

BEGE -145

SOFT SKILLS





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School of Humanities

BEGE -145

Soft Skills

Block

3

UNDERSTANDING THE OTHER

Block Introduction

UNIT 1

Appreciating Different Perspectives

UNIT 2

Coordination with Others

UNIT 3

Understanding Disability

UNIT 4

People Management

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

BEGE -145 Soft Skills

As we understand, there are two types of skills that we identify both in our personal lives as well as professional lives: soft skills and hard skills. Hard skills are technical skills that have to be learned through external training and are usually job-specific. Soft skills cover personality-based traits that are key aspects of what makes someone a good fit for a given role and a productive coworker in a group work environment. We are generally aware of hard skills as they are explicitly mentioned. We have seen people guessing about Soft skills on many occasions.

You will understand through the course that Soft skills generally fall into the category of interpersonal skills and inner values. Unlike hard skills, soft skills are generally not learned in professional training programs and are usually innate or gained through personal development. A person with strong soft skills usually has great communication skills or a strong work ethic. Through this course you will be able to generate a complete understanding on key soft skills such as Self-reflection, Adaptability, Learn ability and Emotional intelligence.

We will also learn about Appreciating different perspectives and also about ways Coordination with others. There will be a detailed discussion on Understanding disability and People management

When we are discussing Soft skills, it is important to understand the process of learning to be creative. Critical thinking is a crucial component and requires detailed discussion and understanding. It is also important to discuss various aspects of Decision making and problem solving. Soft Skills also relate to a futuristic understanding and that will be discussed in the concluding unit of the course Hark into the future.

We are sure that you will enjoy studying all the units and also achieve complete understanding of soft skills in your mind and conduct.

Block Introduction

Block 3 is dedicated to Understanding the other which is another core aspect of soft skills. The big question which often comes up is ‘what is other’ or ‘who is the other’? Simply put, when talking about humans, the other refers to people or group of people who don’t belong to the same caste, class, gender, ethnic identity, nationality etc as ‘us’ or ‘I’. And in terms of situations, the ‘other’ refers to understanding a problem or issue from as many different angles or more precisely perspectives as possible. Looking at people, problems, concepts, conflict, opinions and so on from multiple perspectives is, thus, extremely important, especially given the rapid pace of development in all aspects of life- technology, communities, identities, artificial intelligence etc., and newer and sudden circumstances brought on by Covid, increasing conflict, increasing political and ethnic, national tensions.

In this Block, we are going to look deeper into the challenges and importance of this approach, its benefits, as well as strategies to imbibe multiple perspectives and focus on Appreciating different perspectives. Coordination with others is very important for team spirit and we will discuss that in detail. Unit 3 Understanding disability and Unit 4: People management will help you to familiarize the complex layers of the topics.

We are sure that you will enjoy studying all the units and also achieve complete understanding of soft skills in your mind and conduct.

THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY

UNIT 1 APPRECIATING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 What is multiple perspectives?
- 1.3 Understanding hurdles to multiple perspectives
 - 1.3.1 Barriers to multiple perspectives
- 1.3.2 Understanding Biases as barriers to multiple perspectives
- 1.4 Using the multiple perspectives approach
 - 1.4.1: Using the multiple perspectives approach to understand an issue
 - 1.4.2 Self Check
 - 1.4.3 Strategies to develop multiple perspectives approach
- 1.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.6 Key Words
- 1.7 Suggested Readings
- 1.8 Answers

1.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit will enable you to:

- Understand the concept of ‘multiple perspectives approach’
- Identify the barriers that hinder multiple perspectives approach
- Dive deep into the role of biases and identify some personal biases against multiple perspectives approach
- Learn strategies for developing multiple perspectives approach
- Understand the importance of multiple perspectives approach
- Bring together and apply the various skills learnt as part of this course

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In Block 3 the focus has been on understanding the ‘other’. The big question is ‘what is other’ or ‘who is the other’? Simply put, when talking about humans, the other refers to people or group of people who don’t belong to the same caste, class, gender, ethnic identity, nationality etc. as ‘us’ or ‘I’. And in terms of situations, the ‘other’ refers to understanding a problem or issue from as many different angles or more precisely perspectives as possible.

One of the most popular parables or stories from ancient India is *Blind Men and an Elephant*; and it is an apt introduction to the importance of understanding different perspectives. In this story, a group of blind men, who had never ever come across an elephant, learn to conceptualise what an elephant is like by touching it. Each of the blind men touches and feels a different part of the elephant’s body, but only one part, for example an ear, a tusk, a side, a leg. Afterwards, each described the elephant based on their limited experience. A consequence of this narration was that each man’s description of the elephant, based on their *limited viewpoint or perception*, was different from the other. This parable is sometimes extended to include another observation. Because the perception of the same elephant was different by the three men, they come to suspect that the other was dishonest and they ended up fighting. The moral of the parable is that humans have a tendency to claim absolute truth based on their limited understanding or perception.



Looking at people, problems, concepts, conflict, opinions and so on from multiple perspectives is, thus, extremely important, especially given the rapid pace of development in all aspects of life- technology, communities, identities, artificial intelligence etc., and newer and sudden circumstances brought on by Covid, increasing conflict, increasing political and ethnic, national tensions.

In this Unit on Understanding Multiple Perspectives, we are going to look deeper into the challenges and importance of this approach, its benefits, as well as strategies to imbibe multiple perspectives.

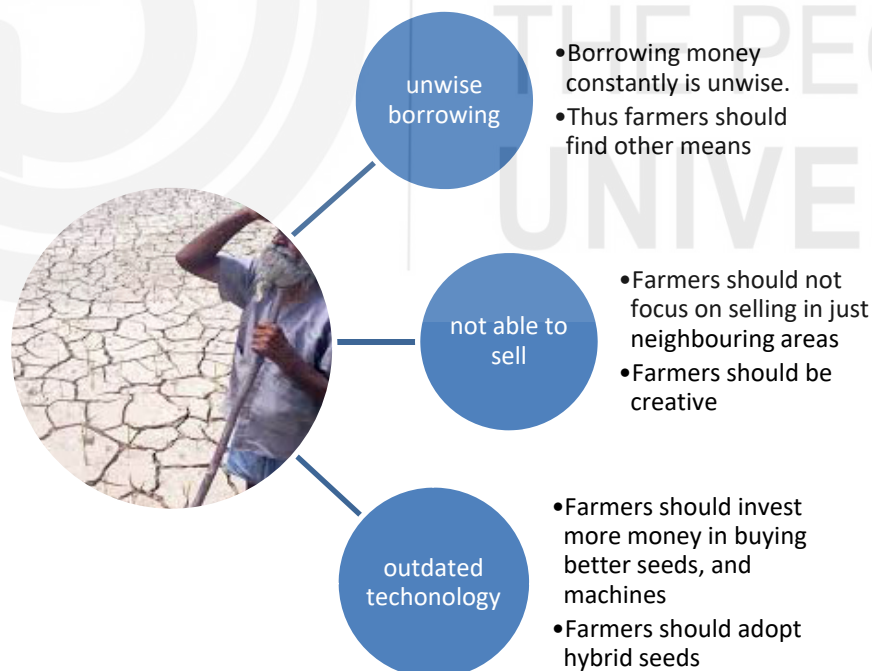
1.2 WHAT IS MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES?

Multiple Perspectives, can be defined as a broad term to *incorporate multiple and possibly heterogeneous/mixed, assorted viewpoints, representations and roles* etc. This multiple perspectives approach can be adopted in different fields – inter-personal relations, decision-making, conflicts, at workplace, in discussions, problems, product design, and study, in family as well as personal life, religion, gender, other forms of identities, climate change, agriculture, industries and more.

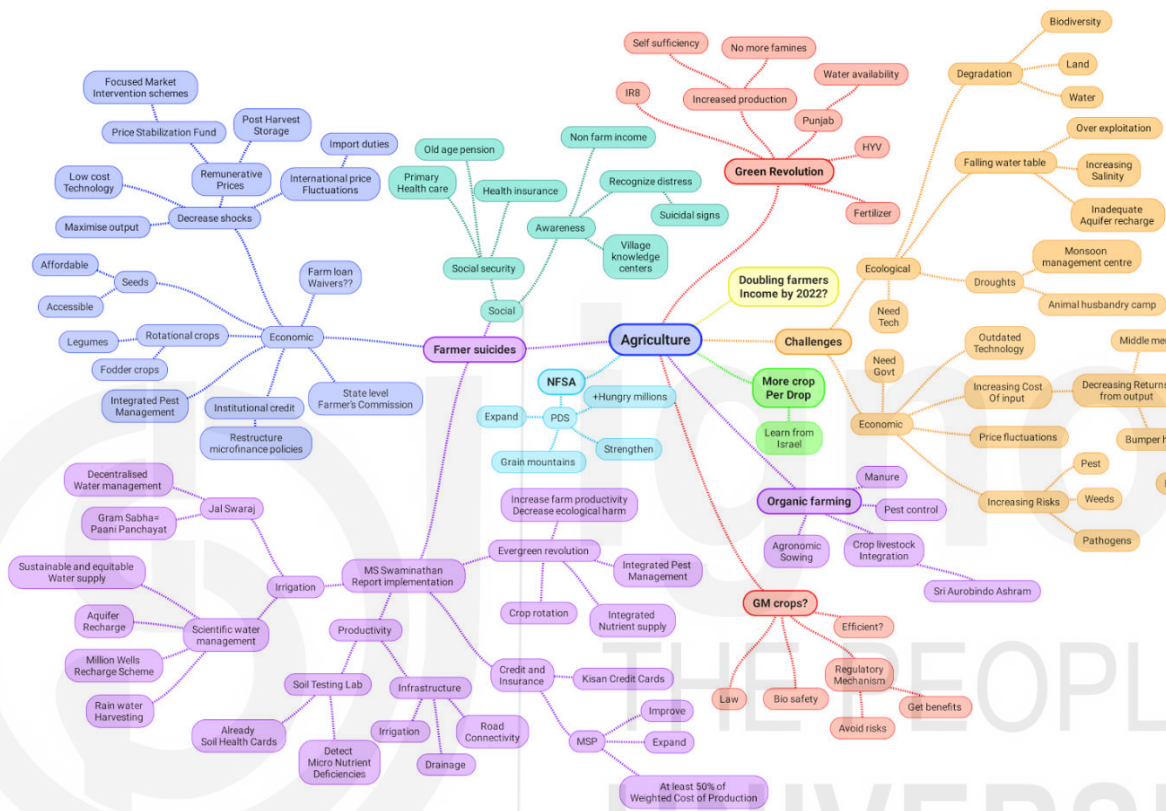
The value of multiple perspectives approach is that it encourages one to look at every issue or problem from a holistic perspective, taking the needs, well-being, and differences of opinion and of attitude into consideration. The adoption of this approach enables the creation of a more compassionate, equitable as well as a sustainable world for all – humans as well as materials.

Let us take an important example of farmers' suicide in India, which is one of the most important problems in the agriculture sector.

A simplistic understanding of this issue can be expressed in the mind map below:



However, if we adopt a multiple perspectives approach to the same issue, the scope of understanding the same issue can suddenly expand. This can be illustrated by the mind map below, which is based on M.S. Swaminathan's Report and his editorial in *The Hindu* on the issue¹.



The differences in understanding the same issue – Farmers' suicide in India- from a narrow perspective and multiple perspectives are self-evident in the above mind maps. The first mind map also represents a very commonly held understanding of the issue. This is likely to hold by most people. In this narrow or limited viewpoint, the farmers and their choices are being held responsible for the increasing suicide rate. On the contrary in the second mind map, the same issue has been explored from many viewpoints. It considers the issues from economic, climatic, social, technological etc. perspectives. It does not hold the farmers as being held completely responsible for this form of human disaster. The multiple perspectives approach helps, furthermore, in identifying steps that can perhaps be adopted to resolve this issue and the course of action which need to be considered. The multiple perspectives approach is also an intrinsic part of critical thinking.

¹This mind map has been taken from the website <http://upscpractice.blogspot.com/2017/08/upsc-mind-maps.html>

The first mind map leads to another very important component – reasons for limited viewpoints or perspectives. We will explore this in the following section.

1.3 UNDERSTANDING HURDLES TO MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

1.3.1 Barriers to Multiple Perspectives

There are many barriers to developing or adopting multiple perspectives. Many of these are surprising because we may take these for granted.

1. **Personal mindsets:** Our own personal beliefs, religious beliefs, negative past experiences or low self-esteem, lack of confidence or mental blocks against learning new things are some of the basic barriers to developing and adopting multiple perspectives. Phrases like ‘I’m too old’ or ‘I know everything’ are used frequently by us all. And these two phrases also reflect a barrier to learning.
2. **Lack of awareness:** Even though we live in a world where information and knowledge can be accessed by pressing a few phrases on the internet, lack of awareness is another common barrier. We may be focussing on reading or listening to information that matches our already existing point of view(s). This includes listening to specific news channels, or specific Instagram or other social media platforms, or reading newspapers that support political ideas that we hold and so on.

One way to break this barrier is to read information that does not confirm our own perceptions but puts forward different arguments. Engaging in a respectful and healthy dialogue with people who hold different ideas is another strategy to break this barrier.

3. **Biases:** Bias, simply put, means preference of an idea or outlook or opinion usually in a way that is close-minded or unfair. This personal preference can lead to ignoring other possibilities, and often to prejudices. For example, in India, young people from minority background often find it harder to get access to rented housing because of different types of biases – religious bias, caste bias, gender bias, race bias or even economic bias.

Biases are very common barriers to multiple perspectives and to learnability. It is worth spending some time in exploring biases. This we will do in the next section.

4. **Egocentric thinking²:** Egocentric thinking is a natural tendency among humans to view everything in relation to oneself. What we know or are aware of often forms the basis for understanding the outside world and others. However, this type of thinking also can lead to inability to sympathise, empathise, consider other viewpoints and be non-judgemental.

²Points 4-5- and 6 are taken from an article titled “7 critical thinking barriers and how to overcome them.” This useful blog piece can be accessed from <https://wabisabilearning.com/blogs/critical-thinking/critical-thinking-barriers>.

5. Drone Mentality: Drone is one of the latest technological devices. It refers to an unpiloted aircraft or space craft. Look at the image of a drone below and think what a drone mentality may mean before reading ahead.

	Drone mentality refers to not paying attention to the world around us, to the people and to the surroundings. Unconsciously we develop a pattern of living, working, studying, or reading; and we tend to stick to it. The mentality prevents us from taking up new challenges and responding to new circumstances.
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6. Arrogance and intolerance: We're often unlikely to think of ourselves in terms of arrogance and intolerance but surprisingly they are present in the majority of us. These two can easily prevent us from developing multiple perspectives because being arrogant and intolerant prevents us from even considering that we may be wrong and that other's opinions may be of value.
7. Inviting wrong people to the table: This phrase, in this context, can be used to refer to the tendency to include wrong individuals or groups to a discussion. These 'wrong' individuals or groups means inviting only a select few or favourites for a discussion or sharing of ideas. In other words, not collaborating with people. The consequences of this includes continued limited understanding of an idea or issue.

The above seven points are simply the tip of the iceberg in examining the barriers to multiple perspectives approach. You, as a learner on path to critical thinking, are expected to break one of the barriers above by undertaking internet research to explore – barriers to critical thinking, strategies to critical thinking, understanding multiple perspectives or different perspectives. Explore blogs and articles on these.

In the next section, we will take up the concept of biases and understanding different forms to biases.

Appreciating Different Perspectives

1.3.2: Understanding Biases as barriers to multiple perspectives

In simple terms biases is preferring one thing or the other for some personal reason or giving only one side of the argument. Cognitive bias is a limitation in objective thinking that is caused by the tendency for the human brain to perceive information through a filter of personal experience

and preferences. According to Banaji and Greenwald³, prejudices and unconscious biases are part of human nature. We all have them. The key is in becoming aware of them and finding ways to overcome them. There are many types of cognitive biases but we are going to explore some of the basic ones.

The confirmation bias: This bias is one of the most common forms of the biases, which we have in small ways referred to above. It refers to the tendency to listen more often to information that confirms our existing beliefs. This bias is responsible for why people tend to favour information that supports and reinforces the things they already believe or think. For example, refusing to listen to the opposing side or only following people on social media who share your viewpoints.

One of the reasons why people easily fall prey to confirmation bias is because it helps them protect their self-esteem by making people feel that their beliefs are accurate. But this bias limits the ability of people to think objectively and can lead to people making poor choices.

The anchoring bias: This is the tendency to be easily and overly influenced by the first piece of information that we hear. For example, while hiring the interviewer may notice a candidate because she or he may have attended the same college as the interviewer; and use it to anchor his/her thinking. As a consequence, this piece of information can affect one's judgement.

The Zero-risk bias: People, including you and I, value certainty. This means that eliminating the chance of risk means that there is no chance of being harmed. However, this bias leads to counterproductive consequences.

The stereotyping bias: This bias leads to formation of generalised belief about a particular category of people or ideas or notions of right and wrong. This is one of the main causes that lead to discrimination and prejudice against women, people of minority religions, or migrants or people from lower caste etc.

The Conservatism bias: Conservatism bias is our inclination to hold on to our beliefs instead of revising them when presented with new information. This bias can be responsible for some people's tendency to continuously invest money in options that continuously yield bad results even after gaining information on better investment opportunities.

The Information bias: This bias refers to the tendency to seek information when it does not affect action. More information is not always better because sometimes having limited knowledge can help more accurate predictions.

³Mahzarin R Banaji and Anthony G Greenwald. *Blind Spot*. 2013.¹² Delacorte Press.

Conformity bias: This form of bias is very common and it occurs when our views are influenced by the views of others. Think about the various examples that can fit the conformity bias. This is a good time to step back and do self-reflection.

Beauty bias: It is very easy to guess what a ‘beauty bias’ may refer to. In the Indian context, this bias is evident in our preference for whiter or lighter skin tone than darker skin tones. This bias is also reflected in many advertisements of cosmetics including fairness creams. Let us take an example of Glow and lovely⁴... wait a minute - what is Glow and Lovely?

Glow and Lovely is the new name of a very well know ‘fairness cream’ – Fair and Lovely. The company Hindustan Lever rebranded this once popular fairness cream because of the growing criticism of ‘colourism’, which refers to prejudice or discrimination against individuals with a dark skin tone. For the longest time, Fair and Lovely associated fairness with ability of a woman to find a good husband, a good job (a doctor or an airhostess).

Exploring the beauty bias further is very important as it can show us how we can be unconsciously biased. What are the consequences of the beauty bias? This bias can lead to recruiting or employing people who meet our standard of beauty. In many cases fairer people may find more employment opportunities than dark skinned people. Fairer people are often promoted more easily. In popular cinema, the *bai* or *kaamwaaliis* often portrayed as having a darker skin tone so that she stands apart from the heroine.

Take a step back and think how you may be unconsciously adopting a beauty bias.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

1. In your own words, explain what is multiple perspectives?

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2. List four reasons why it is important to adopt multiple perspectives approach?

⁴Some articles that are worth reading to understand the rebranding of Fair and Lovely to Glow and Lovely are: Chishti, Seema. 29 June 2020. “Explained: Why dropping the ‘Fair’ from Fair & Lovely matters – or does it?” in The Indian Express. URL: <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/fair-and-lovely-rebranding-hindustan-lever-racism-protests-6476480/>. Pandey, Geeta. 26 June 2020. “Fair and Lovely: Can renaming a fairness cream stop colorism?,” in BBC News. URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-53182169>

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3. Is it true that multiple perspectives approach is a part of critical thinking? If yes, then give one reason to support your answer.

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4. Choose any two barriers to multiple perspectives approach which you find very relevant. Give one reason to support each choice.

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5. What is a bias? How do biases act as barriers to adoption of multiple perspectives approach?

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6. Now that you are aware of some important biases, identify two personal biases that you personally have. Give one reason or example of how the two biases have influenced your choices.

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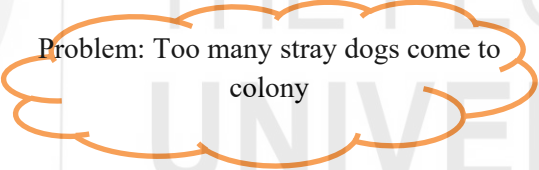
7. A problem: Imagine that there are many dogs in your colony. There are some people who feed the dogs and have no issues or complaint against them. But there is a group of

neighbours, who feel that large number of dogs are causing problems and some course of action should be taken.

Before this conflict becomes worse, you and your friend must work out a solution. In the space below, create a mind map of how you would find out details, look for various options to resolve this issue.

You need to adopt a multiple perspectives approach in this problem solving. To help you think from multiple perspectives, the following stakeholders have been identified:

- a. Children
- b. A neighbour with vision loss
- c. Adults
- d. Animal lovers
- e. Vaccination and health issues of the stray dogs
- f. Accumulation of garbage and poop
- g. Excessive barking leading to sleep loss



Problem: Too many stray dogs come to colony

1.4 USING MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES APPROACH

1.4.1 Using the multiple perspectives approach to understand an issue.

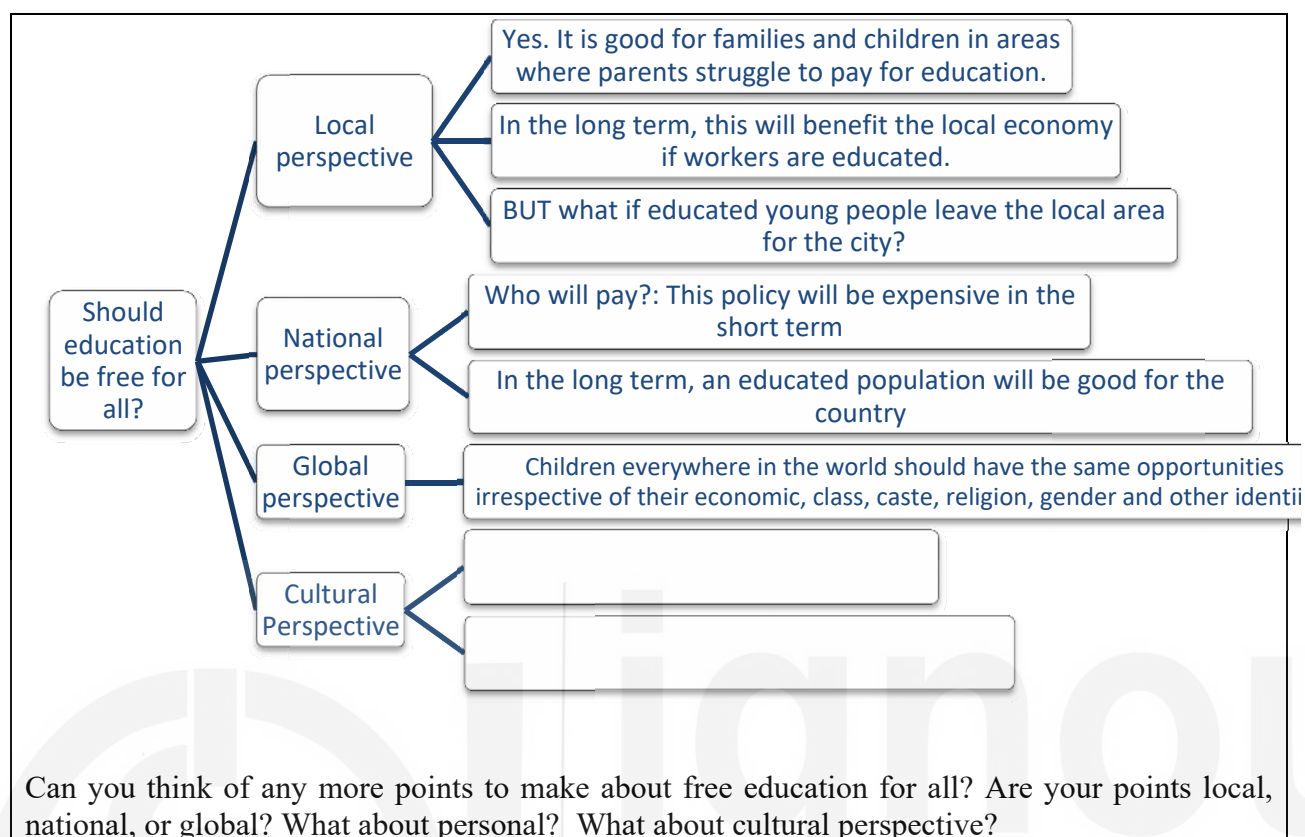
We receive information from different channels – TV, newspapers, e-journals, gossip, social media etc. We constantly hear about problems or issues. Often, we comment on these problems without using critical thinking skills to first understand them. We base our comments on personal feelings or mirror our friends' perspectives.

We live in an increasingly connected world. The problems or issues that we face are related with education, gender, religion, money, trade etc; they can no longer be understood through our own immediate contexts. But these have to be approached from multiple perspectives. Let us look at one such use of this approach. What is your response to the prompt below?

“Should education be free for all?”

Next let us approach this issue from multiple perspectives⁵.

⁵This exercise is adapted from book by Jo Lally, 2015. *IGCSE Global Perspective*. Oxford University Press



In the above example of free education for all, you came across three or four new perspectives: Personal, local, national and global. What do they mean?

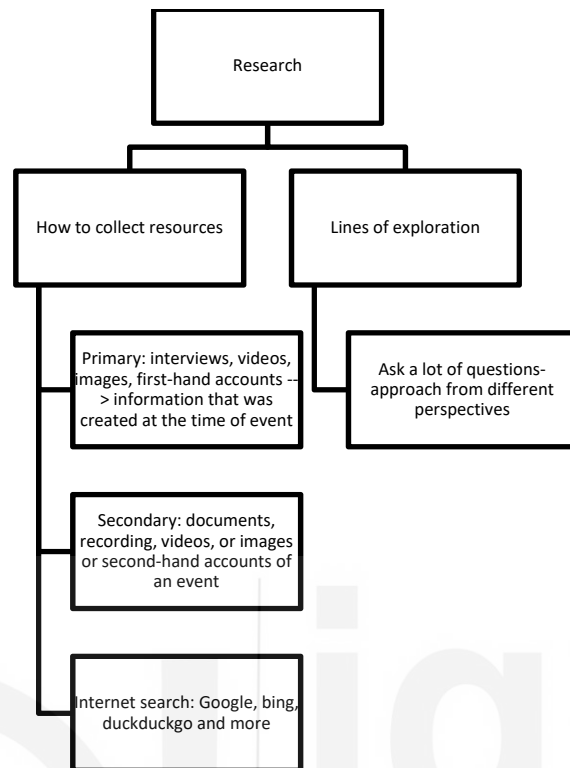
Personal Perspective	Local Perspective	National Perspective	Global Perspective	Cultural Perspective
A personal perspective is the view that a person has on an issue.	A local perspective is a view from neighbourhood, or state; and this can be connected with local bodies or residential welfare societies etc.	A national perspective is the view that a particular country or government has on an issue, which is usually inferred from their laws, policies, or speeches made by national politicians.	A global perspective is a view on an issue that either has global influence or takes into account the nature of the issue globally.	Cultural perspectives are attitudes, values, beliefs and ideas that are shared by a group of people. It can influence the ways in which people behave, think or assert their preference.
A perspective is a viewpoint on an issue.				

Self-Check

Issue: Every monsoon, there are annual floods in Maharashtra. The two images have become common sites every year. You are going to use a multiple perspective approach to explore and understand better the issue of floods in Maharashtra.



For this you will need to undertake research and exploration. These two are essential parts of critical thinking and multiple perspectives approach. Before you undertake the exploration, let us go over key steps of research.



Evaluating information that you find is another important stage in conducting research⁶.

ACCURATE • Can you find the same information in any other source? • Is the resource well written and free of obvious typos and errors?	RELIABLE • Is the source as free from bias as possible? Stick to resources that are purely factual when learning about new topics. • Who is the publisher of the book or magazine? Who owns the website? Look up the publisher or website owner online. Do they have a good reputation? What else have they published or written about?
CREDIBLE • Can you tell who wrote the book, article, or online piece? What education or experience do they have? Look for academic degrees or years of experience working in a particular field. • Is there contact information? Can you e-	CURRENT For most topics, you'll need recent sources. When was the book or article published? • For books, look for the year they were published on the copyright page. You can find it after the title page. For magazines, look for the month and year of publication.

⁶Evaluating information is taken from Britannica's Research Guide for Learner

mail or write to the author, organization, or website to ask questions or get further information?	• For websites, look for the date line or “last updated” line. Is the site kept up-to-date or does it have old information?
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Continuation of your task

Problem: Annual floods in Maharashtra

1.4.3 Strategies to develop multiple perspectives approach

In this section we are going to look at some strategies that can help in cultivating and adopting multiple perspectives approach.

1. Asking questions: Indira Gandhi once said, “the power to question is the basis of all human progress.” We often tend to ask very basic questions and are happy to receive equally basic answers. And as explored in previous sections, this satisfaction results from that fact that the answers that we get mirrors our own perceptions. They do not disturb us. However, asking questions from or having a dialogue with different people, especially those whose beliefs are different from ours is one of the basic keys to developing a multiple perspectives approach and understanding.
2. Mindfulness: The power of mindfulness or self-reflection lies in its ability to help people become aware of their negative tendencies as well as biases. This then can enable people to think differently.
3. Being mindful of sources of information: This is another important strategy in developing a multiple perspectives approach. If the experiences, which includes sources of information etc, are narrow and confirm one’s own belief, the cycle of limited

perspective will continue. Reading, listening, watching, discussing etc a range of sources of information should be seen as non-threatening and as part of learnability.

4. Shutting up and listening: Most of us love to hear the sound of our own voice, our opinions etc. People tend to keep putting forward their own perspectives. Thus, it is essential to quieten ourselves; and listen to what others have to say. This strategy has an additional benefit of building newer and stronger relationship with others.
5. Be willing to be surprised: This strategy may sound surprising and a bit odd but it is an effective and creative one. Be willing to try out new experiences even if it is small step of taking a different route to a familiar place.
6. Pay attention to your blind spots: All of us have blind spots in our actual vision. It is the point of entry of the optic nerve on the retina which is insensitive to light. But beyond physiology, we all have blind spots in our viewpoints. Blind spots in this context mean a subject about which a person is prejudiced or ill-informed or unable to comprehend for various reasons. These reasons could be biases, lack of information, pride, etc. Self-reflection and journaling are two ways in which one can identify personal blind spots.

1.5 LET US SUM UP

In conclusion, multiple perspectives approach, in very basic terms, means to look at a problem, concept, issue or a person from different viewpoints in order to understand, know, observe, explore and examine it better and move beyond a limited understanding. This approach helps in gaining a more realistic assessment or understanding. Thus, the idea that “my perspective is my reality” is not the best approach as this perpetuates false and superficial understanding. Personal preferences, different types of biases, closed mindsets, lack of awareness, drone mentality etc, as explored above are common barriers to developing a multiple perspectives approach.

Multiple perspectives approach leads to a deeper and a more meaningful understanding of the world around us. One can equate this deeper understanding by taking an example of noticing a rainbow. If viewed from a limited perspective, a rainbow can be seen as comprising just seven colours and caused by certain climatic conditions. However, the same rainbow from a wider or multiple perspective(s) can be understood to comprise seven specific colours that are regulated by the interaction of light, air and water particles, as a source of inspiration for art, of hope, marketing, as a wonder for someone who is seeing it for the first time etc.

There are some very easy strategies that we can use to develop our multiple perspectives – self-reflection, critical thinking, accessing wider and different channels of getting information, humility, actively listening.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2

1. Multiple perspectives approach is a good frame to adopt.

For years animals with hooves, like moose, horses, cattle, giraffes, pigs, deer etc. have died while crossing highways. This is a huge problem because not only are animals killed (some of which are endangered) but also humans. Such accidents furthermore lead to damage to property, highways and are expensive. This problem is far more common than we imagine. Bruinderink & Hazebroek (1996) estimated the number of collisions with ungulates (animals with hooves) in traffic in Europe at 507,000 per year, resulting in 300 people killed, 30,000 injured, and property damage exceeding \$1 billion.

If one is to read the above note on death of animals while crossing highways in the newspaper, a lay person is likely to blame animals for the accidents and perhaps suggest that strong barriers should be erected on the highways to prevent animals from crossing.

However, after extensive research a solution was designed. Take a look at the photograph⁷ below:



⁷The Trans-Canada Highway wildlife crossings in Banff National Park have served as science-based inspiration for averting animal deaths on roads all over the globe. PHOTOGRAPH BY JOEL SARTORE, NAT GEO IMAGE COLLECTION

The photograph is of a wildlife bridge over highways in Canada. Such bridges have proven to be very helpful and beneficial to different stakeholders.

You're Task: To gain a deeper understanding a solution using a multiple perspectives approach. Apply this approach for the following things:

- a. Causes of accidents involving animals and humans on highways in India
- b. Consequences of this clash
- c. Possible solutions
- d. Idea of wildlife bridge: feasibility, safety, consequences, taxation and maintenance, scope and relevance in the future.

In the above task, you will be combining the skills that you have been learning in this course.

1.6 KEY WORDS

Multiple Perspectives Approach: Multiple Perspectives, can be defined as a broad term to *incorporate multiple and possibly heterogeneous/mixed, assorted viewpoints, representations and roles etc*

Biases: Biases refers to preference for an idea or outlook or opinion usually in a way that is close-minded or unfair.

Egocentric thinking: Egocentric thinking is a natural tendency among humans to view everything in relation to oneself

Drone mentality: Drone mentality refers to not paying attention to the world around us, to the people and to the surroundings

Perspective: A perspective is a viewpoint on an issue.

Personal perspective: A personal perspective is the view that a person has on an issue.

Local perspective: A local perspective is a view from neighbourhood, or state; and this can be connected with local bodies or residential welfare societies etc.

National Perspective: A national perspective is the view that a particular country or government has on an issue, which is usually inferred from their laws, policies, or speeches made by national politicians.

Global Perspective: A global perspective is a view on an issue that either has global influence or takes into account the nature of the issue globally.

Cultural Perspective: A cultural perspectives are attitudes, values, beliefs and ideas that are shared by a group of people. It can influence the ways in which people behave, think or their preference.

1.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

Jitendra, Meghana. ‘So you think you can learn?’” Understanding ‘Learnability in the workplace,’ *Merittrac*. URL: <https://www.merittrac.com/blog/so-you-think-you-can-learn-understanding-learnability-workplace>

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1.8 ANSWERS

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

1. In your own words, explain what is multiple perspectives?

Answer: Multiple Perspectives, can be defined as a broad term to *incorporate multiple and possibly heterogeneous/mixed, assorted viewpoints, representations and roles* etc.

2. List four reasons why it is important to adopt multiple perspectives approach?

Answer: It is important to adopt multiple perspectives approach because it helps us to:

- a. Gain a fairer and deeper understanding of the world around us in terms of people, issues, ideas and so on
- b. It helps us to think critically
- c. It takes us out from our own narrow world of viewpoints and preferences.
- d. It helps in building better relationships.

3. Is it true that multiple perspectives approach is a part of critical thinking? If yes, then give one reason to support your answer.

Answer: Multiple perspectives approach is part of critical thinking because in order to adopt this approach taking a step back, quietening our own viewpoints are essential strategies in breaking barriers to limited perceptions.

4. Choose any two barriers to multiple perspectives approach which you find very relevant. Give one reason to support each choice.

Answer: This is dependent on learner's preference

5. What is a bias? How do biases act as barriers to adoption of multiple perspectives approach?

Answer: Biases refers to preference for an idea or outlook or opinion usually in a way that is close-minded or unfair. Biases are like personal blind spots, because of which we tend to filter information or see the world around us in ways in which re-affirm our beliefs.

Note: Answers to questions 6 and 7 are completely based on learner's own reflections and understanding.

UNIT 2: COORDINATION WITH OTHERS

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Coordination in Management: Definitions & Principles
- 2.3 Objectives of Coordination
- 2.4 Techniques of Coordination
- 2.5 Coordination as a Managerial Skill
 - 2.5.1 Strategic Planning
 - 2.5.2 Organisational Skills
 - 2.5.3 Judicious Delegation
 - 2.5.4 Smooth and Effective Communication
- 2.6 Coordination and Teamwork
 - 2.6.1 What is a Team?
 - 2.6.2 Characteristics of a Team
- 2.7 Coordination and Control
- 2.8 Benefits of Coordination
- 2.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.10 Suggested Readings
- 2.11 Answers

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this unit is to help you

- understand the concept of coordination with others as an important soft skill
- become aware of the objectives and techniques of coordination
- appreciate the importance of coordination as a key managerial function
- value the significance of coordination with and in a team
- realise the benefits of coordination in an organization.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

"Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much".- Helen Keller

One of the most important soft skills in today's world is coordination with others. With increasing specialization, it is not only important to be very good at what we do, but equally important to coordinate with others as well. No person works in isolation, we are all linked to each other, be it at the workplace or at the personal front. As Helen Keller points out, on our own there is a limit to what we can achieve but our achievements are greater if there is synergy in the competencies of people working together. When people work together towards a common goal it is called teamwork. A team is not just about people coming together as a group to work together but as Henry Ford, a well-known American industrialist said, "Coming together is the beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success". The key to success of any team working together is coordination with each other. Coordination leads to nuanced organization, smart planning, judicious allocation of work, effective communication, evolved critical thinking, efficient problem solving, heightened understanding of our colleagues, being flexible and adaptable, and a higher degree of emotional intelligence and empathy. At the personal front too, effective coordination between family members leads to harmonious relationships and avoids conflicts between members. In a nutshell, coordinating with others proactively is the key to the success of organizational and personal goals and is the essence of management.

Check your progress 1

- 1 What does coordination with others involve?

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2.2 Coordination in Management: Definitions & Principles

Coordination is the foundation of all organisations and has been considered a key principle and function of management. It is continuous in nature as it aligns all resources and processes towards achievement of organisational goals. It synchronizes different competencies and gives structure to individual aspirations and collective objectives. It is also a key component of all other managerial functions and activities. According to George R. Terry and Theo Haimann, "Coordination is a part of the managerial functions of planning, organising, staffing, directing and controlling. It is one of the most important elements of management process and facilitates the entire process of managing. Therefore, it is the essence of management. "James D. Mooney and Alan C. Riley define it as "the orderly arrangement of group efforts to provide unity of action in the pursuit of a common purpose. "According to Edward Brech, a British management consultant, "Coordination is balancing and keeping together the team by ensuring suitable allocation of tasks to the various members and seeing that the tasks are performed with the harmony among the members themselves." It focuses on group goals and aligns different individuals towards it by effective communication, persuasion, and motivation. It is continuous in nature and occasions shifts in structure and method depending upon targets and goals. The

main purpose of coordination is to bring in cohesive collaboration wherein each disparate element seeks to contribute his or her best. Coordination is synchronizing all resources and processes in an effort towards seamless and timely movement towards achievement of organizational goals and targets. It is the key responsibility of all leaders and managers.

Mary Parker Follett, popularly known as the ‘Mother of Modern Management’ with expertise in organisational theory and behaviour delineates the following key principles of coordination:

- **Planning and Coordination** – Coordination begins at an early stage, with the process of planning itself. If there is coordination and clarity at the very beginning, all else will fall into place smoothly.
- **Flexible Hierarchy**– Hierarchy in an organization should not be an impediment to either communication or implementation. Coordination and constant communication ensure that everyone is on the same page be it the managers, supervisors or workers. This will also lead to a spirit of cooperation and trust.
- **Continuous and Dynamic**– Coordination is not a one-time activity, it is continuous, dynamic, and organic in nature. It takes place at all levels, planning, implementation and execution and changes as per requirement and need.
- **Cooperation and Collaboration**– Coordination is not a one-way process but is reciprocal in nature. It is based on a spirit of cooperation and collaboration. All team members are interdependent, and the synergies of individual competencies lead to implementation of strategies and achievement of goals.
- **Mutual Faith and Trust** – A sense of team spirit and camaraderie is essential in coordination, cooperation, and collaboration. And the foundation of this rests on mutual faith and trust. A bowler in a cricket team will bowl the ball with complete faith and trust in the fielders that they will minimize the gain of runs.
- **Unity of Command** – While some organisations are based on loose structures and more informal settings than others, for example Facebook, Amazon and Google, they all follow the principle of unity of command. Leaders give directions and the team follows, the former though might base their commands and directions based on feedback and suggestions by the team. But it is imperative that the commands come from one direction only to avoid confusion.

Check your progress 2

1. Why is coordination referred to as the essence of management?

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2. What are the key principles of coordination?

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2.3 Objectives of Coordination

The objectives of coordination as a key function of an organization are clearly defined. It is to synchronise all activities, processes, and individuals towards the achievement of organisational goals. It gives group efforts a well-defined meaning and purpose and leads to unity of action. W.H.Newman rightly states, “In administration, coordination deals with synchronizing and unifying the actions of a group of people. A coordinated operation is one in which the activities of the employees are harmonious, dovetailed, and integrated towards a common objective. “According to him, it is not a separate activity but “a condition that should permeate all phases of administration.” For Ordway Tead it is, “a smooth interplay of the function and forces of all the different component parts of an organisation to the end that its purposes will be realised with minimum of friction and a maximum of collaboration effectiveness.” Some of its key objectives may be summarized as listed below:

- **Clarity and accomplishment of goals** – The prime objective of coordination is to ensure that all are geared in the same direction. Coordination ensures that there is clarity of goal and purpose in each and every team member or employee no matter which regional or international office they may be placed in.
- **Unity of action and collaborative synergy**– With clarity of goal, there is unity in action. All efforts are directed towards the same goals and there is a spirit of collaboration and cohesion. This ensures optimum utilization of resources towards achievement of organisational goals.
- **Economy of effort and time** – With pooled resources and synergy of niche competencies, there is economy of both effort and time. If the same employee was to perform multiple tasks, it would take a lot more time and would not be efficient. But if each is a specialist in a niche area and their competencies are brought together, there is economy of both effort and time.
- **Cordial interpersonal relations** – Effective coordination reduces friction and leads to cordial interpersonal relations not just between leaders/managers but also amongst team members. This will reduce rigid hierarchy and increase congeniality which will enhance productivity and output.
- **Diversification and growth**–Effective coordination between multiple arms i.e. teams and departments of an organization encourages diversification and growth. In order to

mitigate risks and losses and to nurture growth, most big organizations diversify to multifarious verticals and businesses, this is possible only because of coordination.

- **Reduces attrition rate** – Coordination has a cascading effect on literally every aspect of an organisation. Coordination not only promotes organisational growth but also promises individual satisfaction. If there is a cordial and harmonious interpersonal relationship, employees are happy to continue working instead of jumping ships due to an acrimonious professional workspace.

Check your progress 3

- 1 List the key objectives of coordination.

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2.4 Techniques of Coordination

Coordination is the foundation on which teamwork rests. It is an essential soft skill, much desired by employers in the business environment today which rests on several verticals or business projections spanning several continents and large group sizes. Multinational giants like Amazon and Google have more than 1, 00,000 employees as per the statistics posted in 2019 with Walmart leading the pack with 22, 00,000. The Tata group of companies in India employs 7, 20,000 people with Tata Consultancy Services itself having 4, 48,000 employees in the year 2020 with exponential expansion annually. The success of any organization, big or small, rests on seamless coordination and organization. Coordination is putting resources in place so that systems and processes move smoothly. It is an act of integrating all elements in a nuanced and balanced manner so that there is cohesive collaboration of synergies. It begins with planning, and continues with organising, staffing, implementation, right up till execution and feedback. Dirk Morschett, Hanna Schramm-Klein, Joachim Zentes in a chapter titled 'Formal and Informal Coordination Mechanisms' in an insightful book *Strategic Management* published in 2009 (p. 158) cite several organisational experts who have suggested different coordination techniques. Bartlett, Ghoshal and Beamish (2008) compare an organisation or specifically a multinational company to the human body and its different parts. The formal organisational structure is the anatomy, its systems and processes are the physiology, and the organisational culture is seen as human psychology. In the same context of multinational companies, Martinez and Jarillo view coordination as an "...administrative tool for achieving integration among different units within an organization, i.e., to align a number of dispersed and yet interdependent international activities". They suggest the two salient techniques of coordination, the first as structural and formal and the second as informal and more subtle. Following is a table delineating the two, adapted from Martinez and Jarillo (1989)*.

Formal mechanisms	Informal Mechanisms
Organisational structure: departmentalization or grouping of organizational units	Lateral or cross- departmental relations: direct managerial contact, temporary or permanent teams, task forces, committees, integrators, and integrative departments
Centralization or decentralization of decision making through the hierarchy of formal authority	Informal communication: personal contacts among managers, management trips, meetings, conferences, transfer of managers etc.
Formalization and standardization: written policies, rules, job descriptions, and standard procedures, through instruments such as manuals, charts etc.	Normative integration: building an organizational culture of known and shared strategic objectives and values by training, transfer of managers, career path management, reward systems etc.
Planning: strategic planning, budgeting, functional plans, scheduling etc.	

*Morschett D., Schramm-Klein H., Zentes J. (2009) Formal and Informal Coordination Mechanisms. In: Strategic International Management. Gabler. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-8349-8332-9_9

Check your progress 4

1 Which are the two techniques of coordination as suggested by Martinez and Jarillo?

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2.5 Coordination as a Managerial Skill

Henry Fayol was amongst the first few to mention the importance of coordination as a managerial skill along with Luther Gullick and Lyndal Urwick who included it while delineating the administrative process, “Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Co-ordination, Reporting and Budgeting”. It was an integral part of the function of a Chief Executive, who coordinates all managerial functions of an organization and ensures a targeted approach to accomplishment of goals with optimum use of all resources. According to J.D.Mooney, “It is the first of principles of organization and includes within itself all other principles which are subordinate to it through which it operates”. Coordination may be internal or external, the former linked to activities within the organization and external refers to coordination and liaison with external agencies. Furthermore, it may be lateral or vertical, the first being coordination between team members and vertical coordination refers to a more hierarchical association between management and workers of team leader and team members. Given below are few steps involved in this highly complex and integral management function.

2.5.1 Strategic Planning

The first step to coordination with others is to strategize and plan. The outcome must be clear as well as the deadline in which the task must be completed. Strategy planning and management is about choosing the best possible way to achieve specific goals using optimum resources, be it physical, human, or financial in the defined timeframe. Strategy management lends clarity and offsets loss of time and money. There should be a clear mission and a vision, and decision making on the right strategy must be inclusive i.e., all views and feedback from top governance to all team players must be taken into consideration before strategy is formulated. It is also important to constantly evaluate the strategy employed in the face of constantly changing business environments and modulate the plan accordingly. Strategic management or strategic planning is a five-pronged approach.

- Identifying and setting of goals – this must factor in the mission and vision of the project
- Comparative analysis of options – this includes a SWOT analysis of the various strategies decided upon to achieve the goal
- Selection of the best possible strategy and strategy formation – this shows the way forward
- Implementation of the selected strategy to achieve the goal
- Monitoring and evaluation of the strategy – feedback is integral to the entire process so that timely course correction can be made.

Check your progress 5

1 What do you understand by the term strategic management?

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2 Describe the five-pronged approach of strategic management?

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2.5.2 Organisational Skills

After having decided upon the best strategy to achieve goals, be it organisational or personal, the next important step is to organise the methodology to achieve them. Break it into micro targets and plan the day accordingly. If the target is to achieve the desirable score in the exams, one breaks the syllabus to be covered into smaller units/ topics daily, assesses periodically and moves ahead accordingly. Likewise, to achieve organisational goals, it is imperative to set daily or weekly micro goals so that timely planning and review offsets any setback in terms of delays and

losses thereon. Some simple tips for easy and effective organisation are given below. These help you coordinate with yourself and plan better.

- Bifurcate the goals into long-term and short-term goals or micro and macro targets.
- Prepare a planner– it could be broken down to monthly, fortnightly, weekly and daily units. It is easier and more effective to use planner apps on your devices. Not only are they very useful but since they are cloud based, one has access to them all the time.
- Avoid multitasking if you cannot manage it. It is best to focus on the task at hand and give it your 100 percent rather than get diverted with multiple goals daily.
- Prepare a to do list daily and work towards them. It is very gratifying to tick off goals achieved on a daily basis.
- Take notes, be it in a meeting or in a tele conversation or just jot down thoughts as they come to you. This is very useful and comes in handy as one gets bogged down with multitasking.
- Ask questions and seek feedback periodically, this helps you to be on the right track. Even if it is a personal target, ask yourselves questions to evaluate your progress.
- Avoid social media while working towards a goal unless your job profile demands it. It is addictive and can while away peak productive hours.
- It is imperative to plan periodic breaks while organising one's day. It is not counter-productive but keeps you motivated and your energy levels high.
- Break your daily planner into imperative, necessary, and desirable activities. It helps you focus on what is more important and can help delay what can be postponed.
- Don't feel bogged down when there is a deadline. Take deep breaths and practice mindfulness as detailed in the unit on 'Keeping Fit' to keep yourself calm and charged.

Check your progress 5

1 How do you keep organise your work schedule?

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2.5.3 Judicious Delegation

Once the strategy to be deployed for accomplishment of goals is firmly in place, it is important to align the team with judicious delegation of tasks. A leader is only as good as the team and an

effective team leads to seamless achievement of goals and targets. Steve Jobs rightly pointed out that, “Great things in business are never done by one person; they’re done by a team of people.” But putting a team together or ensuring the right job is allocated to the right person requires high levels of understanding and collaboration. Team size in multinational organisations are huge and diverse with different competencies and what makes this even more complex is that they may be working entirely in the virtual space. These may be specialists in their own field and are minute pieces of a large jigsaw puzzle. It is the job of the person heading the project to put these pieces together, to delegate tasks wisely keeping in mind not just the specialization of the individuals but also their temperaments and their ability to work well as a team. Most teams work under a high-pressure environment where a lot is at stake and there are no chances for retakes or course correction. Unlike teams who interact frequently in the real space and also bond over offsite recreational spaces, those working in the virtual space do not connect with each other as individual humans, they seldom get the opportunity to cooperate with each other, and are faceless virtual competencies who are expected to collaborate cohesively. In such an environment it is even more imperative to choose team members wisely with due care. Some key pointers to keep in mind while delegating tasks is given below:

- There should be clarity in what needs to be delegated and to whom to achieve the desired outcome.
- Keep in mind the team members’ strengths and weaknesses before allocation of tasks. Taking cognizance of their specialization is not enough but understanding their temperament and ability to collaborate cohesively is important too.
- The goal or target must be spelt out clearly. It is important to never lose sight of the vision and mission of the team.
- All members must be provided the right resources to execute their tasks smoothly.
- The authority chain must be clearly demarcated. Too many bosses may lead to chaos whereas clarity in the chain of command and accountability smoothens the process.
- Clear communication channels must be established with provision for feedback at every level to ensure smooth coordination.
- It is very important to keep the team motivated with periodic acknowledgements by way of awards or bonuses. While it is important to provide constructive criticism, it is equally important to be generous and profuse in praise when called for.

Check your progress 6

1 What should be kept in mind while delegating tasks?

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2.5.4 Smooth and Effective Communication

Mike Krzyzewski, popularly known as Coach K of the United States' men's national basketball team rightly stated, "Effective teamwork begins and ends with communication". Communication is probably the strongest component of coordinating with others and the backbone of any relationship be it personal or professional. It is what makes a team strong and leads to the desired results. Communication involves sharing of ideas, information, knowledge, and research which are intellectual resources and benefits all if done at the right time and in the right environment. It is not important to just communicate but to communicate effectively. Fluid communication works both ways, irrespective of hierarchy. Also, feedback is integral to the communication process. A team is bound by shared goals and communication rests on trust and faith not only in the target to be achieved but also in each other. It fosters a team spirit of belonging which is the riding factor for success. There is greater efficiency and hurdles are dealt with effective solutions if communication channels are open. Not only does this reduce the scope for conflict but also strengthens bonds. Furthermore, open and democratic channels of communication lead to better coordination and are the foundation for innovative solutions and out of the box thinking. Some of the ways in which communication fosters coordination in a team are delineated below:

- **Alignment of team goals** – Since most organisations have large teams spread across continents and cities, communication helps align team goals and ensures minimal confusion.
- **Clarity in thought and purpose** – Effective communication between leader/manager and teams and between members of team brings clarity in each one's role and purpose in the project.
- **Open communication** – Free flowing channels of communication are inclusive and give everyone space to air their views and grievances. This leads to reduction in misunderstandings and quick solutions to problems.
- **Persuasion and motivation**– Communication helps both in persuasion and motivation. It is imperative to motivate each other periodically and eases the process of persuading team members towards alternate points of views.
- **Create bonds and foster team spirit** – Communication helps to create bonds and foster team spirit particularly when the team is large and diverse and spread across different continents.
- **Reasoned argument** – Communication helps to offer reasoned arguments based on facts and sound research. It leads to clarity and achievement of goals.
- **Emotional Intelligence** – If members communicate with each other, this leads to a better understanding of each other's diversity and subject position. Since large teams consist of members belonging to different nationalities and ethnicities, communication between team members is necessary to foster alliances and camaraderie.

Check your progress 7

- 1 How are communication and coordination interlinked?

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2.6 Coordination and teamwork

Organisations are increasingly becoming bigger, spanning transnational shores, and are dealing with multifarious and complex operations and verticals. With the virtual space becoming the new office with large teams across continents being team members, and with increasing pressures of meeting deadlines and organisational targets, it is imperative that there be perfect coordination between all resources: human, infrastructural, intellectual, material, financial, and information. Effective coordination between all elements is the key to organisational success as there is an organic flow of understanding, strategy, communication, execution and feedback. The key performative function of all leaders and managers is to be able to coordinate, harness and collaborate individual competencies for a seamless movement towards targeted goals. More importantly, first we need to understand what is a team, how it functions and what are its characteristics and furthermore what can be done for better coordination amongst team members?

2.6.1 What is a team?

Professor Leigh Thompson of the Kellogg School of Management defines a team as a, "... a group of people who are interdependent with respect to information, resources, knowledge and skills and who seek to combine their efforts to achieve a common goal". The roles of each member are well defined, and each contributes towards the fulfillment of the group goal keeping aside his or her personal aspiration. We operate as a team in every sphere of life, be it personal or professional. Within a family, each member has a specific role to play individually and collectively. If one member does not cooperate and does not perform his or her role optimally, it leads to friction within the family. The foundation likewise of every profession as well is collaboration and coordination within a team. A medical team performing surgery will consist of surgeons, anesthetists, technicians, and nurses along with a separate team to deal with exigencies. Each one brings in their own niche specialization and skills thereby reducing risks and enhancing performance. Another example of the way a team functions is that of a sports team. Besides the players who are at the forefront, winning a match because of the combined synergies of all players, there is a huge team working behind the scenes, whose contribution is equally valuable. Coaches, nutritionists, behavioral therapists, physiotherapists, doctors, masseurs, performance analysts, media managers, spokesperson etc. are a part of a national sports team, in which each has a specific function and contributes to the performance along with the players. Furthermore, if we take the example of Cricket, coaches would be a separate sub team with a coach each for batting, fielding, bowling, and wicket keeping along with the head coach. Perfect coordination between all members and at all levels lead to collaborative synergy and cohesion leading to greater chances of success.

Check your progress 8

- 1 You are a producer and are planning to produce a reality TV talent show. List the teams you might want for seamless production of the same.

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2.6.2 Characteristics of a team

Teams are of varying sizes; they can range from more than 2 members to large teams comprising 200 or much more depending upon the organization and the project involved. The complexity of the task, the interdependency on various factors, the time needed for completion of the task are some of the factors that determine the kind of team needed for a particular task. Teams can be independent and functional, i.e. they function on their own and have similar competencies and skills and may be from the same department under a single leadership. This could be an HR team, or a team of lawyers engaged in an intellectual property matter etc. larger project necessitates interdependent teams with multidisciplinary expertise; these comprise individuals with different skills sets, maybe from different departments who complement and collaborate with each other. Some teams are not permanent in nature or fixed in the organizational structure of the firm, they are put together for a limited period till completion of the project. Other kinds of teams would be a management team whose task is to visualize and plan, an execution team who executes the plans given to them, a trouble shooting team whose primary tasks is to remove hurdles, a field team whose main task is to work at the ground level. No matter what kind of team it is or what purpose it serves, there are common characteristics underlying teamwork, some of which are listed below:

- Common goal
- Clarity of purpose
- Well defined roles
- Unity in commitment towards goals
- Smooth flow of communication
- Accountability and transparency
- Mutual trust and faith
- Collaborative spirit
- Easy sharing of resources
- Respecting differences in opinions
- Willing to take risks

Above all, none of the team members can achieve anything singly, what is needed is strong leadership at the top to coordinate all members cohesively towards fulfillment of goals.

Check your progress 9

- 1 If you are a leader/ manager, what characteristics would you want in your team?

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2.7 Coordination and control

Coordination is linked to control and both are essential managerial functions. Control refers to periodic assessment and evaluation so that course correction can be made timely to avoid wastage and loss of resources including time. In larger teams, it is even more crucial to keep a check on performances as per set standards. Way back in 1916, Henri Fayol was amongst the first few management experts to define control. “Control of an undertaking consists of seeing that everything is being carried out in accordance with the plan which has been adopted, the orders which have been given, and the principles which have been laid down. Its objective is to point out mistakes in order that they may be rectified and prevented from recurring”. While earlier assumptions of control as managerial function was to assess and rectify, in modern structures of management, control pre-empts deviations before they take place, thereby ensuring minimal loss. It includes setting highest standards as per industry specifications and using sophisticated tools of analysis to measure performance and quality. Like coordination, it is a continuous and dynamic process that is linked to planning and aids in achievement of desired goals. Not only does it help in monitoring performance but is also an effective strategy to control costs and errors. Control establishes a standard, measures actual performance with pre-determined standards, analyses the cause of deviations and accordingly takes corrective action, hence justifying Stafford Beer’s assertion that, “Management is the profession of control”.

Check your progress 10

- 1 What do you understand by the statement, “Management is the profession of control”?

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2. 8 Benefits of coordination

Be it as a leader or manager or a team member, coordinating with others is an important people’s skill which leads to seamless organisation and harmony. In an organisation, it is important to integrate work performed by different teams/ departments in a project and furthermore different individuals in a team. Coordination leads to unity of purpose and action, it avoids confusion and

delays and reduces wastage in all resources, be it manpower or material. Judicious allocation of tasks and follow up ensures there is no overlap or duplication. Its importance is multifarious and beneficial to the growth of the company. Some benefits of coordination are listed below highlighting its impact on smooth functioning of all enterprises, big, medium, or small.

- **Smoother functioning** – Coordination leads to seamless organization and processes as there are well defined roles and goals. Furthermore, judicious allocation of tasks ensures smooth sailing.
- **Avoids duplication** – In a large team, which may go up to 200 members or more, chances of duplication of work are high and effective coordination will ensure that only the right person is allocated the right task. It is imperative that all pieces fit in the larger picture seamlessly.
- **Reduces wastage** – There is a significant reduction in wastage of people hours, material, and time if there is proper coordination. This has an immense financial implication on the organisation.
- **Improves efficiency** – Coordination of collaborative synergies helps bring in specialized competencies and integrates them into the larger plan so that efficiency is improved.
- **Maintains harmony** – Better coordination leads to less confusion and maintains a harmonious working relationship between leadership/management and team members and equally important establishes a cohesive bond between members of the team.
- **Effective supervision and control** – Good coordination leads to more effective supervision and control. Managers or leaders need not maintain hierarchical distance. It is an easy flow rather than the rule of the rod.
- **Timely accomplishment of goals/ targets** – Coordination ensures that confusion is kept at bay and all resources are aligned and balanced in such a way so as to meet goals and targets on times.
- **Helps diversification** – With effective coordination, collaboration and control, companies can diversify their business interests and verticals and thereby boost their expansion and growth without the need for exponential increase in resources.
- **Better management across geographical divides**– Large organisations are spread across different continents, countries, and cities. To manage synergies and competencies across geographical divides, effective coordination and control is paramount.
- **Essential in the virtual environment**–With most businesses shifting to the virtual environment, coordination has acquired greater significance.

Communication, supervision and control are now all in the virtual space, necessitating even more effective coordination.

Check your progress 11

- 1 How is coordination beneficial to an organization?

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2.9 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you have understood the importance of coordinating with others as a key managerial function. It is the backbone and essence of all other functions such as planning, organizing, staffing, execution etc. The different definitions of coordination given here have reinforced the common elements of coordination closely linked to communication, persuasion, motivation, and control. It is essential for effective teamwork towards accomplishment of organizational goals. Its objectives and techniques have been detailed along with its benefits. Irrespective of the size and scope of any organisation, it is coordination which is the key to diversification and growth.

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2.11 ANSWERS

Check your progress 1

- 2 What does coordination with others involve?

Coordination involves nuanced organisation, judicious allocation of work, effective communication, evolved critical thinking and efficient problem solving, heightened understanding of our colleagues, being flexible and adaptable, and a higher degree of emotional intelligence and empathy.

Check your progress 2

1. Why is coordination referred to as the essence of management?

Coordination is the foundation to the smooth functioning of any organisation. Effective and efficient coordination includes planning, organising, staffing, directing, and controlling and leads to achievement of organisational goals seamlessly. Hence, it is referred to as the essence of management.

2. What are the key principles of coordination?

According to Mary Parker Follett, the key principles of coordination are linked to planning and continue till execution and feedback. Communication and coordination are inextricably linked. Furthermore, coordination is continuous in nature and is dynamic depending upon need and requirement. Its essence is cooperation and collaboration as different competencies merge in a symbiotic bond based on mutual faith and trust.

Check your progress 3

- 1 List the key objectives of coordination.

The key objectives of coordination are to synchronise all activities, processes, and individuals towards the achievement of organisational goals. It gives group efforts a well-defined meaning and purpose and leads to unity of action. There is clarity of goals, everyone works towards its accomplishment, and all energies collaborate in a cooperative spirit, leading to economy of effort and time. Based on mutual faith and trust, and cordial interpersonal relations, it nurtures diversification and growth leading to a reduced attrition rate.

Check your progress 4

- 1 Which are the two techniques of coordination as suggested by Martinez and Jarillo?

The two techniques suggested by Martinez and Jarillo are Formal and Informal mechanisms. The former refers to division in sub-units such as departments and teams while the latter refer to lateral or cross departmental relations. There is a hierarchical structure in decision making in formal technique whereas communication is more informal in the second one. Formal is more structured and standardized with well laid down policies and procedures, the informal being more normative through an evolved sharing of an organizational culture.

Check your progress 5

- 1 What do you understand by the term strategic planning and management?

Strategy planning and management is about choosing the best possible way to achieve specific goals using optimum resources, be it physical, human, or financial in the defined timeframe. It lends clarity and offsets loss of time and money.

- 2 Describe the five-pronged approach of strategic management?

The five-pronged approach of strategic management is as follows:

- Identifying and setting of goals – this must factor in the mission and vision of the project
- Comparative analysis of options – this includes a SWOT analysis of the various strategies decided upon to achieve the goal
- Selection of the best possible strategy and strategy formation – this shows the way forward
- Implementation of the selected strategy to achieve the goal
- Monitoring and evaluation of the strategy – feedback is integral to the entire process so that timely course correction can be made.

Check your progress 5

- 1 How do you keep organize your work schedule? (Indicative answer)
I prefer using planners and organisers apps on my mobile phone. Daily, weekly, and monthly targets are charted and synchronized with my calendar, and I take notes on the Notes app on my phone as well. There are alarms set and the phone reminds me my daily targets. Besides Microsoft planner, I have been using Planner Pro and Time Planner.

Check your progress 6

- 1 What should be kept in mind while delegating tasks?
First, it is important to be clear about what needs to be delegated, then it is imperative to choose the right person for the right task keeping in mind their specialization and temperament. Communication of goals is important so that there is clarity, and the authority chain must be clearly demarcated. Hierarchy and structure are important and must incorporate provisions for feedback to ensure accomplishment of groups goals.

Check your progress 7

- 1 How are communication and coordination interlinked?
Communication is the strongest component of coordinating with others. It lends clarity to group goals and the task to be accomplished. It involves sharing of ideas, information, knowledge, and research which are intellectual resources and benefits all if done at the right time and in the right environment.

Check your progress 8

- 1 You are a producer and are planning to produce a short film. List the teams you might want for seamless production of the same. (Indicative answer)
It is very important to first have the captain of the ship, i.e. the director in place. The direction team and the scriptwriter work in tandem with each other. The other teams needed would be the casting, cinematography, sound, set design, editing teams amongst others. It is a collaborative project and perfect coordination is required for fulfillment of the project.

Check your progress 9

- 1 If you are a leader/ manager, what characteristics would you want in your team? (Indicative answer)
An ideal team would be motivated by the common goal, with clarity in purpose and role. There should be a smooth communication flow between members leading to accountability and transparency. Along with a collaborative spirit which rests on mutual trust and faith, there should be easy sharing of resources and a healthy respect for differences in opinions.

Check your progress 10

- 1 What do you understand by the statement, “Management is the profession of control”?
Control establishes a standard, measures actual performance with pre-determined standards, analyses the cause of deviations and accordingly takes corrective action, hence justifying Stafford Beer’s assertion that, “Management is the profession of control”.

Check your progress 11

- 1 How is coordination beneficial to an organisation?

In an organisation, it is important to integrate work performed by different teams/ departments in a project and furthermore different individuals in a team. Coordination leads to unity of purpose and action, it avoids confusion and delays and reduces wastage in all resources, be it manpower or material. Judicious allocation of tasks and follow up ensures there is no overlap or duplication. Its importance is multifarious and beneficial to the growth of the company.

UNIT 3 UNDERSTANDING DISABILITY

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Taking the first step: Exploring disability
 - 3.2.1 Self-Check
 - 3.2.2 What is disability?
 - 3.2.3 Turning the tide
- 3.3 Disability Rights
 - 3.3.1 What are disability rights?
 - 3.3.2 What is the constitutional position on disability in India? Includes education rights
 - 3.3.3 Accessible/ Inclusive Tourism
- 3.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.5 Suggested Readings
- 3.7 Key Words

3.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit will enable you to:

- Understand disability and the challenges in understanding the topic
- Understand disability through experiential exercises
- Understand disability and individuals with disability by reading about some well-known individuals
- Understand the discrimination and deprivation often faced by individuals with disability
- Understand the need to adopt the human-rights based lens to the question of disability
- Read and explore disability rights as mentioned in the Indian government; and the challenges
- Read and explore assistive technology, inclusive education, and inclusive tourism

Note: In this Unit you are encouraged to explore further independently either through reading the articles mentioned or through the Self-Checks and Check your progress.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Think about your everyday experience and routine. You wake up, open your eyes and you unconsciously register it is morning, the light, your room, your step into your slippers easily and walk to the bathroom for your morning routine. You know how to reach for your toothbrush, paste and other things. Once you have freshened up, you select your clothes, you notice the colours of your clothes, get ready and go about your day. You walk on the road and if there is a hole in the road or a dog, you will easily side step aside to avoid them. If you see excrement on the road, you will easily avoid it.

Do you remember a movie that you like? How do you remember about it visually? Our everyday life is very visual, auditory and interactive. Now can you think about how you would feel if suddenly you are unable to hear or see or speak or partially see or partially hear?

The following memories are real as they are from the experience of the writer.

By the time I was five, my *dadi* or my father's mother had lost her sight from both eyes. One because of a disease called glaucoma and the other because of complications from a cataract surgery. In the 1980s we did not have much knowledge and resources to help her. For some reason she also refused to use a stick to help her move around. She was an educationalist who also did a lot of social work when she had her sight but she never learnt braille, which is a tactile system of writing used by visually impaired people. But even when she lost her sight, she inspired me. My *dadi's* lack of sight fascinated me because I admired how well she coped. I was a child and I had very little understanding of technology available to help her. Since she could not see visually TV like the sighted do, she would enjoy listening to it. In addition, her transistor was her world. She knew more about current events than any of us. She listened to the plays, the sports' commentary, especially cricket, and if I remember correctly even movies. Her bedside table was always organised. Each and every bottle had its own specific place. Her shoes or slippers were almost always arranged in a specific way. She wore sari every day and got ready on her own. We always made a point of not changing the arrangement of furniture in our house because it made it easier for *dadi* to move around. She was a talented knitter. She taught me multiplication tables and because of her teacher's instincts, she always knew when I was cheating in reciting the tables. She taught me and my cousins. But one of the memories that had the biggest impact in my life was when we were attending a religious ceremony and I was sitting with her. I was describing to her to the best of my ability what I could see. When I look back at the family photographs of weddings etc, I notice how she seems to be sitting alone. This experience taught me not to see disability with pity-lens because I was exposed to my *dadi* who was always independent⁸.

I was fascinated with my *dadi's* life. I would pretend that I could not see and try to navigate around the house. I counted and knew the steps that would take me to complete one round in my colony and would often walk it while closing my eyes; and it wasn't easy. It made me more

⁸Many would question this statement of my *dad* being 'independent' but that is how I saw her even then.

aware of my surroundings and also perhaps of how people orient themselves in the world. It made me think about ideas of accessibility. Understanding disability is as important as understanding self and understanding different perspectives.

3.2 Taking The First Step: Exploring Disability

3.2.1 Self Check

Let us start with a small experiential exercise. Choose any one of the exercises below:

Exercise 1: Blindfold yourself or tie something around your eyes so that you cannot see anything. For two to three hours go about doing your routine around the house. Do what you would usually do.

Exercise 2: If you have a wheel office chair, then pretend that the chair is a wheel chair. Go around the house, even if its multi-level, doing your routine work including going to the toilet and working in the kitchen. Do this for three-four hours.

In the tables below, note down your self-reflection.

Self-reflection questions	Exercise 1: The Blindfold	Exercise 2: Using the wheel chair
Which exercise did you choose?		
Before you started the experiential exercise, what were you expecting?		
What things/tasks did you find easy to do?		
What things/tasks did you find hard to do?		
What things that you normally do without much difficulty, like locking doors or turning switches on-off, did you suddenly find difficult to manage?		
Was there anything that suddenly made you feel anxious?		
What were the comments or reactions of your family members?		

How did you feel? What went in your head?		
What did you learn about experience of disability?		
Is the design of things in our everyday life, like house, bathroom, access to our house, sinks etc done in a way which makes access easy for people with different abilities or even the elderly?		
Anything else that struck you...?		

3.2.2 What is disability?

The two exercises that we did were part of visible disabilities – sight impairment and physical movement impairment. Disability is much more complex and often not so very clearly visible at all times. It is a fact that almost all of us at some point in our lives may temporarily or permanently experience disability. It could be a fractured limb or chronic migraines, which makes it difficult to even talk. *But it is equally important to remember that even if this is the case, the needs, rights and provisions that focus around disabilities should not become a secondary priority in the name of providing 'equal access to all'.* The question then is – what is disability? Over the years our understanding of what is disability, its consequences, factors that make it worse or help in alleviating it, our approach to disability and more have evolved. And at the same time, it continues to be much contested. This deeper understanding is in large part because of the efforts of the members from the disabled community for their rights.

In its simpler form according to World Health Organisation (WHO), “[a] disability is any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions)⁹”. In the statement above are three key points are important for us to pay attention to. According to the World Health Organization, disability has three components:

1. **Impairment** in a person’s body structure or function, or mental functioning; examples of impairments include loss of a limb, loss of vision or memory loss.
2. **Activity limitation**, such as difficulty in seeing, hearing, walking, or problem solving.
3. **Participation restrictions** in normal daily activities, such as working, engaging in social and recreational activities, and obtaining health care and preventive services.

⁹ (Geneva: 2001) World Health Organization, International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) external icon. WHO.

There is also a debate about the terminology. Some individuals as well as activists prefer the term ‘differently abled,’ while others prefer to use ‘disabled’. Earlier the term ‘handicap’ was used and some people still use it. But the use of the term ‘handicap’ is problematic. *Handicap* began to be applied to physical and mental differences in the early 1900s, when the new fields of sociology and social work started looking at people in terms of their place in society as a whole. More derogatory terms were also used like crippled, lame, imbecile, invalid etc. However, things started to change with the birth of the disability rights movement. ‘Disable’ was adopted as part of self-determination process. This evolution in terminology also reflects the struggle for asserting rights.¹⁰

Causes of disability are also very diverse. It can be due to conditions present at birth that may later affect life, or genetic or environmental factors or on account of injury or caused by longstanding health condition like diabetes. One can be born with a disability. It could also be learning disabilities like dyslexia, which is a reading disability that involves difficulty reading due to problems identifying speech sounds and learning how they relate to letters and words. People when they grow old can get various forms of disabilities, for example memory loss, limited mobility and could require assistance in routine functions.

Think about any member of your family or someone known who 80 years old is or above. What kind of limited physical, mental or emotional limitations have you noticed in them? Disability/ies are also caused by environmental factors. For example, on the night of 2-3 December 1984, there was a gas leak of chemical, methyl isocyanate, from Union Carbide India Ltd.’s pesticide factory in Bhopal, India. It turned the city of Bhopal into a big gas chamber. It killed more than 15,000 people and affected 600,000 workers; and the Bhopal gas tragedy is known as the world’s worst industrial disaster¹¹. In addition, the toxic waste from the factory site was leaking into the ponds of the area, which were the sources of water for the people. Even now the second and third generations of children of the survivors of the tragedy are born with disabilities not seen elsewhere in India. Cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy (MD), Down's syndrome, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), blindness, learning difficulties, and gross motor delay are common and many of the children, now young adults, have multiple conditions.^{12,”}

Accessibility and inclusivity are other two terms that will be used in this Unit. Let us pause and consider what these mean.

Accessibility: **Accessibility** means that websites, tools, facilities, and technologies designed and developed so that people with disabilities can use them. More specifically, people can perceive, understand, navigate, interact with the Web and contribute to the Web.

Inclusivity: It is the practice or policy of providing access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded. It could be people from

¹⁰ To read more on the shift of terminology see (a) Blog titled “So what’s wrong with the word ‘Handicapped?’” (1 April 2018). Southern Adirondack Independent Living (SAIL). URL: <https://sailhelps.org/so-whats-wrong-with-the-word-handicapped/>

¹¹ “What was Bhopal Gas Tragedy,” in *Business Standard*. URL: <https://www.business-standard.com/about/what-is-bhopal-gas-tragedy>

¹² See the project by Rohit Jain, independent Social Documentary Photographer and a short story writer, who reports on the ongoing legacy of the Bhopal Disaster. URL: <https://pulitzercenter.org/people/rohit-jain>

marginalised communities, the LGBTQ community, women, people from poor communities, people with disability, minority groups and Dalits.

In this Unit when these two terms are used they are specifically used for individuals with disability/ies.

It is clear that disability is far more common than we would like to believe and that a common man's understanding of disability is very limited. We often consider people who cannot see completely or hear completely or walk with use of visible aids like wheelchair or crutches as individuals with disabilities. But in fact, this is a very traditional or limited understanding of disability. A common person's perception of the things that an individual with disability can achieve is also very limited. We will start our journey of understanding disability by looking first at examples of individuals with different types of disabilities who have inspired millions and have made significant contributions. This is done for three main reasons. These examples will hopefully encourage the readers (a) to change the ways they see individuals with disabilities; (b) highlight the importance of creating inclusive designs for all; and (c) highlight the importance of providing access to technological and medical advances to individuals.

3.2.3 Turning the Tide

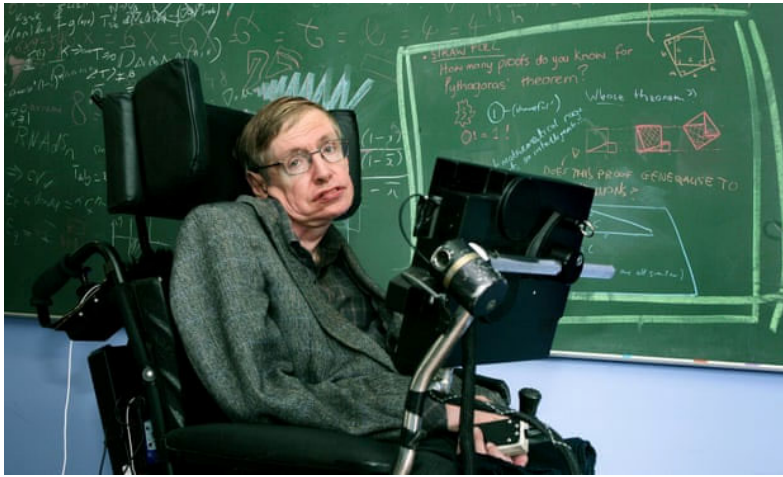
In this section we are going to look at four examples of individuals with disabilities who have contributed to the wider world.

A Brilliant Mind

Stephen Hawking¹³ (1942-2018) is one of the well-known physicists of the 20th Century who contributed to the fields of gravity, black holes and cosmology. He helped determine that black holes are not totally dark but instead emit radiation. He predicted that black holes as tiny as protons were created, governed by both general relativity and quantum mechanics. He also proposed that the universe itself has no boundary, just like the Earth. His books *A Brief History of Time*, and other books aimed at non-scientists like *A Briefer History of Time*, *The Universe in a Nutshell*, *The Grand Design* and *On the Shoulders of Giants*.

In 1963, close to his 21st birthday, Hawking was diagnosed with motor neuron disease or Lou Gehrig's disease. He was not given more than two years to live and yet he beat all odds and made significant contributions in the field of the study of the universe. The disease progressed to such a degree that he was confined to a wheelchair. Hawking even lost his voice. He communicated with the help of a speech-generating device constructed at Cambridge, which was combined with a software programme. It allowed him to communicate in an electronic voice. You may be able to recognise Stephen Hawking from the image below.

¹³Ball, Philip. (7 January 2016). "These are the discoveries that made Stephen Hawking famous," in BBC Earth. URL: <http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/20160107-these-are-the-discoveries-that-made-stephen-hawking-famous>



Stephen Hawking at his office at the department of applied mathematics and theoretical physics at Cambridge University in 2005. Photograph: Murdo Macleod/The Guardian

Having access to technology enabled Hawking to continue his work even after suffering from such severe limitations and restrictions. He had determination and intelligence but it was also the ability to have access to technology that played a huge role in empowering and enabling him.

The Trend Setter



Are you familiar with this famous fashion brand? Thomas Jacob Hilfiger is a world-famous American fashion designer and founder of the corporation by the same name. His brand of clothes is known for its wearability, comfort and style. Hilfiger has won many awards and written many books.

When Thomas Hilfiger was a school student many of his teachers described him as lazy and stupid because he had trouble reading so much so that he decided not to attend college. He suffers from a learning disability known as Dyslexia in which the abilities to read, spell, write and speak are affected. People with dyslexia have trouble connecting the letters they see to the sounds those letters make. For example, the word “cat” might read as “tac”. This is a far more common problem than we imagine. Children and adults with dyslexia are often made fun of but dyslexia does not mean that these individuals are any less capable. Dyslexia is often not detected or

people are unaware. Some famous people that you know have Dyslexia – Richard Branson and Tom Cruise, etc.

But there are strategies that can be adopted to help those who have dyslexia at school – use of audio books, allowing typing rather than writing etc. It is thus important to provide support systems including awareness among teachers and students, educational techniques, and creating an inclusive classroom.¹⁴ This could include (a) organising lessons in a more structured manner by first clearly stating what is going to be taught and before concluding the class, re-iterating what was taught in the lesson; (b) giving clear instructions; (c) ensuring that the student has noted down clearly and ensuring that she/he has the required worksheets. There are also assisted technology that can help individuals with dyslexia. Later on in the Unit, you will be exploring more steps that can be taken to help individuals with dyslexia.

Beating the Odds

Deepa Malik has beaten odds not once but many times. She is a motor rally driver, a swimmer, a sports bike racer, an entrepreneur, a motivational speaker and a prominent disability activist. She has completed an 8-day 1,700 km bike ride to 18,000 feet in sub-zero temperatures. She has won 18 international and more than 54 national medals in various sporting events. Deepa may be confined to a wheelchair after multiple surgeries because of a spinal tumour but her story is of determination and overcoming lack of facilities present for individuals with disabilities. She won a silver medal in the shotput event in the 2016 Rio Summer Paralympics.

Deepa was just 5 years old when she was diagnosed with a spinal tumour. She underwent surgery and between ages of 7 and half years to 9 and a half years, she underwent vigorous physiotherapy and was in a leather chest brace to help keep her spine straight with iron callipers or braces for the legs. She gradually recovered and went on to play every game in the school. But the tumour returned in 1999 and after surgery, she was confined to a wheelchair.



¹⁴ “Top Teaching Strategies for Students with Dyslexia,” in Our Blog, The Dyslexia Resources: <https://dyslexiaresource.org/top-teaching-strategies-for-students-with-dyslexia/>

Deepa Malik¹⁵

Deepa, in one of her interviews, spoken very strongly how access to good physiotherapy, dietary counselling, need-based training and support from family including her own determination empowered and enabled her to develop a stand-alone spirit rather than becoming a victim. Deepa also started *Ability beyond Disability*, which is aimed at sensitising society toward her type of disability. Deepa Mehta was elected as the President of the Paralympic Committee of India in February 2020. The following quote to the Olympic Channel is testimony of her efforts and her motivation for moving into sports administration:

I have mostly won all the medals as a responsible athlete for my country. I have won the Asian Games, the World Championships, have also broken records, and have a Paralympic medal in Rio. I have always found myself as a sports activist rather than a sports person, leading a change. I could make that change whenever I won a medal. I would then force some policies to be changed or create some awareness for para-sport. How sports can empower people with disability. So that was a major motive.¹⁶

Setting the Stage

Many of us may have heard of Helen Keller (1880–1968), an American author, activist and lecturer admired worldwide for overcoming a severe disability – she was both blind and deaf. She lost the abilities of hearing and sight when she was 19 months old and yet learnt to speak. It was because of her efforts to improve the treatment of the deaf and the blind that helped remove the disabled from asylums.

Your task in the following Self-Check would be to find out more about Helen Keller and also explore disability through self-exploration.

Self-Check

1. Getting to know: Below is a list of people. Your task is to find out about them.

a. Pranav Bakshi¹⁷

What is Bakshi known for?

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¹⁵ Image taken from <https://sheroes.com/articles/the-extraordinary-story-of-deepa-malik-rio-paralympics-2016-indian-athletics-records/MjIxOQ==>

¹⁶ Mukherjee, Soham (3 February 2021). “Paralympic: ‘Sports activist’ and ‘woman extraordinaire’ Deepa Mehta leading a change in India,” in Feature, *Olympic Channel*. URL: <https://www.olympicchannel.com/en/stories/features/detail/paralympics-sports-activist-and-woman-extraordinaire-deepa-malik-leading-a-chang/>

¹⁷ Article by Think Change India (4 June 2019). “Meet the 19-year-old model...cannot hold him back,” in *Social Story*. URL: <https://yourstory.com/socialstory/2019/06/autism-model-india-pranav-bakshi-inspiration>

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What does he suffer from?

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Find out more details on this disability

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List names of five people who also suffered or suffer from autism.

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b. Preethi Srinivasan

What are the contributions of Preethi Srinivasan?

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What does she suffer from?

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What are the challenges faced by individuals who are quadriplegic?

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List names of five individuals who are quadriplegic and have carved out a name for themselves.

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c. Helen Keller

What were the contributions of Helen Keller? How did she change the perception that people had of individuals with disability?

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d. Spencer West

What is West known for or what are his achievements?

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What does West suffer from?

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What are the challenges faced by West and how did he overcome them?

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What are the challenges faced by amputees?

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e. What do you think can be done to create awareness about disability?

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f. Schools are one of the most important spaces for children. Think about your school. Was your school disabled friendly? For example, would it have been easier for students in wheelchair or amputation to get around the school? Were there sports that these students would have been able to participate in? Would the students and teachers have been sensitive to students with disabilities? Write your reflection below:

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In the next section, we are going to read about Disability Rights in India, inclusive education, and inclusive tourism.

Check your progress 1

Based on the nature of question, please use internet to find out information. You may need to read articles or interviews. You can also speak to activists who work in the related sector or speak to someone with disability known to you.

1. What is disability?

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2. What is autism? Is there only one kind of autism? List the challenges faced by individuals with autism.

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4. Find out the challenges faced by dyslexic students in schools and universities.

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5. Find out the challenges faced by visually impaired individuals in India.

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6. What kind of disabilities can disease like diabetes lead to?

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7. What have your learning points in the understanding of disability been thus far? Give at least 4 points.

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8. Find out information on Paralympics. What is it? When was it started? What are the various sports that come under Paralympics?

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3.3 DISABILITY RIGHTS

3.3.1 What are disability rights?

The definition of disability is not simplistic as it has appeared thus far in this Unit. The WHO's reframed definition. Even WHO's understanding of 'disability' has evolved over time and yet many feel that even this definition is too medical and centred on individual and 'does not adequately clarify the interaction between societal conditions or expectations and unique circumstances of a disabled individual'¹⁸.

The British Council defines it as:

Disability is the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a society which takes little or no account of people who have impairments and thus excludes them from mainstream activities¹⁹.

This is important as it connects disability as a consequence of discrimination and disregards the unique circumstances of people with disabilities. Bringing attention to the *humanness* of individuals with disability/ies is essential. To many of the reader's addition of the word 'humanness' may sound odd. However, if you step back and critically think of your own attitude towards anyone you have seen who either in a wheelchair was or visually impaired, it may not come as a surprise. Words like '*bechara* or *bechari* or *lachar* or *lachari*' in Hindi and their equivalent in other languages are often used for individual(s) with disability/-ies. Most people cannot see beyond the disability to note the 'humanness', their aspirations, their desires and their

¹⁸See footnote 2.

¹⁹ Mohit, Anuradha, Meera Pillai and Pratiti Rungta (2006). *Rights of the Disabled*. National Human Rights Commission. URL: https://nhrc.nic.in/sites/default/files/DisabledRights_1.pdf

abilities among other features. In fact, in many cultures children born with disability or those who become disabled later on are considered a curse or even confined to the house. Sometimes parents or family members go as far as committing individuals with disability/ies in special homes. This is why the intervention of disability rights as well as the activism of members from the community have been of utmost importance. Thus, the clause or principle of non-discrimination helps to make human rights in general 'relevant in the specific context of disability, just as it does in the contexts of age, sex and children'²⁰.

The main responsibility for ensuring respect for the rights of individuals with disability/ies rests with governments. Various Acts, policies and schemes have been implemented and more need to be implemented for the security, enrichment and empowerment of individuals with disability/ies. According to Rajib Bhattacharya, 70 million disabled Indians continue to be treated as second-class citizen and face continuous marginalisation and discrimination²¹.

3.3.2 What is the constitutional position on disability in India?

In this section, we will explore some of the provisions made in the Constitution of India for individuals with disability/ies. While exploring this, we will pay attention to 'inclusive education'. It is equally important to note that the topic of the rights of individuals with disability/ies is a complex one and below is a shortened version of it.

Kalpana Kannabriansuccinctly summarises the finding of the Disability Rights Monitoring Project that attempted a detailed assessment and mapping of policy relating to persons with disabilities in India:

While the Indian Constitution prohibits discrimination per se, it does not explicitly prohibit discrimination on grounds of disability. However, a seven judge constitutional bench of the Supreme Court of India [in 1992] *Indra Sawhney vs. Union of India* held that the "spirit of Articles 14 [right to equality] 15 [right against discrimination] and 16 [right against discrimination in public employment]" allowed for discrimination and affirmative actions for persons with disabilities. As a result of this decision, the Constitution may be read as explicitly prohibiting discrimination against persons with disabilities. The fundamental right to life enshrined in the Indian Constitution provides the guarantee of life with liberty and dignity to all persons resident in India. The right of persons with disabilities to respect, dignity and freedom is part of this generic right to life. However, the recognition of disability as part of a larger terrain of human diversity is something that has not yet entered official discourse on disabilityrights. Article 21 of the Constitution of India protects the Right to Life and Personal Liberty, which are inclusive of the principles of inherent dignity and individual autonomy for all persons resident in India. This, together with Article 14, the Right to Equality before law provide the

²⁰ Bhattacharyya, Rajib (2014). Disability Laws in India: A Study in *International Journal of Research (IJR)*. Vol-1. Issue-4. Page 99-115. ISSN 2348-6848.

²¹See note 15.

conditioning environment for specific laws and policies that uphold fundamental rights for different classes of individuals²².

The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) was enacted to enforce the fundamental right to education for children between six and fourteen years of age. With the passage of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPWD Act), inclusive education got statutory backing in India. The RPWD Act defines inclusive education as “[a] system of education wherein students with and without disability learn together and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities”. Recommendations of the Act include non-discrimination in schools, accessible infrastructure, reasonable accommodations, individualised supports, use of Braille and Indian Sign language in teaching, and monitoring among others. The policy has provisions for recruitment of special educators with cross-disability training and incorporates disability awareness within teacher education. In addition, India ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2007, which envisions free, quality, inclusive education as the fundamental human right of every child with a disability.

In 2016, Rights to Persons with Disabilities Act was passed that replaced the earlier Persons with Disabilities Act of 1995. It was hailed as a landmark act as it increased the number of disabilities from just seven to twenty-one, and increased the quota of reservation for persons with disabilities from 3% to 4% in government jobs and 3% to 5% in higher education institutions²³.

But even though these acts have been passed there is a huge gap in reality. Schools either have limited assisted technology or none. Assistive technology is technology used by individuals with disability/-ies in order to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible. For example, in schools the assistive technology that can be used are – electronic worksheets, talking calculators, phonetic spelling software, videotaped social skills, dotbook with Braille display²⁴ more mobile prosthetics etc. Teachers are not trained or there is absence or lack of Special Educators. Schools often lack infrastructure to make it easier for students with various types and degrees of disability to move around. Many schools teach foreign language or a modern Indian language but do not consider teaching sign language or braille as part of language.

The above are just small examples of problems that students and adults with disability continue to face in accessing **quality** education. It is not important to just provide education but the emphasis is on **quality** education.

²² Kannabrian, Kalpana (2009). Monitoring the Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Laws, Policies and Programs in India. York University: Disability Rights Promotion International. URL: <http://www.yorku.ca/drpi/files/IndiaLawsRep.pdf>

²³ Jha, Martand (3 December 2017). “India has a long road ahead to combat challenges faced by persons with disabilities,” in Health, The Wire. URL: <https://thewire.in/health/persons-with-disabilities-challenges-india>

²⁴ This device is developed by IIT Delhi, KritiKal Solutions, Pheonix Medical Systems, and Delhi-based Saksham Trust. For more examples of assistive technology see webpage: <https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/technology/assistive-technology-for-persons-with-disabilities/1759947/>

3.3.3 Accessible/ Inclusive Tourism

Let us look at a collage of images from one of the unique service providers known as NATIVE (Network of Accessible Tourism for an Inclusion Valued Economy²⁵). As you look at the collage, make a note how tourism related activities or facilities have been made accessible for individuals with disability/-ies – use of braille for example.



Which image really caught your attention? Why?

Below we are going to read two examples of what steps have been taken by various hotels to make tourism accessible based on this interview.

Example 1:

Paco Irizar, owner of Ruralsuite Hotel Apartaments in Spain, designed special furniture to make each apartment's kitchen wheelchair accessible. A piece under the glass top is removable so those in wheelchair can cook and wash their dishes.

Example 2:

NATIVE worked with Jean-Pierre Datcharry, owner of Kasbah Dar Daïf, Morocco. Their collaboration led to the creation of a wheelchair adaptable to fit on a camel's hump (see the image in the collage). In addition, the tents are equipped with adaptive toilets.

²⁵To read more about NATIVE, listen or read the interview, *Native Hotels- Accessible Tourism*, with the creator of the organization Pablo Ramón in the *Ability Magazine*. If you go to the website of the *Ability Magazine*, you will note an additional feature. Every written article can also be listened to, which makes it accessible for people with certain disabilities. URL: <https://abilitymagazine.com/native-hotels-accessible-tourism/>

Other steps that can be undertaken is to train the staff. Hospitality and tourism are two of the largest growing sectors in terms of employment and for the disabled consumers. Apart from making both disable friendly, these two sectors can also provide quality and well-paid employment opportunities to individuals with disability/-ies. For example, the Lemon Tree Hotels have been gradually creating inclusive employment opportunities since 1980s by hiring people with disabilities. According to the article printed in 2018²⁶, ‘out of 4,500 employees spread across 40 hotels in 23 locations, over 13 per cent are differently-abled’. They have employees from Down Syndrome, hearing disability or limb impairment etc.

In both these examples, work of NATIVE and the Lemon Tree Hotels, the interlinks between inclusive facilities, inclusive service, inclusive employment opportunities and human rights are very clearly visible.

3.4 Check your progress 2

1. Why is it important to shift our approach to disability from charity-based or pity-based to human rights-based?

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2. Explain what is assistive technology. How can it help students with disability?

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3. Find out and list four Rights of education in India for people with disabilities.

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4. Find out and list four Rights of employment in India for people with disabilities.

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²⁶Narayanan, Chitra (12 January, 2018). “Service with a smile and the best of ability,” in *The Hindu: Business Line*. URL: <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/columns/chitra-narayanan/service-with-a-smile-and-the-best-of-ability/article9732196.ece>.

Don't ignore the people

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3.5 LET US SUM UP

In conclusion, it is clear that understanding disability is a complex and challenging subject. Yet it is equally important to engage with the topic and also understand it better. We must be aware of the efforts of activists from the disability community who have pushed and continue to push for adopting a human-rights approach to disability in order to make our world more inclusive and accessible. Through the examples of individuals with various disabilities, it is clear that having a disability does not translate into not having great potential. Providing technology, facilities, accepting it and supporting, enabling training and access to medical facilities are some of the important ways to empower and enable individuals with disabilities.

3.6 SUGGESTED READINGS

Articles in the online Ability Magazine. URL: <https://abilitymagazine.com>

Exclusive conversation with Mukesh Nayak, Director of Physiotimes and published in the online magazine Ability Magazine. URL: <https://abilitymagazine.com/deepa-malik/>

Jha, Martand (3 December 2017). “India has a long road ahead to combat challenges faced by persons with disabilities,” in Health, The Wire. URL: <https://thewire.in/health/persons-with-disabilities-challenges-india>.

Narayanan, Chitra (12 January, 2018). “Service with a smile and the best of ability,” in *The Hindu: Business Line*. URL: <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/columns/chitra-narayanan/service-with-a-smile-and-the-best-of-ability/article9732196.ece>.

Native Hotels- Accessible Tourism, with the creator of the organization Pablo Ramón in the *Ability Magazine*.

“What was Bhopal Gas Tragedy,” in *Business Standard*. URL: <https://www.business-standard.com/about/what-is-bhopal-gas-tragedy>

(Geneva: 2001) World Health Organization, International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) external icon. WHO.

Note: Most of the articles mentioned in this Unit should be read in order to understand disability better. You may find links to other sources in these references.

3.7 ANSWERS

Check your progress 1

1. What is disability?

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), “[a] disability is any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions).”

2. What is autism? Is there only one kind of autism? List the challenges faced by individuals with autism.

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviours, speech and nonverbal communication. Some of the challenges faces by individuals with autism are:

- a) Not treated well in school and in social interactions
- b) Autistic individuals are often discriminated
- c) Many autistic individuals find it difficult to communicate with others

3. Find out the challenges faced by dyslexic students in schools and universities. Some of the challenges faced by dyslexic students in schools and universities are:

- a) Teachers and students can be insensitive to dyslexic students and their needs Because they may not understand the problem and how to help.
- b) Dyslexic students in schools and universities often don't get the needed help and Guidance that can help improve their abilities and aptitude.
- c) Lack of awareness on dyslexia often creates short- and long-term problems.
- d) People with dyslexia often face stigmas of various kinds – social, cultural, Sometimes religious

4. Find out the challenges faced by visually impaired individuals in India. Some of the challenges faced by visually impaired individuals in India are:

- a. Lack of trained teachers and faculties that would enable individuals with visual Impairment to get proper training and adaptability skills
- b. Infrastructural problems like potholes on the roads, bad pavements, lack of Talking traffic signals, lack of braille signage, dirty roads etc lead to many

Challenges.

c. Lack of easily and readily available technology at affordable prices for Individuals with visual impairment

d. Various kinds of stigma

e. Lack of affordable medical care and facilities

5. What kind of disabilities can disease like diabetes lead to?
There are seven common side effects of diabetes:

a. Foot ulcers

b. Cardiovascular disease

c. Vision impairment

d. Gum disease

e. Fatigue

f. Stroke

g. Nerve Damage

Check your progress 2

1. Why is it important to shift our approach to disability from charity-based or pity-based to human rights-based?

Human rights are very essential and that every living human needs in order to live a life that helps them live to their true potential. These rights should be enjoyed by all without any discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, religion, economic or social status, medical condition etc. By this understanding of human rights, it is important to approach disability from human rights perspective.

2. Explain what assistive technology is. How can it help students with disability?

Assistive technology helps people who have difficulty speaking, typing, writing, remembering, pointing, seeing, hearing, learning, walking, and many other things. It can make education accessible to learners with disability. Students who struggle with learning can use AT to help with subjects like reading, writing, and math. AT can also help kids and adults with the tasks of daily life

For example, a wheelchair, an app that reads text aloud or has a keyboard for typing

3. Find out and list four Rights of Education in India for people with disabilities.

Below is a list of some Rights of Education in India for people with disabilities:

- The Constitution of India applies uniformly to every legal citizen of India, whether they are healthy or disabled in any way (physically or mentally). Right to education is guaranteed under the Constitution of India. The right to education is available to all citizens including the disabled. Article 29(2) of the Constitution provides that no citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on the ground of religion, race, caste or language.
 - Article 45 of the Constitution directs the State to provide free and compulsory education for all children (including the disabled) until they attain the age of 14 years. No child can be denied admission into any education institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on the ground of religion, race, caste or language.
 - Every Child with disability shall have the rights to free education till the age of 18 years in integrated schools or special schools.
 - Appropriate transportation, removal of architectural barriers and restructuring of modifications in the examination system shall be ensured for the benefit of children with disabilities.
 - Children with disabilities shall have the right to free books, scholarships, uniform and other learning material.
 - Special Schools for children with disabilities shall be equipped with vocational training facilities.
 - Non-formal education shall be promoted for children with disabilities.
 - Teachers' Training Institutions shall be established to develop requisite manpower.
 - Parents may move to an appropriate forum for the redressal of grievances regarding the placement of their children with disabilities.
4. Find out and list four rights of employment in India for people with disabilities.

Some of the rights (more than four) for employment in India for people with disabilities are:

- 3% of vacancies in government employment shall be reserved for people with disabilities, 1% each for the persons suffering from:

Blindness or Low Vision

Hearing Impairment

Locomotor Disabilities & Cerebral Palsy

- Health and Safety measures and creation of a non- handicapping, environment in places where persons with disabilities are employed
- Government Educational Institutes and other Educational Institutes receiving grant from

Government shall reserve at least 3% seats for people with disabilities.

- No employee can be sacked or demoted if they become disabled during service, although they can be moved to another post with the same pay and condition. No promotion can be denied because of impairment.



UNIT: 4 PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 People Management as an Important Soft Skill
- 4.3 Attributes of People Management
- 4.4 Significance of People Management in an Organisation
- 4.5 Human Resource Management – Some Definitions
- 4.6 People Management as a Human Resource Function
- 4.7 Steps to Improve People Management Skills
- 4.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.9 Suggested Readings
- 4.10 Answers

4.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this unit is to help you

- understand the significance of people management as an important soft skill
- become aware of the attributes of people management
- enhance your understanding of its importance as leaders and managers
- be aware of people management as a human resource function
- work on your people management skills

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The key behind the success of any organization is not just the business idea, the organizational structure, or the financial backing but the human resources engaged in it. The workforce, be it at the managerial level or the workers in the factory, the sales team or the advertisement team, or employees in marketing or finances or production etc., it is the people working in the organization at any level who are the root of its success, and it is imperative that these roots are nurtured with care to ensure the growth of the organization. In today's globalized world, where teams are of larger sizes, diverse and varied, with increasing interaction in the virtual space across transnational borders and time zones, it is even more imperative that managing the

workforce is given due attention and care. Human resource management is an important and integral function of corporate management, whose main task is not just to ensure that the best suited person is employed for a specific task but is also responsible for aligning each employee's aspiration and needs with organizational goals and growth. While this is a separate department and will be dealt with in this chapter as well, what will be highlighted here is 'people management' as a key soft skill which is also an important leadership and managerial skill. What is meant by people management and what are its attributes and how it can be improved will be discussed at length here along with its significance in an organization as well.

Check your progress 1

- 3 Why people management is even more important in today's globalized workspace?

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- 2 What hurdles can you think off when people work together in the virtual space?

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4.2 People Management as an Important Soft Skill

The importance of soft skills be it in the personal space or in the professional sphere cannot be stressed enough. Employers are no longer looking just for subject expertise but are looking for the right balance between soft and hard/technical skills. Soft skills which are also known as people's skills include balanced interpersonal relationships, effective communication, critical thinking, and problem solving, flexibility and adaptability, and empathy amongst several other skills. Be it leaders or managers or even team players, the underlying soft skill on which the foundation of success depends is people management. People management is an all-encompassing skill which precludes understanding of humans, their personality types, actions, and responses. A good leader or a manager can effectively manage his/her team or followers only if s/he understands them. He or she must be aware of the team member's competencies and personality type. With teams becoming increasingly large and diverse, people management has gained even more importance. It is imperative to understand team member's individual competency and personality type and align collective goals and individual aspirations, to motivate their collective endeavour, to enhance productivity in a conducive and stress-free environment. People management not only includes giving the right support and motivation but

also enhances trust, transparency, and accountability. Leaders and/or managers should also be able to mediate, find effective solutions, and be efficient organisers as well. The next section delineates attributes that define people management.

Check your progress 2

- 1 What do you understand by the term people management?

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4.3 Attributes of People Management

The term ‘people management’ denotes a large spectrum of soft skills which are delineated below with examples.

1. Effective communication skills

The essence of people management lies in effective communication. More importantly, it is imperative that the leader/manager be a good listener. Active listening helps in understanding people and their problems. And to be able to listen and understand, it is important that there be no barriers in communication such as bias or prejudice. Once there is clear understanding, it is equally important that the right feedback, whether in terms of job allocation or resolution of problems be clear and precise. For example, if a team member is not able to give due attention at work, it is better to talk to him/her and understand the reasons behind it rather than to harangue or chide the employee for not meeting the deadline. This will be counterproductive. Effective communication reaches out to the root of the problem and adds to productivity and efficiency besides improving interpersonal relationships.

2. Judicious allocation of tasks

Judicious people management begins with allocating the right task to the right person. To understand the technical and other aspects of the job at hand and to allocate it to the person with the most suitable specialization or competency will ensure greater productivity and timely completion. While employees with multi skills are desirable in teams, but increasingly there is greater specialization in the workspace and people management includes the necessary vision in ensuring that individual competencies and collective goals are aligned. For example, if a legal firm in India has to file an intellectual property or patent case in a medical field, having medical experts on board will be a huge help or at least lawyers with a strong background in that specific field.

3. Understanding personality types

It is not enough to keep in mind the team member’s niche competency or specialization but also to factor in their personality type. For timely and effective completion of task, it is important to have a cohesive team which works well together. Given the fact that larger

corporations are multinational with large and diverse teams who now also operate in the virtual space across varying time zones, which can obfuscate or complicate interpersonal relationships and lead to complications, it is even more important now that leaders/managers understand human psychology and the interplay of human behaviour and relationships. For example, while putting together a mixed-race team with different nationalities and ethnicities, it is important to ensure that all team members have a higher degree of emotional intelligence. And an ideal team is also a balanced mix of different personality types, aggressive and passive, extroverts and introverts etc. Hence people management precludes a sensitive and sensitized understanding of human behaviour and personality types.

4. Balanced appreciation and constructive criticism

Leaders and managers have a difficult role to play, they are responsible for completion of a task on time and that is possible only if all team members are in sync with each other and the collective goal to be achieved. And that is possible only if everyone works in harmony which is not the case. Humans are complex and there are several factors at work in team management. Not everyone takes criticism easily and it is important for it to be constructive and for there to be the right balance between appreciation and censure. For example, if a manager has to point out something not done right, it is best to first appreciate the team member for past work done or his or her attributes before pointing out what could have been done better. This will drive home the point and lead to a balanced working relationship. People management is also about mentoring junior colleagues and helping them grow.

5. Problem solving skills

Managers and leaders are confronted with problems at every front, some are expected and factored in, for example logistical issues or delays in supplies or hardware/software snags amongst several others. But there may be other pressing issues occasioned by interpersonal problems. Large and diverse team sizes often lead to a clash of personality types, or misunderstandings because of diverse nationalities, ethnicities and race. Lack of sensitivity towards gender, caste and class only compound the problem. People management skills are needed to ensure that these issues are dealt with utmost sensitivity and care. Managers have to be expert in conflict resolution and mediation, their task involves high critical thinking and problem-solving skills, all of which come under the larger umbrella of people management.

6. Motivation

Managing people and getting them to work cohesively and collaborate proactively is an important aspect of people management. There will always be some tasks that members will not want to take up and there will always be some team members who lag and are generally slackers. Not everyone has the same dedication or commitment to the group goals. It is imperative that managers and leaders have excellent persuasive and motivational skills. Motivation involves periodic assessment and appreciation, off site recreational activities and competitions, motivational speeches and workshops, establishing awards and suitable remunerations. It could be as basic as one to one meetings to understand the team member better to an organizational platform to motivate employees. For example, a manager of a sales team may announce rewards on accomplishment of individual targets, a leader may establish the practice of employee of

the month/year award or the organization management may encourage offsite motivational workshops to encourage employees. All of this leads to enhanced productivity and employee satisfaction as well.

7. Nurture Trust

Mutual trust and confidence are the foundation on which interpersonal relationships rest. A hierarchical organizational relationship of manager and subordinate necessitates a greater need to nurture trust and faith in each other. Subordinates usually feel exploited and that impacts their emotional balance and hence productivity. People management skills include fostering an environment wherein employees/ subordinates feel that the management cares and values them. While hierarchy in an organization is important as it gives it structure and augments organizational processes, however, team members must be valued with trust, respect and appreciation and must be made to feel as valuable assets of the organization. For example, multinational giants like Facebook and Google do not have enclosed workspaces for managers demarcating their higher position, the office set up is organic and casual. Each member is inculcated with a feeling that he or she is trusted and appreciated.

8. Inculcate patience

Managing people is not an easy task, there are several variables and though human behaviour as a collective can be predictable, individual responses cannot. There will be situations in which team members do not respond as expected or there seems to be no solution in sight to interpersonal issues. Aggression and imposition of hierarchy is not the solution and will only aggravate the problem. The need of the hour is patience and tolerance, to listen to all opinions patiently and to come up with a reasoned and rationalized solution. Patience is a desirable managerial soft skill and not everyone has optimum levels of restraint or fortitude. These have to be inculcated with due practice. Meditation and mindfulness help in nurturing patience to deal with recalcitrant elements. For example, fault finding between team members must be discouraged, and attempts must be made at cohesiveness of the peer group wherein one is not pitched against the other. Active listening and critical thinking are integral to finding solutions and both need patience.

9. Balanced judgement

Balanced judgement is integral to people management. To be unbiased and non-judgmental requires high levels of emotional intelligence. It is imperative to listen to all perspectives and opinions, to be able to process them with a calm mind, and to deliberate on the issue at hand and not form an opinion in haste. Gathering knowledge and views of experts helps when one is not sure of what is the right thing to do. Yet at the same time, one cannot sit on a problem for too long as that will only compound the issue at stake. Timely and balanced resolution is needed, and one has to hone one's critical thinking and problem-solving skills to come up with a balanced judgement. For example, production of medical syringes had to be increased significantly during a medical emergency necessitated by the pandemic but workers were also falling prey to COVID 19 and were battling with their own anxiety driven by fear. The manager is under pressure by organizational leadership to enhance productivity and is also dealing with the fears and anxieties of workers who refuse to work. It is imperative that the manager listens to both

leadership and workers equally and comes with an effective solution based on balanced judgement which leads to increased productivity with workers at ease.

10. Micromanagement

While generally it is understood that people management is about micromanagement and handling of team members as individuals, in today's multinational organization where teams are spread over transnational virtual spaces, people management is more and more about micromanagement as well. It is about nurturing skills and letting individuals work on their own independently as long as they are able to meet the organizational targets. In such cases, adherence to rigid workflows and processes of reporting are cast aside and employees are given more freedom and independence to choose their own work styles without a manager hovering over them. People management is also about striking the right balance between micro and macro management depending upon the composition of the team and varying competencies.

Check your progress 3

- 1 Which key soft skills are included in people management?

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4.4 Significance of People Management in an Organisation

The benefits of people management are immense. A content and productive workforce is the backbone of any organization. If they are comfortable working with the management, leadership and peer groups, their output increases manifold and the attrition rate of the company decreases significantly. Not only does the organization benefit but it is beneficial to the individual employees as well. They have a higher degree of satisfaction, and it augments their desire and need to do better. This further improves their efficiency and productivity. Effective people management will lead to a conducive work environment and will also attract more talent and niche specialization. This will further the company's image, prospects, and morale. Hence sufficient attention to people management ensures progress of all stakeholders of the company. Several advantages of the same are detailed below:

1. Builds team spirit

Teams in today's globalized multinational environment are large, complex, and diverse with different competencies. Moreover, the diversity in terms of gender, caste, colour and geographical space and time zones makes the task of the manager/leader even more difficult. It is important to ensure camaraderie between members of the team, an easy flow of communication and mutual understanding and cooperation. Given the diversity, it is evident that there will be several barriers including linguistic and cultural. People

management is integral to building team spirit, to factor in variables and to create an environment wherein all work in tandem in the same direction.

2. Stimulates and Motivates

People management also entails stimulating the team and keeping its morale high. The manager/leader has to constantly strive to motivate the team towards the target goals. There are several ways in which to stimulate and motivate team members. The manager/leader must ensure that there is clarity in purpose, the vision and mission and goals of the project must be clearly stated to avoid confusion. The team must be led by example set by the leader who should encourage the team by negating negativity and by being optimistic and positive. The team need not be monitored at every step, it is neither conducive to the employee's growth and nor will it foster confidence. Stimulated and motivated employees are propelled by their own spirit and will be a huge asset to the organization and help meet organizational targets on time.

3. Nurtures Niche Competencies

While multitasking employees are desirable by any organization, there is a growing demand for those who are specialists in their fields. Niche competencies and specialisations save time and effort and help both the organization and the individual grow faster. People management helps allocating the right task to the right individual which ensures efficiency and competency. If a person is allocated the work that he or she is trained for and enjoys the most, higher is the motivation and satisfaction and greater is the productivity. This also helps the individual in advanced training in his or her field and further nurtures their competencies. It helps them develop and augment and enhance their knowledge base. Ultimately, a satisfied employee who has the best suited learning and work environment makes for a content workforce who will evolve with the organization and help in its growth.

4. Lowers Attrition Rate

Effective people management goes a long way in lowering the attrition rate of the organization. Attrition rate is the 'employee turnover' or the rate at which employees leave the organization for another competitive company or other reasons. Managing and nurturing employees proactively helps in not only attracting the right talent but also in retaining it. In a competitive work scenario where headhunters are on the look out to poach the best employees, who are also willing to jump ship when attracted by better offers in terms of pay structure and other stimulants, it is even more necessary to be able to create a conducive work environment where the employee is motivated to stay for the long run. Good people management lowers the attrition rate which helps retain talent and reduces the cost of training and development of new employees.

5. Enhances Work Productivity

People management is the key to employee satisfaction. A conducive work environment where they are content and motivated leads to enhanced productivity. Ultimately a satisfied workforce will lead to a satisfied management, hence every organization must

invest in people management strategies and processes. People management also includes investing in the employee's skill enhancement and growth of knowledge base. Several organisations motivate their employees to pursue higher degrees or advance their skills. They are willing to even pay for it. This investment will reap manifold benefits and lead to greater productivity and profits.

6. Envision and Prepare for the Future

While the primary functions of people management are to search for the right talent and skill, allocate the right job, to nurture and motivate the employee, to be able to train and also retain him or her, to align individual goals and group targets, all of which enhances productivity, employee satisfaction and achievement of target goals, there is yet another benefit of effective people management. The manager/leader must also envision the skills needed in this fast-changing world of technology driven needs and ensure that the employee is future-ready and prepared to meet upcoming challenges. This ensures a smooth run and that there are no ripples in the transition. This involves an active engagement in the relevant field, to be able to understand and read past and present trends and to be able to gauge and predict the future requirements to prepare a task force for it. This helps an organization stay much ahead of competition.

Check your progress 4

- 1 How can people management enhance productivity?

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- 2 How can people management envision and prepare employees' for the future?

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4.5. Human Resource Management – Some Definitions

Peter F. Drucker coined the term 'Human Resource' in 1954 in his pioneering book *The Practice of Management*, a term that rapidly gained importance in the world of corporate management and planning. Michael Armstrong (2006) emphasised its significance in management as a "strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization's most valued assets –

the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives.”

Edwin B. Flippo, an expert on management defines human resource management as “planning, organizing, directing, controlling of procurement, development, compensation, integration, maintenance and separation of human resources to the end that individual, organizational and social objectives are achieved” and Pigors and Myers sum it up as “basically a method of developing potentialities of employees so that they feel maximum satisfaction of their work and give their best efforts to the organization”. The main purpose as can be seen from the above attempts to define HR, is to maximise the potential of human assets and human capital of the organization and to calibrate it to organizational goals and targets.

Check your progress 5

- 1 What do you understand by the term ‘Human Resources’?

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4.6 People Management as Human Resource Function

Human Resource Function refers to the activity of sourcing and retaining human capital, nurturing these human assets by providing the right inputs and directives and aligning them towards organizational goals. People management is an integral part of the human resource function in organisations, it is a subset which entails understanding employee behaviour, work ethics and interpersonal relationships. It also accounts for sourcing talent, mentoring and nurturing it, enhancing work output as well as retaining the right work force. Furthermore, people management helps weave individual employees into the larger work milieu of the organization to retain a homogenous fabric that defines the work ethos of that organization. On the other hand, certain multinational giants like Facebook and Google have come up with strategies at the workplace that encourage heterogeneity and individual work styles, freedom from rigid hierarchies in a bid to encourage creativity and enhance output. Whichever strategy is employed by any organization, people management is about adhering to it, improving on it, and making it a worthwhile experience for the employees as well to gain their trust and loyalty. It is also about creating a brand for the organization, a work culture that speaks for itself and attracts likeminded personnel. It is not just about what the prospective employee can give the organization but also about how the latter can be integral to the former’s growth and development.

Check your progress 6

1 What is meant by Human Resource Management?

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4.7 Steps to Improve People Management Skills

While some have inherent leadership and management skills, other have to cultivate them. It is a lifelong learning process, but not a difficult one. One has to work consciously on acquiring and enhancing people management skills. As is clear by now, it entails a vast spectrum of other soft skills such as empathy, emotional intelligence, communication, critical thinking and problem solving amongst others. It is important first to ask yourself the following questions, to do a SWOC analysis about yourself to be able to understand clearly where there is scope for improvement.

1. How would I rate myself as a manager/ leader?
2. What is the perception of my team members about me?
3. How well do I understand my team members?
4. Do I contribute to the growth of my team?
5. Am I able to motivate the team to meet the organizational targets?
6. Is my team comfortable working under my supervision?
7. How do I react under stress?
8. Am I a good mediator and can I handle conflicts with patience and judgement?
9. Can I think critically and come up with a judicious solution when there is a problem?
10. Do I enjoy my role as a manager/leader?

Clarity about oneself helps to cultivate, nurture, and enhance skills that serve to make one a better manager. Following are some basic steps to improve one's people management skills.

1. Ensure Clarity of Goals

A manager/leader should be clear not just about the organizational goals and targets but also the strategy and process to achieve it. If he or she is confused, it will only lead to further confusion in the team and the purpose will be defeated. To maintain clarity, keep the goal in sight, check periodically if you are on the right path, seek feedback and opinion not just from your superiors but also peer group and team members.

2. Improve Communication Skills

Work on your communication skills, it is the foundation to effective and efficient people management. First and foremost, practice active listening, listen to people carefully. Understand the message being communicated in its entirety including the signals being conveyed through para linguistic features. It is equally important to focus on the message you are conveying, it should be precise and concise. Work on reducing barriers if any in the communication process. Barriers could be generated by interpersonal issues. Seek feedback periodically. Constructive feedback helps in improving communication.

3. Inculcate Patience

It is important to be patient for effective people management as there are several variables in human behaviour, action and reaction. One must not react immediately but instead analyse the whys and wherefores before giving a suitable response. Patience is integral in corporate people management as delivery of targets on time can create a stressful situation. To be calm and help create a conducive atmosphere for others to work in is a significant component of people management. Regular meditation, yoga and mindfulness should be practiced to inculcate patience and tolerance.

4. Augment Interpersonal Skills

People management is all about handling people, with multifarious personality types and moods and attitudes. Each person comes with his or her own baggage in terms of prejudices and stereotypes. Managing people is a complex task and it is important to be affable and genial. If you are easy going and easy to approach, people will turn to you for guidance and feedback, they will look towards you to solve problems. It is important that others relate to you and vice versa. Develop a keen understanding of others, reach out to them, and find out their perspective before putting yours forward and always be approachable and positive. This goes a long way in enhancing interpersonal and people management skills.

5. Enhance Flexibility and be Adaptable

Seldom does anything go as per plan, while one may have a plan B or C in place for times when the sailing is not very smooth, it is important to be flexible and adapt to changing circumstances. One must learn not to be rigid and obstinate but always to be open to different ways of approaching a problem. It is a learning experience, and everyone benefits from it. Reach out to the team for their opinion and take them along with you. Remember, a leader or a manager is as good as his/ her team. Be a part of the team from inside rather than lead it from the outside.

6. Encourage Trust and Build Faith

Trust and faith are the foundation on which the bilateral relationship of manager/leader and team stands. Trust has to be built and faith fostered. It does not come naturally. Encourage trust and nurture faith by sharing confidence and delegating responsibly. It

will take time but must be nurtured and cultivated carefully. Managing people is based on cooperation and interest in each other.

7. Heighten Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence is the foundation of all soft skills and particularly of people management. It is the ability to understand others without any prejudice or bias, to be able to put yourself in someone else's place and understand them. Empathy and compassion will lead to higher emotional intelligence and better people management. The job of the manager/leader is not to make life difficult for the team member but to create an empathetic and conducive work environment where the member feels at ease.

8. Enhance Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills

Team members or employees will look towards you for solutions to myriad problems, it important to enhance your critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This will lead to better people management. Thinking on the spot and out of the box is crucial as innovative thinking leads to innovative solutions. Furthermore, problems compound and add to the travails of a manager, it imperative to keep a clear head, patience and tolerance. Evaluate your choices judiciously and solve the problem timely.

Check your progress⁷

- 1 Enumerate the ways in which people management skills can be augmented.

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4.8 LET US SUM UP

This unit focused on people management as a key soft skill which is also an integral human resource function. It focused on how the employees of any organization are its human asset and capital and the essential purpose and function of people management in sourcing, nurturing, and retaining talent in the organization. Furthermore, the multifarious attributes of people management were delineated along with its significance in the corporate structure. People management is also a significant subset of Human Resource Management. This was also discussed in detail along with markers to improve people management skills.

4.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

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4.10 ANSWERS

Check your progress 1

- 1 Why is people management even more important in today's globalized workspace?

In today's globalized multinational corporations, where team sizes are large and diverse, spread over different continents with members of different gender, class, caste, nationalities, ethnicities, and competencies management of teams has gained even more significance.

- 2 What hurdles can you think off when people work together in the virtual space?

There are several hurdles as well as advantages when people work together in the virtual space. Different time zones make working together difficult as adjustments have to be made, some members might end up working late into the night or start very early in the morning. Since the virtual space is entirely dependent on technology, there may be technical snags at times. Furthermore, since members may belong to different nationalities and ethnicities, there may be barriers in communication making people management a far more complex task.

Check your progress 2

- 1 What do you understand by the term people management?

People management is an all-encompassing skill which precludes sourcing the right talent, nurturing it, honing and developing its skills and making efforts to retain it. It also includes aligning individual aspirations and company goals. It involves understanding of employees, their personality types, actions, and responses.

Check your progress 3

- 1 Which key soft skills are included in people management?

Several soft skills are included in people management including good communication skills, effective allocation of tasks, understanding personality types, a balanced approach towards appreciation and constructive criticism, good critical thinking and problem-solving skills, the ability to motivate and nurture faith and build trust, and to be able to delegate and macro manage effectively amongst several others.

Check your progress 4

- 1 How can people management enhance productivity?

People management is the key to employee satisfaction. A conducive work environment where they are content and motivated leads to enhanced productivity. Ultimately a satisfied workforce will lead to a satisfied management, hence every organization must invest in people management strategies and processes. People management also includes investing in the employee's skill enhancement and growth of knowledge base. Several organisations motivate their employees to pursue higher degrees or advanced skills. They are willing to even pay for it. This investment will reap manifold benefits and lead to greater productivity and profits.

- 2 How can people management envision and prepare for the future?

The manager/leader must envision the skills needed in this fast-changing world of technology driven needs and ensure that the employee is future-ready and prepared to meet upcoming challenges. This ensures a smooth run and that there are no ripples in the transition. This involves an active engagement in the relevant field, to be able to understand and read past and present trends and to be able to gauge and predict the future requirements to prepare a task force for it. This helps an organization stay much ahead of competition.

Check your progress 5

- 1 What do you understand by the term 'Human Resources'?

Human resources are the employees, the workforce of any organization. They are its human assets and capital and are the foundation on which the organization rests.

Check your progress 6

- 1 What is meant by Human Resource Management?

Amongst several definitions offered by management experts, Edwin B. Flippo sums up human resource management succinctly as "planning, organizing, directing, controlling of procurement, development, compensation, integration, maintenance and separation of human resources to the end that individual, organizational and social objectives are achieved".

Check your progress 7

- 1 Enumerate the ways in which people management skills can be augmented.
There are several ways in which people management skills can be augmented. Some of them are listed below.
 - a. Ensure clarity of goals
 - b. Improve communication skills
 - c. Inculcate patience
 - d. Augment interpersonal skills
 - e. Enhance flexibility and be adaptable
 - f. Encourage trust and build faith
 - g. Heighten Emotional Intelligence
 - h. Enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills