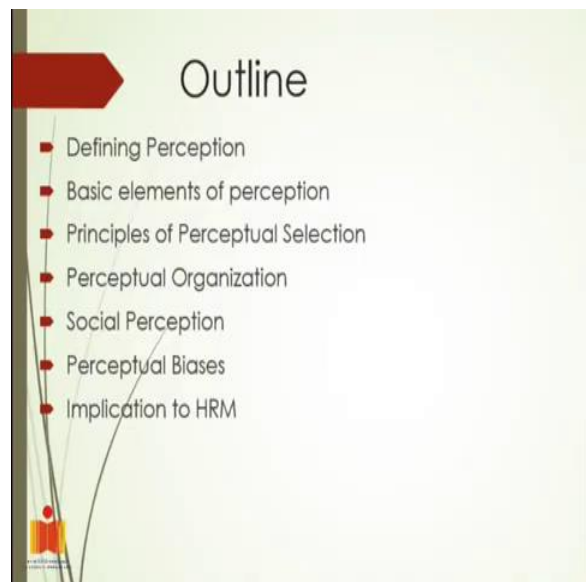**Organizational Behaviour - an Introduction**
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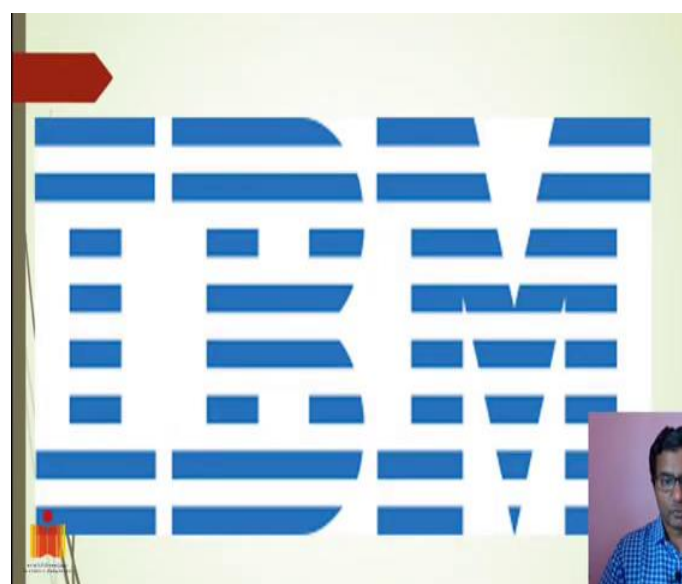
Lecture - 07
Perception – Part 2

Warm welcome to this lecture series on Organizational Behaviour. We are in the second chapter which is on Perception. And today we are going to see the second section of this perception chapter. I will quickly summarize what happened in the previous lecture in this chapter.

So, this is the outline of the entire chapter. We also defined what is perception and we try to understand why it is important to know about this idea of perception, especially in workplace.
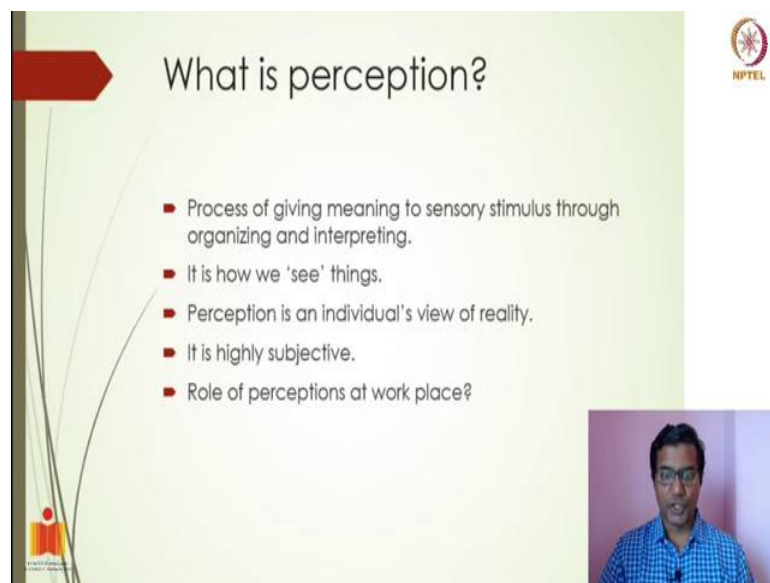
So, perception being subjective phenomena, it can lead to miscommunication among people or misunderstanding or miscommunication among people. Perception is defined as how we give meaning to sensory stimuli by organizing and interpreting it. So, like I said earlier, it is very subjective and this subjectivity can lead to some problems in organizations. So, that is why it is very important to understand this idea of perception.

We also looked at the basic elements of perception. So, perception broadly involves selection and screening of information and then organization of stimuli. So, we select certain stimuli around us. We screen the information available to us and we select only few stimuli. And then whatever stimuli we encounter or we selected, we organize them in a certain way. And also perception as a process has different steps.

So, the first step in perception which is perceptual selection, depends on various factors. So, like I said there are many factors or many stimulus which are available in our environment in our day to day life, but we select only few of them. So, what decides which of those stimuli will be selected.

Broadly these factors can be classified into two categories; one external factors, two internal factors. So, external factors are factors associated with the stimulus itself. So, we looked at what are the characteristics of stimulus, which can make us choose only those stimulus in comparison with other stimulus available.

Internal factors are factors associated with the individual himself or herself. For example, you know your motivation at that level or your interest in a certain area, will make you choose to perceive certain things available in the environment in; in your external environment. So, this is what we saw in the previous lecture in perception.

Now, we are going to look at the second important element in perception which is perceptual organization. Like I said you know, we choose certain stimuli from the environment.

So, once we have the set of stimuli, we organize them. We try to group them together or we try to you know give them some order so that some meaningful interpretation can be made. So, according to Gestalt theory; I also explained the Gestalt school or Gestalt theories in the previous lecture. So, according to Gestalt theory we use many principles to organize external stimuli or sensory stimuli.
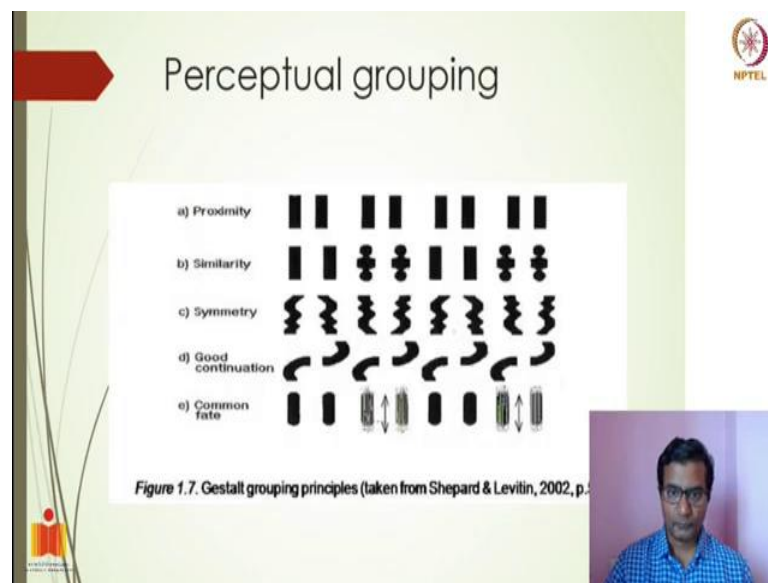
So, these are some of the important methods humans use to organize perceptual stimuli or sensory stimuli ok. So, the first principal is perceptual grouping. So, humans especially have this tendency to group certain stimuli together, in a certain way to make sense out of it. For example, in grouping there are many specific methods we use. Many of them are unconsciously we use these methods; the first one is Proximity.

For example, when there is a stimuli group of stimuli we look at, or we try to group them based on the proximity, how close they are. For example, in the first line you see two black blocks together. You will not see the white spaces as one entity. You will see only black bars as one entity.
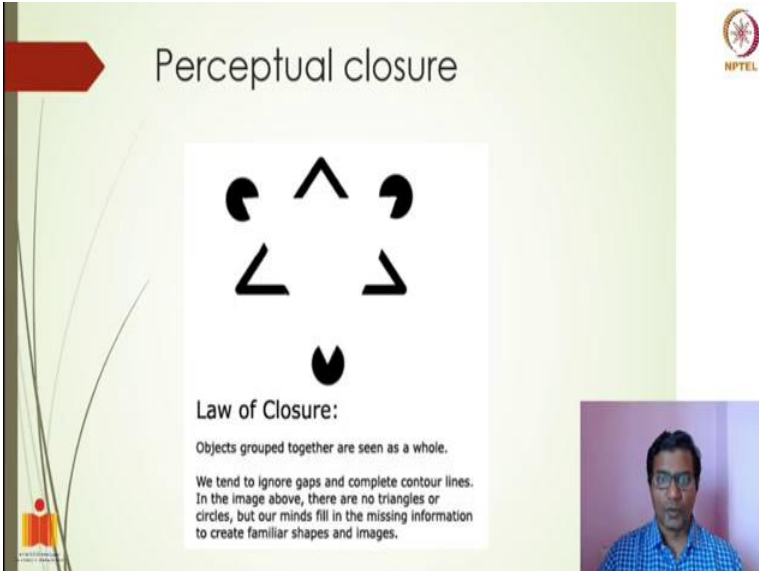
You see a pattern, and that pattern depends on the proximity of a certain kind of stimuli. Similarly, or the second perceptual grouping principle is similarity, which means similar

looking or similar stimuli which are of similar nature or similar appearance we group them together.

For example, in this example next to similarity; things which look similar we group them together and consider them as one group. Symmetry is order. You know we try to group things which look like they are mirror images or they form a geometrical order. So, the example which is there you can understand. And also good. The fourth one is good continuation. So, we group things based on the perception of flow in the stimuli.

So, for example, the example which is given in this slide. A good continuation denotes. Even though there is a gap between these two lines we perceive them as together, the line which is there 1 and 2 we perceive them to them together rather than 2 and 3 ok. Because 1 and 2, you see them flowing as a continuous stimulus even though there is a gap in between. And also common fate means if you see them to be in the same direction. When you see the stimuli flowing in the same direction or in the same manner, we see them as one group ok.

There are lot of examples given about this in you know in. I will give you a link. You can read many of these things with examples ok.

The second principle of perceptual organization is Perceptual closure. So, perceptual closure means in a particular stimuli or when we have a group of stimuli even though there is gap in between, we try to fill those gaps we try to close those gaps.

So, if you can read the sentence given in the slide you can understand. We tend to ignore gaps and complete the whole structure together. So, for example, let us say you have a telephone call ok. And during the call there is some break in the call. Even though there are some break in the call we try to fill information based on our understanding of what is the conversation is all about ok. So, we fill the missing information to create familiar shapes and images.

But again, this can lead to serious problems in some cases. Because when you fill in the gaps without actually receiving those stimuli, you may fill them with wrong assumptions ok. So, for example, that is where many of these illusions happen. We try to fill in those gaps through our mental imagery ok. Which leads to false kind of perception.

Figure and ground denotes that. So, the third perceptual organizational principle is figure and ground.

So, figure and ground is based on what we consider as figure which is the object which we are perceiving. All the other things become the background and we perceive the background as one uniform group of stimulus. So, we do not perceive. So, let us say in this picture in the slide, if you see the vase you will see the background as something which is blank.

Other way around, if you see the face; two faces in the picture the contours of the vase loses its significance. You do not see the vase, because you see it as one space where nothing is there ok. You only see the face.

So, this principal says that depending on what we choose to see, all the other things become blur the background things become blur. So, again this can lead to problems. Because you know we consider something as important all the other things become unimportant. But sometimes things we neglect to see as background can also be important.
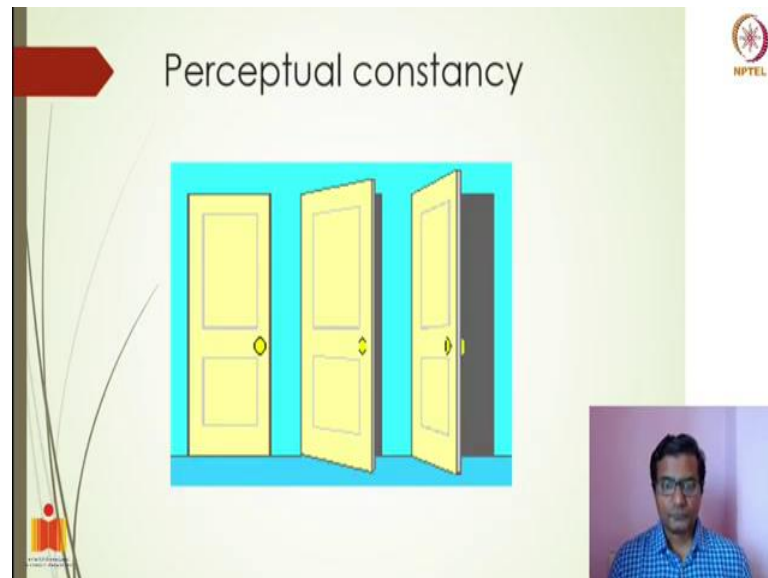
Perceptual constancy means, humans and also sometimes some animals have this tendency to see constancy of certain image.

So, in this example the door which you see you see it as a rectangle. Is not it? Even though in a very strict sense it may not be a rectangle in the third picture. The third picture it is not a rectangle it probably it is a parallelogram ok.

So, use. Even though the shape of the rectangle changes we consider even in the third image it to be a door. So, we will not. So, we will not confuse ourselves by saying the shape has changed so it cannot be a door ok. So, we tend to have this tendency to see constancy in what we perceive. So, we do not see change that easily ok.
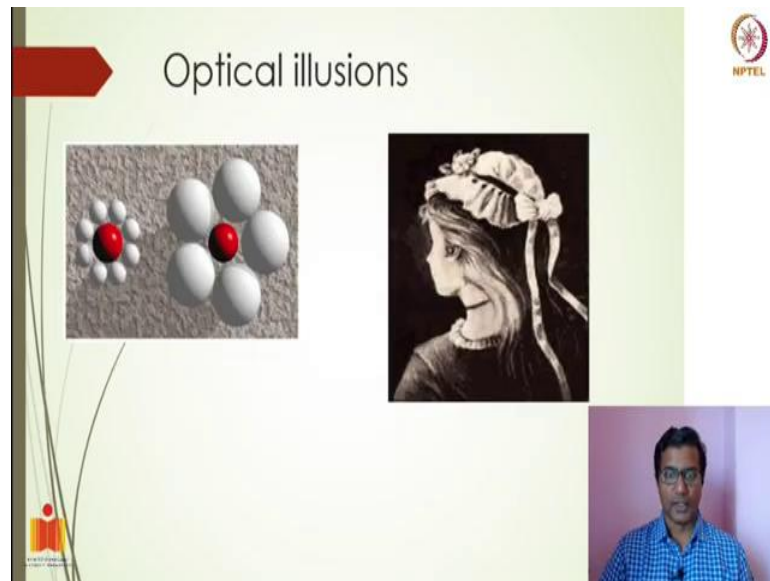
So, the problem with perceptual organization principles is optical illusions. Sometimes, even though it helps them to interpret information or helps us make sense out of varied kind of stimulus, you know which otherwise, if you do not organize them, it becomes chaotic.

But to make sense out of it we organize them in a certain way and even though there are gaps we fill them. Even though there is no consistency we tend to see them to be consistent. Even though you know they may not group together. Even though there is no continuity we try to see continuity or order.

So, it is good because it helps us to collectively group those stimuli together and make sense out of it, but the problem is sometimes it can lead to illusion. Illusion means something which is not there, but you know we see things. For example, in the first picture. The picture on your left, you see that red color circle in the left side to be bigger than the circle in the right side. In fact, in both cases the red color circle is the same size. There is no size difference of the red circle. But depending on the background we see the size to be different.

Similarly, in the second picture some of you have seen, this is a very famous optical illusion. Depending on what is the background you choose, you will see a young lady or you will see a old woman ok. So, this is not just about physical stimulus.

Even in social contexts many of these things hold true ok. like I said a law of closure. You know we try to fill in information. So, you would have interacted with someone for

many years. So, what you think is you assume certain things to be true about this person, because you think we have been continuously interact with this person. So, we know this person well ok.

Similarly, you know we tend to look at consistency in what we perceive. You may not you know things happening around you or your friend you becoming old. We never feel that we become old if you look at the mirror ok. Why? Because, consistently we are looking at that same image and we think we are the same person whom we are 10 years back or 15 years back, which is not true. We also change as individuals. So, we fail to see change in ourselves or in others.

So, these are the problems which can happen, because of the wrong use of perceptual organization principles ok.

So, we move on to the social perception part; till know we looked at the mechanism of perception or the mechanism of sensory perception. Now, we are going to look at perception in the social context. So, what is social perception? Social perception means the process of combining, integrating and interpreting information about others to gain an accurate understanding of them. It can also be about ourselves ok.

So, throughout our life we will try we are in this process of understanding others. So, we have this tendency to know about others. It is a kind of a curiosity we have about understanding people around us or phenomena around us. So, what we do in this curiosity? We try to collect information, combined integration, integrate them, try to

interpret them so that we can understand others. In fact, curiosity is a very important instinct of humans.

Even small children, they have this you know tendency to ask questions, seek for information, go out and try out new things and things like that which is nothing but curiosity. So, why we have this curiosity? To understand the world around us the people around us which is very normal ok. But sometimes what can happen is. This process we may like I said in perceptual organization we may use wrong cues or we may use wrong processes, which can lead to failure or inaccurate understanding of others or the environment around us.

When I say environment. What is happening around us, people around us things around us and things like that. In social perception, I am also going to explain something called Attribution. Attribution is again a tendency of human beings which involves trying to understand the cause behind others behaviour. It can also be your own behaviour. So, we have this tendency to see why people behave the way they behave? Is it because of internal factors or it is because of external factors?

For example, if somebody is like very irritated kind of a person. So, you want to know whether this person is a person who is always irritated or he is as a person is irritated or, because of other reasons. So, we always have this tendency to give cause to others behaviour and also our own behaviour. So, these two things in fact, there are many other things in social perception. But in this chapter, we are going to look at only these two things which is one understanding others behaviour and attributing cost to behaviour ok.

Social Identity

- Personal identity: The characteristics that define a particular individual.
- Social identity: defining a person in the context of his/her membership in various social groups.
- Social identity theory: we perceive ourselves and others based on both our unique characteristics (personal identity) and our membership in various groups (social identity).

So, one important element in social perception is social identity ok. Or identity per se is a very important element in perception. So, where do I identify myself? In other words, how do I define myself? Or is it the answer to the question who am I? Or when it is about others, it is about who is this person. So, we ask this question, is not it? Like if you meet someone for the first time we will try to understand them in terms of who are they.

You know by looking at them we will try to judge their gender, we try to judge their age, we tried to judge their religious background or you know language background and sometimes, you also ask what is your job? You know, who are your parents? and things like that.

So, all these things help us give some identity to a to that person. And also we also try to define ourselves with a certain identity. So, let us do a small exercise. In fact, many times we may not even think in these lines, we may not even know this is what we are trying to do trying to find out identity or establish identity.

So, to understand this process I will give you a small exercise ok. So, just close your eyes and think and come up with five statements starting with I. So, I is self. For example, if you ask me to do this exercise. I will say I am a teacher, I am a father, I am a good person, I am a man. So, these are some of the things which I will write when I have to write five sentences. So, write. Similarly, you also write five things describing which you will start from I am ok.

So, it can also be like I like dancing and things like that, but try to write things starting with I am ok. Just take a minute do it in in a minute. I will give you some time ok. I hope at least you would have you know thought about in your mind, is not it?

In these sentences, how many of them are highly you know independent of a social group and how many of them are in relation to a social group? So, what I mean is, for example, if I say you know I am a good communicator let us say.

So, it is about me. When I say I am an Indian; which means I am identifying myself with a social group. So, I had a choice I would have said I am a human I would have identified myself with some other social group. Maybe I would have said I am a Tamilian, you know which is my language identity or I am a man which is a gender identity. So, I had options of identifying myself with many social groups, but I chose to I choose to do it with only certain social groups, then it means those social groups are important to me ok.

So, in let us say in this five sentences which you thought about or you wrote. How many of them are not related to any social group and how many of them are related to a social group? In fact, for many of us we identify ourselves as a member of a social group ok. So, that is what is social identity. We also it is not just about ourselves you know we try to do it for others also. When you try to understand or place an identity about someone plays an identity of some person we meet.

We try to look at the social group which they belong to. You know we try to look at them like know this person is a Punjabi, this person is a male or a female, this person you know belongs to a certain religious group depending on the kind of symbols they wear ok. So, all these things we make.

But the problem in social identity is establishing social identity or personal identity is sometimes it can lead to bias. In fact, that is what social identity theory says. It is a very popular theory in social psychology. In fact, I request you to read about this in internet I will also give you some material as links.

So, which says we perceive ourselves and others based on one their own personal identity and also the social group in which they belong to ok. For example, you look at

someone ok. So, this person is tall and athletic so, that is their personal quality ok. So, you attribute them as very strong athletic person ok.

A sports person let us say and also their social group. This person is a Punjabi and you will say maybe we assume that all Punjabi's are athletic or very strong you know very hefty built ok. One own assumption we make.

So, this is what is social identity theory. We use both personal qualities and the social group qualities to give some identity to others and also to ourselves. But the problem with this is stereo typing ok. You would have heard this term stereo typing.

Stereo typing means based on certain qualities of the person, which belongs to their social group, we try to generalize them ok. In other words, stereo typing is generalizing the quality of a person or identity of the person based on their social identity ok. Which is trying to understand this person or justify certain qualities of the person based on their social group.

For example, like I said Punjabi's ok. So, all Punjabi's are strong and hefty built. Or you know all Gujarati's are entrepreneurs. So, let us say if a friend you meet you know or your neighbour is a Gujarati. You think this person is a very entrepreneur person. Or South Indians are very brainy people or you know things like this or Europeans are very punctual. Something like that.

So, if you meet a European you think this person might be a very punctual person ok. So, we assume certain things to be true about a person based on the social group which they belong to. Again, which may not be true in all cases. For example, if somebody says I am a politician ok. So, what kind of qualities will you attach to this person's job or you know the role which they play? vis a vis I am a teacher. So, you think this person must be of certain qualities.

So, this is what is stereo typing. In fact, we look at stereo typing elaborately in the next slides, but a social identity the problem with social identity is or using social identity to define personal identity is stereo typing. They can be other biases also.
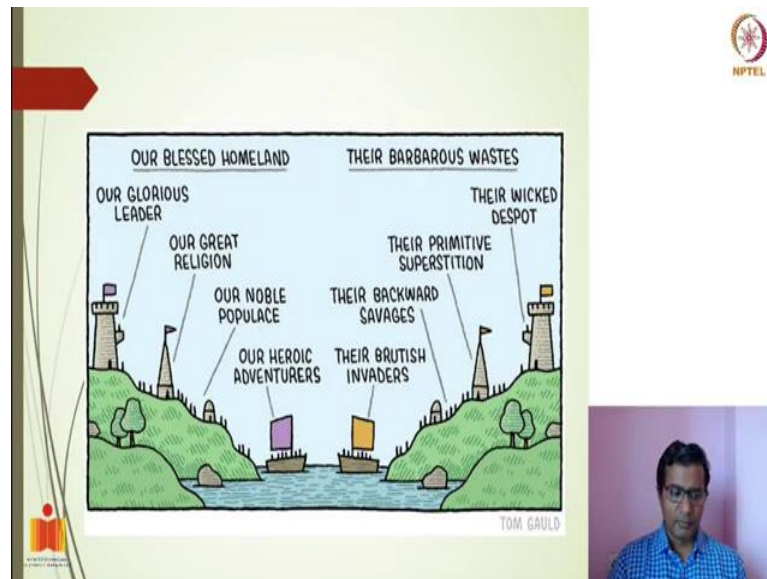
Another problem with a social using this kind of an approach is in group bias. So, in group bias means people who are of the same social identity they feel they are special more important or they are better or they are you know more capable than people of other groups.

For example, let us say you are you know you are let us say I am a Tamilian ok. I meet two people one person is a Tamilian and another person is let us say you know Bengali. Let us say, I am standing in a queue two people are coming to the queue which one person is Tamilian, one person is Bengali and both of them break the queue let us say. So, I know this person is a Tamilian. So, I will think maybe this person is in urgency, maybe some real reason why is breaking the queue.

Other person is a Bengali, you know I will think because my I am a Tamilian. I will think this person Bengali is like breaking the queue, because he is not following the rules. So, same behaviour I interpreted differently, because one person belongs to a group which I belong to another person belongs to the group which I do not belong to ok.

So, if you see this slide, if my people of my social group do something, I will justify it saying that it is you know a good thing there is a real reason behind it. If somebody else does it of this other social group, we try to label them as bad people or you know they do not have responsibilities and things like that.

So, I will stop here. What I am going to do now is I will give you a homework ok. So, next session we are going to talk about attribution of causality which means. Like I said

earlier we try to find out or a we try to understand what is the cause of others behaviour or even your own behaviour.

So, I want you to read a bit about this. There is a theory called or just give this keyword attribution to cause attribution of cause. So, I repeat again attribution of cause; attribution of causality. So, use this keyword, search in internet and try to read a bit about what it says. And we will meet again and then I will explain what is what is it all about ok. So, I will stop here. Just go through the slide again so that you will understand what are the concepts we covered today ok. So, have a nice day see you soon.