavioural component involves the behaviour of the individual in a specific manner towards an object. The first and second component can't be seen by others but surely enough, it can be inferred. To understand the third component, the first two components are essential.

Direct experience of a person: In association with previous attitude towards the objects, family, peer group, economic status, mass media etc, are different sources which play a major role in the formation of one's attitudes. All the attitudes of an individual may not be consciously held. In some cases the individuals may not be aware of their own positive/ negative attitudes and the sources of attitude which they possess. Attitudes formed by direct experiences resist change whereas attitudes formed by social learning may change easily. If the individual experience is positive, it may lead to the formation and sustenance of positive attitude.

3.2 JOB SATISFACTION

Job Satisfaction is a collection of positive or negative feelings towards one's job. It shows the amount of satisfaction towards the job. It is the result of the reciprocal relationship between the employee's expectations and the rewards that are received from the employer. Job satisfaction is a part of life and it is

influenced by a host of factors – the nature of the job, one’s inclination and the job environment.

Concept of Job Satisfaction

Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as an emotional feeling developed as a byproduct of job experience. It is a complex phenomenon which reflects and affects the cognitive, affective and motor behaviours of an employee. Feeling, thinking and action are involved in job satisfaction. Blum (1968) explained job satisfaction as the summation of likes and dislikes towards the job.

Job satisfaction is a general attitude which is the result of many specific attitudes in three areas, namely (i) specific job factors; (ii) individual characteristics; and (iii) group relationship outside the job.

Several theories concerning the sources of job satisfaction have been proposed in the organisational literature. These theories can be classified into one of three categories:

1. **Situational theories** which hypothesise that job satisfaction results from the nature of one’s job or other aspects of the environment.
2. **Dispositional approaches** assume that job satisfaction is related to one’s own mindset.
3. **Interactive theories propose** that it is developed as result of nature of the work and one’s own views about job

All these factors cannot be isolated from each other for analysis. The most notable situational influence on job satisfaction is the nature of the work itself—often called “intrinsic job characteristics”. Researches show that nature of work is the most important factor for job satisfaction.

3.2.1 Theories of Job Satisfaction

Hierarchy of needs

Maslow’s needs hierarchy theory was one of the first theories that examined the importance of job satisfaction. The theory suggests that human needs form a five-level hierarchy consisting of: physiological, safety, belongingness/love, esteem, and self-actualisation needs. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs postulates that there are essential needs that need to be met first (such as, physiological needs and safety), before more complex (such as, belonging and esteem) needs can be met.

Motivator-Hygiene Theory

Herzberg’s motivator-hygiene theory suggests that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not the two opposite ends of the same continuum, but instead they are two separate and, at times, even unrelated concepts. ‘Motivating’ factors like pay and benefits, recognition and achievement need to be positively addressed in order for an employee to be satisfied with work. On the other hand, ‘hygiene’ factors (such as working conditions, company policies and structure, job security, interaction with colleagues and quality of management) are associated with job dissatisfaction. This theory postulates that when hygiene

**Understanding
Individual Behaviour**

factors are low, an employee is dissatisfied, but when these factors are high, it means the employee is not dissatisfied (or neutral), but not necessarily satisfied. Motivators influence the satisfaction level of an employee.

Dispositional approach

This approach suggests that job satisfaction is closely related to personality. It postulates that an individual has a strong predisposition towards a certain level of satisfaction, and that this remains fairly constant and stable across time.

Job satisfaction and organisational behaviour

Organisational behaviour is related to the work behaviour of persons. Most studies in organisational behaviour include reference to job satisfaction, job involvement and organisational commitment. When a person is fully satisfied with his work in the work place, he will be sincerely committed to his job. A high level of job satisfaction develops a positive attitude towards the job. The effect of job satisfaction reflects on the performance of employees: productivity increases, absenteeism reduces and customer service increases.

Job involvement indicates a person's involvement in the work and the degree to which he identifies himself with the job. A person with strong level of job involvement takes care of the work that he undertakes. If he is involved well in his work, the productivity rate increases, the administrative authority recognises his worth and encourages him with incentives.

Organisational commitment is a mental state of an employee who identifies himself with the organisation and its goals. He wants to continue his membership with the organisation. It is clear that job involvement identifies the attitude towards one's specific job, whereas organisation commitment identifies the attitude towards the employing organisation. Thus, all the three attitudes are interlinked. Job satisfaction is required for job involvement which in turn leads to commitment to one's specific job.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. Explain the types and components of Attitude.

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2. Discuss different theories of Job Satisfaction.

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3.3 COMMITMENT

Commitment is the act of binding (intellectually or emotionally) to a course of action. When a person takes up a job, he is supposed to be making a commitment to do the job well, and his employer makes a commitment to compensate him for his work. There are commitments to quality of work, sincerity and integrity.

Characteristics of committed people

Committed people share certain traits that make them committed to their passions, whether it is football, education, career or family. Committed people have the following characteristics:

1. **Courage of Conviction:** Committed people value their passions strongly and move toward their goals with full force. Because they are so committed to their passions, they don't care about the disapproval of others. They are able to move forward toward their goals without fear of what people may think of them.
2. **Loyal:** Committed people have their priorities and they stick to them. They develop a routine that allows them to slowly and steadily work toward their goals. They are loyal to their families, their friends, their team, their sport and themselves because they are determined to succeed in various dimensions of life.
3. **Dreamers:** Committed people are committed and loyal to very specific goals, whether it is winning the Heisman Trophy, beating a personal record or becoming a doctor. Committed people constantly make new goals and are always striving to push their boundaries and achieve more.
4. **Tough:** People who are committed have a unique endurance that allows them to physically keep going because they are mentally wired to work endlessly toward their dreams. In other words, their workload does not seem overwhelming because they wholeheartedly want to perform it.
5. **Happy:** Above all, committed people are truly happy because they have a higher purpose to live for. Each day is one step forward toward achieving their goals and dreams, and they feel fulfilled knowing that they are always moving forward.

Organisational commitment

Organisational commitment is an issue which has been gaining importance over the years. It implies the degree to which an employee is loyal to his/her organisation. The management is very much concerned about the organisational commitment of its employees. Organisational commitment is found to have significant relationship with turnover, productivity and satisfaction.

If individuals are committed towards the organisation, they definitely work and achieve better and even outperform their co-workers and help gain for organisation a more competitive position and more profitability.

3.4 EFFECT OF EMPLOYEES' ATTITUDES

Employee Attitude

People enter jobs with different ideas, expectations, goals and attitudes towards their work. They also expect some recognition from the organisation. The most important attitude of an employee which affects organisation is job satisfaction. Generally a worker with positive attitude shows better performance than a person with negative attitude. So it is the responsibility of the manager to monitor employees' attitudes and take measures to curb laziness and negative attitude of employees.

Employees' attitudes and job satisfaction have close relationship. An employee will show positive attitude towards work when he or she is fully satisfied with job. Job satisfaction depends on pay, promotion, work, supervision etc. And these factors lead to organisational commitment.

Types of employees' attitudes

Based on the findings of different studies, attitudes of the employee generally fit into one of the six categories given below.

1. **Fulfillment seekers:** The people with these attitudes believe that a job should provide opportunity to show their talents. They would not bother about payment and other benefits.
2. **High achievers:** High achievers have certain ambitions to achieve in their life through their career. They show initiative in their work and attain higher positions as engineers, doctors and lawyers.
3. **Clock punchers:** They feel jobs and career are different. Their approach to job is ambivalent.
4. **Risk takers:** They are ready to take risks to achieve financial success.
5. **Ladder climbers:** They seek security in job and standing income. So once they get a job they will not try for better jobs. They will stay in a job for long time and with one employer. This attitude is opposite to risk-taking attitude.
6. **Paycheck cashers:** They give preference to jobs which have higher wages rather than jobs that have opportunity to show their talents. The factor of financial status dominates their thinking.

There are a number of methods for measuring employee attitudes such as conducting focus groups, interviewing employees or carrying out employee surveys.

Factors affecting attitude

Factors which affect the attitude of employees are discussed below:

Psychological: Attitude of a person is determined by many factors like ideas, values, beliefs, perception, etc. All these have a role in determining a person's attitude. Values are ideals or guiding principles in one's life.

Family: Home is the first school for the child to learn good and bad to develop proper attitudes. Family plays an important role in the formation of attitudes

Society: Every person will be influenced by the society and the culture to which he belongs.

His ideas, values and attitudes will reflect the conditions of the society

Economic: Attitudes are also affected by changes in position, compensation, financial conditions of the work place etc.

3.5 CHANGING ATTITUDES

Attitudes may change with time, environment and with proper attention towards them. So it is the responsibility of managers of the organisations to take care of the employee's attitude. Positive attitudes of employees towards their work result in better performance. An employee who feels that he is not taken care of by the organisation will show a poor performance because of his negative attitude. By providing rewards, by encouraging their efforts, by attending to their problems, administrative authorities can transform, wholly or partially, the negative attitude of employees. No doubt, there will be obstacles in the path of attitude transformation, but these can be addressed rationally. Therefore, the duty of the management is to identify these barriers and find out the ways of overcoming them and effectively changing the attitudes.

Types of Changing Attitudes

The changes in attitude can be classified into the following two types:

1. **Congruent Change:** Congruent change means, though the original attitude is not changed completely, yet the intensity of feelings of the attitude is adjusted. For example, a person who wastes money in gambling may gamble less through the impact of counseling. A negative attitude may persist but its intensity can be reduced.
2. **Incongruent Change:** A change in attitude from a negative direction to a positive direction is known as incongruent change. For example, a person who has been disliking his boss, starts liking him.

Barriers to Changing Attitudes

There are a number of barriers that prevent people from changing their attitudes. Briefly, these are as follows:

Prior commitment: Sometimes a goal-seeker who is committed to work will not show interest to change his course of action

Strong commitment: Sometimes commitment towards work will not permit the employee to change his attitude.

Publicly expressed attitudes: A person cannot change his attitude, once his attitude is recognised by the public and accepted by it.

Low credibility: It is the tendency of employees not to respond to the changes suggested by a senior because they do not have trust in him.

Degree of Fear: If high level warnings are not given by the employer, then there will be a low level of fear. On the other hand, if high level warnings are given, then they complain that their employer is threatening them. So sometimes it is difficult to change the attitude of employees by creating fear.

Insufficient Information: Sometimes people do not show interest in changing their attitudes until they understand that their boss is not satisfied with their attitude and this can affect their progress.

Lack of resources: when there is a gap between the needed resources for the fructification of programmes and the availability of resources, it becomes difficult for the organisations to change employees' attitude.

Improper reward system: An inadequate reward system in the organisation also changes the attitude of employees. For example, lack of transparency in the reward system may be a factor in hardening of attitudes towards the organisation.

Ways of Changing Attitudes

Attitudes can be changed by different ways which are stated as follow:

- Insufficient information develops negative attitude and we can address it by providing new information that will help to change the attitudes of employees.
- Attitudes may change through direct experience.
- By resolving discrepancies between attitudes and behaviours.
- Through persuasion of friends and peers.
- Since a person's attitudes are influenced by his peer or inference groups, one way to change the attitude is to modify one or the other.
- Fear can also change attitude.
- A situational change can transform attitude.
- Well established attitudes tend to be resistant to change, but flexible attitude may be more amenable to change.

In addition to the above techniques, communication between the employer and the employees, fun activities which help interaction between them, and involvement of the employees in the process of planning and development programmes can also influence the attitudes of employees.

Check Your Progress 2

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. What are the characteristic features of committed people?

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2. Explain the different types of employee's attitude.

3.6 CONCLUSION

Attitudes are important because they can guide thought, behaviour, and feelings. Thus, attitude change occurs when a person goes from being positive to negative, from slightly positive to very positive, or from having no attitude to having one. Positive changes help in the improvement of the performance. Thus, the biggest challenge before an organisation is to convert negative attitudes towards work and work plan into positive orientations towards profession and performance.

3.7 GLOSSARY

- Attitudes** : Attitudes are logically hypothetical constructs (i.e., they are inferred but not objectively observable), they are manifested in conscious experience, verbal reports, overt behaviour, and physiological indicators.
- Job satisfaction** : it is a feeling of contentment that an employee derives from his/her job. Job Satisfaction is all about an individual's feelings about the work, work environment, pay, organisation culture, job security and so on
- Commitment** : It is an act of binding ourselves to a course of action. An employee needs commitment to his role and organisation.
- Employee Attitude** : The performance of an employee in work reflects is determined by several factors, but more particularly by his attitude. Persons with positive attitude will perform in a better manner than those who are having negative attitude. It is the responsibility of the managers to monitor and transform the attitudes of their employees.

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3.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1. Your answer should include the following points:

- Positive attitude
- Negative attitude
- Neutral attitude
- Sikken attitude
- Affective (emotional), Behavioural (conative) and Cognition (information)

2. Your answer should include the following points:

- Hierarchy of needs
- Motivator-Hygiene theory
- Dispositional approach.

Check Your Progress 2

Employee Attitudes and Job Satisfaction

1. Your answer should include the following points:

- Controversial
- Loyal
- Dreamers
- Tough
- Happy

2. Your answer should include the following points:

- Fulfillment seekers
- High achievers
- Clock punchers
- Risk takers
- Ladder Climbers
- Paycheck Cashers



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UNIT 4 LEARNING: NATURE AND THEORIES

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Nature of Learning
 - 4.2.1 Principles of Learning
 - 4.2.2 Factors influencing Learning
- 4.3 Theories of Learning
 - 4.3.1 Classical Conditioning Theory
 - 4.3.2 Operant Conditioning Theory
 - 4.3.3 Cognitive Learning Theory
 - 4.3.4 Social Learning Theory
- 4.4 Conclusion
- 4.5 Glossary
- 4.6 References
- 4.7 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Acquire conceptual understanding of learning;
- Understand the classical conditioning and operant conditioning theories of learning;
- Differentiate classical conditioning from operant conditioning theory of learning;
- Acquire the knowledge about cognitive learning theory and social learning theory;
- Observe how learning is going on at different stages of human development; and
- Understand the theories of learning and their implications in day-to-day life.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Generally, learning implies socialisation leading to the modification of behaviour. However, it should not be considered that learning is concerned with positive aspects of change only. One learns good and bad things both. That is why one possesses virtues as well as vices. Learning changes the mode

of thinking and imagination. Practice also brings change or modification of behaviour. Therefore, practice is a means of learning. Learning occupies an important place in life. It is through learning that man brings changes in his instincts that appear difficult to be changed. Learning therefore provides key to the structure of our personality and behaviour.

Meaning of Learning

As young infants, we learn to hold ourselves upright, to walk, and to use our hands. Later, we learn to run, to play cricket etc. We learn to read, to write, and to memorise information to help us to pass an examination. Thus, we can say that except the simple innate reflex activities like eye-blinking, salivation, knee-jerking, sneezing, vomiting and coughing, all other activities or behaviours are learned.

Every aspect of human development is related to learning. Various modes of behaviour of a person are the outcomes of his learning. Every form of learning depends on maturation which enables one to learn. Learning is the basis of our ability and individual differences. Some people learn more than others, hence it makes them different from others.

Definitions of Learning

Various psychologists have defined learning in different ways. Some such definitions are given below (Lakshmi, 2000):

Skinner: “Learning is a process of progressive behaviour adaptation”.

Crow and Crow: “Learning is the acquisition of habits, knowledge and attitudes. It involves new ways of doing things and it operates in individuals’ attempt to overcome obstacles or to adjust to new situations. It represents progressive changes in behaviour. It enables him to satisfy interests to attain goal”.

Woodworth: “The process of acquiring new knowledge and new responses is the process of learning”.

Gates and others: “Learning is the modification of behaviour through experience and training”.

H.J. Klausmeir: “Learning is a process whereby a change in behaviour results from experience, activity, training, observation and the like”.

4.2 NATURE OF LEARNING

As learning is the process of modification of behaviour, it implies cumulative improvement which is arrived at as a result of various changes that take place while learning is in progress. It is growth through experience and improvement in efficiency of adjustment as a result of practice, insight, observation, imitation or conditioning. Learning involves in making the right response and in continuing to make it to a certain situation. It is a purposeful and goal-directed process. No good learning can take place unless the goal is clear and definite. The activity involved is both physical and mental and is in response to a felt need from within.

However, learning is not an individual matter; all learning is social. It takes place in response to the environment in which there are individuals and group patterns. We learn many things as a result of our association with people in our family, in school and colleges, on the play grounds, and in our profession. Much of our unintentional learning or incidental learning is the product of social influences; even our attitudes are coloured by the group to which we belong.

4.2.1 Principles of Learning

There are certain principles involved in the learning process. Some of them are mentioned below:

- i. **Universal:** Learning is not restricted to any particular age, sex, race, culture, time and place etc. So, it is universal in nature.
- ii. **Continuous process:** It is a never ending process that extends from womb to tomb. It denotes the lifelong nature of learning.
- iii. **Development through learning:** Woodworth rightly said “all activity can be called learning so far as it develops the individual. Development is a never-ending process as learning”.
- iv. **Dynamic and flexible in relation to real life situations:** Learning is not a static process, it is a dynamic phenomenon. The way of living and acquiring knowledge differs from context to context and person to person, hence, there are several channels of learning based on real-life situations.
- v. **As a means:** Learning is directed to reach goals purposively; therefore, it is a means to achieve an end and not an end in itself.
- vi. **Leads to adjustment:** Learning helps an individual to adjust himself adequately to the existing as well as new situations/ environment. Most of the time learning occurs by modifying, adapting and developing behaviour.
- vii. **Result of practice:** Learning is the basis of drill and practice, hence, it has been proven that students learn best and retain information longer when they have meaningful practice and repetition.
- viii. **Physical and mental maturity:** To learn anything, physical and mental maturity are necessary, otherwise, real learning may not occur.
- ix. **Transferable:** Whatever is learned by the individual can be transferred to another person with a positive or negative impact.

4.2.2 Factors influencing learning

The success and failure of learning in terms of introducing desired modification of behaviour of a learner depends on a host of factors some of which are listed below:

- | | |
|--|---|
| i. Personal factors | ii. Social factors |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical and mental health• Age | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Home environment• School environment |

- Maturation
- Emotional condition
- Needs
- Interest
- Motivation
- Abilities
- Aptitudes etc.
- Cultural context
- Learning materials
- Relationship with teachers, parents and peer groups etc.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. Discuss the meaning of learning.

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2. Explain the principles of learning.

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4.3 THEORIES OF LEARNING

Several psychologists have tried to explain how and why the learning process takes place. Abundant experiments have been conducted on animals and human beings. The researchers have come to certain conclusions that have taken the form of theories of learning. There are many theories explaining the modes of learning: 1. Trial and Error learning theories, 2. Classical learning theories, 3. Operant conditioning, 4. Cognitive learning theories, and 5. Social learning theories, etc.

Conditioning Theory

The word ‘conditioning’ means the process of ‘training or getting used to’ or ‘accustoming to’ a new situation or a stimulus. It is a process of self-substituting, the original stimulus substituted by a new one and connecting the response with it. There are two types of conditioning: 1. Classical conditioning 2. Operant conditioning.

4.3.1 Classical Conditioning Theory

E.L Thorndike and R.S Woodworth (1929) proposed Stimulus-Response (S-R) bond of learning. According to theory, a stimulus is connected to its response. These bonds between S-R may be motor, perceptual, emotional, and conceptual and can be organised into systems.

Later, the behaviouristic theory of conditioned response was put forward by the Russian psychologist Pavlov and is well known as Classical conditioning. Pavlov's experiments with a hungry dog led to the formulation of Conditioning Theory. Normally, a hungry dog salivates when food is presented. He started his experiments by ringing bell every time when food is presented. He repeated the same for a number of times. Finally, he rang the bell without presenting food. Even then he found that the dog salivated, since the dog had become conditioned to a response by salivating to the stimulus of the ringing bell.

Here a weaker stimulus (bell) is associated with a stronger stimulus (food). So the dog is enabled to transfer the response connected with the stronger stimulus. With these experiments, the terminology including conditioned stimulus (ringing bell), unconditioned response (salivation) conditioned response (salivation in the absence of food) has been introduced in learning. Pavlov's research was limited to psycho-physical nature. For example, a small child may touch a small kitten without any fear, but if anybody shouts every time the child touches the kitten, gradually the child will be afraid to touch it.

Educational implications: The theory of conditioning does not explain all types of learning, yet through this theory we can understand that repetition is of great value in learning things. Drill is necessary, but it should also be meaningful and motivating. Importantly, distracting and opposing influences should be eliminated during the process of learning.

4.3.2 Operant Conditioning Theory

E. L Thorndike in his S-R theory notes that the responses or behaviours are weakened or strengthened by the consequences of behaviours. This concept was refined by B.F Skinner and his theory is known as Operant conditioning. Operant conditioning means strengthening desirable behaviour by reinforcing it, and at the same time, discouraging undesirable behaviour. Skinner did a lot of research on the principles of Operant conditioning. These principles have been extensively used in research and in clinical and therapeutic settings. Basically, Skinner used reinforcers for changing behaviour. He created a learning apparatus box called the Skinner box. It is a rat box so designed in which every time when the rat moves towards the lever, it receives a food pellet. Thus the movement of the rat towards the lever is trained by giving reinforcement with food pellets. This idea of shaping a rat's behaviour was extended for shaping human behaviour. The key components in this experiment that are integral to achieving the modification of behaviour are timing and consistency that act as effective reinforcers. Skinner highlighted the importance of these factors in his experiment.

Timing: The time between the response and the reinforcer should be minimal. If the rat does not receive food pellet immediately after it moves towards lever, that behaviour will not be repeated.

Consistency: The rat moves towards lever only when it receives food pellet. The reinforcement should be given after every response.

Skinner developed the concepts of two kinds of reinforcers: 1. Primary reinforcers which are innate and have not been learned (food, warmth, sexual gratification); and 2. Secondary reinforcers stimuli which are provided externally. Further, B.F Skinner used the terms ‘positive reinforcement’ (rewards) and ‘negative reinforcement’ (punishment) for shaping behaviour. Though shaping is commonly used to train animals, it is also a useful learning tool in modifying human behaviour.

Educational implications: According to the theory of Operant conditioning, giving rewards to students reinforces the students’ behaviour. A desirable behaviour can be sharpened by using positive reinforcers.

4.3.3 Cognitive Learning Theory

In the previous types of learning behaviour, learning has been explained in terms of the association of stimuli and responses, but there are several human learning situations which do not involve specific kinds of association between the stimulus and response or between response and reinforcement.

In the 1920s, German psychologist Wolfgang Kohler studied the behaviour of apes. He designed certain simple experiments that led to the development of one of the first cognitive theories of learning which is also called ‘insightful learning’.

Kohler’s Experiment: Kohler placed a chimpanzee (Sulthana) inside a cage with a desirable piece of fruit, often a banana, out of reach outside the cage. To obtain the fruit, the animal had to use a nearby object as a tool. Usually the chimpanzee solved the problem and proved that it had some insight. The following description is typical: Sulthana is inside the cage and it cannot reach the fruit, which lies outside, by means of his only available short stick. A longer stick is deposited outside the cage, about two meters on one side of the object and parallel with the grating. It cannot be grasped with the hand, but it can be pulled within reach by means of the small stick. Sulthana tries to reach the fruit with the smaller of the two sticks. Not succeeding, he tears a piece of wire from the netting of his cage, but that too is in vain. Then he stares around. He suddenly picks up the little stick with the help of which he pulls the long stick. By using the long stick, he reaches the fruit. Kohler calls the cognitive processes underlying Sulthana’s behaviour as insight, a sudden awareness of the relationship among various elements that previously appeared to be independent of one another.

Certain aspects of the performance of chimpanzee are unlike those of Skinner’s rats. For one thing, struck by the chimpanzee, the solution was sudden rather than the result of a gradual trial and error process. Also Kohlers’s chimpanzee could readily transfer what it had learned to a novel situation. For example, in one case, Sulthana was not put inside the cage but some bananas were placed too high for him to reach. To solve the problem, Sulthana staked some boxes strewn around him, climbed the platform and grabbed the bananas. It means learning takes place or a problem is solved all-of-a-sudden rather than through trial and error.

Implications

- Learning is a purposeful and goal-oriented activity.
- Emphasis is given to the whole, generating the ‘Whole to Part’ maxims of learning.
- It develops higher order thinking, reasoning and creativity among learners.
- It evolves the attitude of problem solving.

4.3.4 Social Learning Theory/ Observational Theory

The Social learning theory has been propounded by Albert Bandura. According to Social learning theory, learning occurs through the social context. This theory suggests that a learner’s social interactions with other knowledgeable persons affect his learning. It focuses on attention, retention, motor reproduction and motivation as factors of learning. Bandura in his theory proposes that observation of others’ behaviour plays a leading role in learning. For example, a child learns to show love, anger or sympathy by observing the behaviour of elders. He also learns speaking, reading, and writing by observing his parents and teachers. After his studies, Bandura determined three salient models of observational learning:

1. Live model: It includes an actual person performing behaviour.
2. Verbal instructional model: It involves giving description of model behaviour
3. Symbolic model: It includes a real or fictional character demonstrating behaviour through TV, books, online media etc.

Bandura explains that the following steps are usually involved in learning:

- 1) **Attending and perceiving:** Observation of a role model catches the attention of a child.
- 2) **Remembering the behaviour:** The child remembers the actions and styles.
- 3) **Converting the memory into actions:** The child imitates the role model. A behaviour observed and remembered by the learner is analysed in terms of its acceptability to the learner. It gets transformed into action only afterwards and thus the observed relevant and accepted aspects of the model’s behaviour are imitated by the learner.
- 4) **Reinforcement of the imitated behaviour:** The child tries to change himself into the role of a model. The behaviour of the model imitated by the learner is reinforced for proper adoption and further continuance.

In this way, social learning through observations and modelling proves to be an effective means of learning many things concerning one’s behaviour. The impact of these observations is perceptible on his environment, expression of love, anger, hatred, companionship, friendship or solitude which collectively expresses his mode of observation and behaviour. All these reactions and

responses depend upon what has been observed, remembered, imitated and reinforced in the context of his experiences and models.

Implications

- Observational learning increases the knowledge of learners, retention and life skills.
- Various reinforcements and modelling can be used by teachers to increase the attention of learners.
- The learners follow the teachers having positive behaviours as their role model.
- Clear distinction between behaviours and their consequences can effectively result in increase in the desired behaviour and decrease in the undesired behaviour.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. Briefly discuss the concept of Classical Conditioning in Learning?

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2. Explain the Social Learning Theory.

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4.4 CONCLUSION

Learning can cause a lasting change in behaviour produced by experience. One of the most universal forms of learning concerns the reflex which is inborn and built in response to a stimulus. Through learning, a reflex response can become attached to a stimulus that does not originally cause the response. This process was demonstrated when Pavlov taught a dog to respond to a sound with the salivary reflex originally caused by the presence of food in the mouth. This type of learning is called Classical conditioning. Another type of learning by Skinner concerns Operant behaviour—the random or exploratory activities in which organisms engage, not in reflex response to a stimulus but as a self-generated way of operating on the world around them. In operant conditioning, the reinforcement is the reward. The rule is that the operant behaviour that is reinforced by a reward tends to be repeated, while operant behaviour that

is not reinforced tends to take place only at random intervals or when is abandoned. Cognitive theories emphasise the role of purpose, insight, memory, understanding, reasoning, problem solving and other cognitive factors. The cognitive learning involves information storage and processing without explicitly building up stimulus-response association or manipulation of the reinforcers. Social learning theory proposed by Bandura emphasised on learning through direct experience by observing the behaviour of elders or phenomena.

4.5 GLOSSARY

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|----------------------------|---|
| Learning | : Learning is behavioural change which results from experience. Learning is a basic and universal fact to be found in all behaviour. |
| Conditioning | : The basis for conditioning is using connection between stimulus and response. In Pavlov's experiment, salivation of a dog is conditioned to the ringing of the bell. |
| Reinforcement | : The term 'reinforcement' means strengthening the tendency of a response to be repeated. When an organism responds to a stimulus and that response is reinforced, it is probable that the same response will be repeated the next time when the stimulus occurs. |
| Operant | : An item of behaviour that is not a response to a prior stimulus but something which is initially spontaneous, which may reinforce or inhibit recurrence of that behaviour. |
| Learning by insight | : It is characterised by sudden grasping of the solution. The process of organising or reorganising or structuring or restructuring leads to a discovery |

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4.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1. Your answer should include the following points:

- Learning provides key to the structure of our personality and behaviour.
- Definitions of learning.

2. Your answer should include the following points:

- Universal
- Continuous process
- Development through learning
- It is dynamic and flexible in relation to real life situation
- Learning is a means
- Leads to adjustment
- Result of practice
- Physical and mental maturity
- Transferable

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1. Your answer should include the following points:

- Classic conditioning is a process of self-substituting.
- There are two types of conditioning: 1. Classical conditioning 2. Operant conditioning.

2. Your answer should include the following points:

- The Social learning theory is developed by Albert Bandura.
- In Social learning theory, the learning occurs in the social context.
- It suggests that learners' social interactions with other knowledgeable persons affect their learning.

