

Organization Management
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Module No. # 01

Lecture No. # 02

Longitudinal Thinking and Legacy Factors: Organizational Growth

We have looked at the issues of the nature of the course, the nature of the subject matter, its scope, its complexity and what is organization management all about. I want to carry that discussion forward today and take it to something which I think touches all our lives, yet the truth is we don't know that it does.

The way we behave, shows where we come from. Our behavior patterns are determined by what we have watched since we were born; what we have seen as the way of life and what we believe works for us. Therefore, the truth is not very many people have exercised choices over their behavior, but they have merely learned from what they saw around themselves in the family in which they were born, in the society in which they were born, the dominant influences on them as individuals, the schools and the colleges they have gone to, the kind of friends they have kept.

It is an unthinking absorption of behavior pattern which you think works. When we talk of longitudinal thinking, it is meant to make you conscious of this simple fact. That you are what you are not because you chose to be that, but you are what you are because you don't think enough. You absorb things without understanding that you are absorbing things without a critical appraisal. You don't see the influences, which go into your making and I am talking of the normal run of the mill.

Education is the process of creating a thinking mind, which is why in organization management course soon after the discussions of the nature, scope, complexity we get into understanding the legacy factors and longitudinal thinking.

In management there are two types of thinking: one is called lateral thinking and some of you may have heard about it. Lateral thinking is the process of exploring the options of doing a thing and though it is popularly attributed to Edward De Bono, lateral thinking is older than something like 150 years in its modern tradition. It goes back to Caulton to take the name of a western scholar who is credited to have had something to do with it.

As I told you the last time, we are in the habit of believing things if it is backed up by western scholarship rather than if it is backed up by indigenous scholarship because the kind of confidence which you did to have in own intellectual tradition is something which is yet to be seen in as prominent a manner as it should be.

Which is why you make a beeline for foreign universities, nothing wrong with that, but it is not as if there are no good institutions in India. Yet, the dream of every one and everyone always has a 10 percent exception is to migrate somewhere.

How does a nation grow to be great when such a large percentage of its population is totally alienated from its own intellectual traditions and dreams of nothing else but, leaving. Of course, exceptions are there, but we are talking of a critical mass, I will restrain myself even from commenting which way our nation is made, because as I have repeatedly maintained, it is not my interest to exercise judgment. My interest is the very limited one in my profession and which is why I have stuck to this profession all these years. People who sit through my classes should learn how to think.

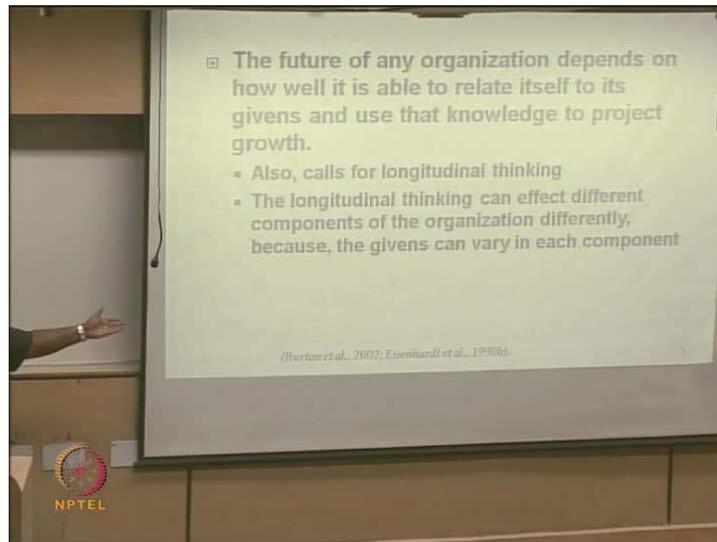
You don't have to come to a class to acquire knowledge for that you should be sitting in a library. You come to a class to move from knowledge to wisdom and wisdom cannot be given, which is why I believe that nothing can be taught, everything has to be learnt and you cannot teach an unwilling person anything, nothing will get absorbed. So, I believe in the learning process more than that the teaching process. Therefore, the onus is on you. What you get out of your lecture is a factor of your competency, your interest, your preparedness and your work.

The qualities of a teacher go only so far and no further, the quality of a lecture also goes only so far and no further. Therefore, I have said two things in the sessions so far: one is each one's behavior is determined to a very large extent by the kind of thinking to which he has been exposed and the kind of person he believes will be a successful person. It is equally true that a lot of influences on any individual are absorbed unthinkingly and there is very little critical appraisal.

I have also tried to emphasize that the emphasis is on the learning process not on the teaching process and try to help you to show that you cannot be a learning person without some self-respect and some objective evaluation of your own strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, the emphasis is on the scientific method.

Longitudinal thinking is the process of helping you to recognize this. And as I explain the topic to you, it will take a little while for the subject matter to fall in place because you have to go through something like 10 or 12 slides to understand what is the exact meaning of longitudinal thinking is.

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Before, I explain to you longitudinal thinking, you need to be clear on how exactly longitudinal thinking is linked with organizational growth, because the subject matter is the focused one and there may be many topics which are important and there may be many activities which will help you to think but in this course, we are interested only in those aspects which touch upon organization management. There has to be a focus on the treatment of the topics, there has to be a focus on the learning process and there has to be a clear cut understanding on what that topic has to do with an organization. Obviously, when we talk of an organization, we are talking of organizational growth.

Through the last session, this one and the future sessions I will attempting to get your fundamentals of organizational management in position. Towards that direction, let me make an addition to what I have already shared with you. There is no such thing as a static organization and organization is either growing or it is declining. An organization by definition even when it appears to be static has to undertake a lot of activities, it is like that expression you have to do a lot of running to be at the same place.

Obviously, the deliverable of any organization management analysis is growth, because you heard me say that unless you are growing you are declining, you are corroding. So, the future of any organization depends on how well it is able to relate itself to its givens and use that knowledge to project growth.

Now, the word 'givens' here is an important word. There are facts of your life which will not change. What are the facts of your life or for that matter, what are the facts of anybody's life will not change? Your date of birth will not change, your place of birth will not change, your parents will not change and your ethnicity will not change and for those of you, who don't know the word ethnicity, it has to do with racial characteristics, the colour of your skin, the shape of your hair, the length of your nose, your height, your physical features. There is a whole discipline of study known as ethnology and it is a close cousin of anthropology. Anthropology is the science of the evolution of the Homo sapien species.

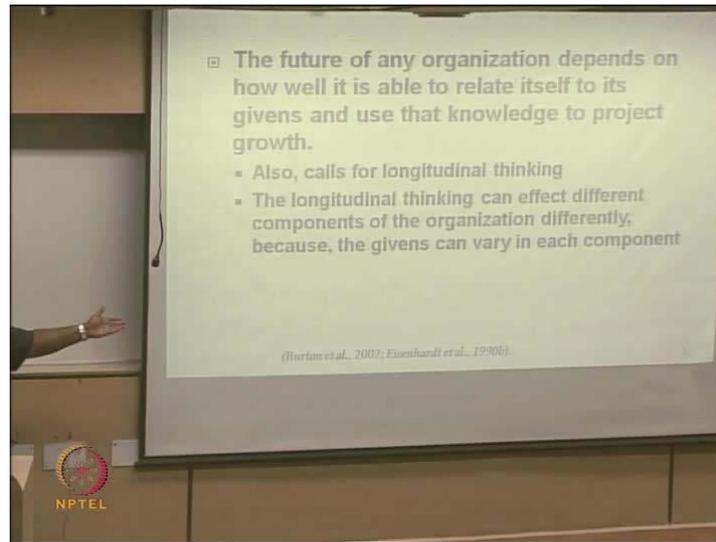
So your ethnology is a given characteristic that will not change. In fact, those of you who are at all familiar with the Indian tradition, you would know that at the time of [FL] is when you worship your ancestors and you wish them well in the world beyond.

The worship is confined only to four generations, four couples on your father's side and four couples on your mother side. Of course, so long it was a component of the Indian tradition it was considered utter nonsense, till the study of genetics revealed that indeed the transference of genes in Homo sapiens takes place across four generations and was of course it was discovered in the west, it became fashionable to talk of it in India also.

So Indian tradition was no longer to be laughed at, they realized that what they Indians had been saying all these millennia was 'truvennia'. What is still not known is how your genetic code has been composed of by the selection of 16 individuals' genetic code. Genetically there are 16 individuals living in each one of us, not in their entirety, but several of our characteristics, several of our traits have been picked up from these 16 individuals. Four generations on the father side I told you, four generations on the mother side and each one multiplied into 2 because it is a couple.

As we discussed this topic today, we are not aware of how the selection of the genetic code takes place, we don't know enough but what is known is that characteristics do get transferred.

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For example, both of your parents may not have colour blindness then the parents of your parents need not have colour blindness, but you may be colour blind. You may have inherited it as a genetic trait from three generations ago of people whom you don't even know. In fact in a country where it is so fashionable to have male child and in the psyche there is such a difference between a male child and a female child, alas. The truth is after you have had a male child so what, how many people know the name of their great great grandfather?

Quite frankly if you ask me I don't know why people yearn for a male child, nobody is going to remember them anyhow for more than even one generation. In fact given the present times I don't know how many of you have seen that ad which is going around of this person who lands up in an old age home to wish his father happy birthday. And he is carrying a computer, it is a computer ad and then in the computer is that recording which he plays back to his father with grandchildren saying 'Happy birthday grand dad'.

I just don't know how to react to such an ad. At one stroke, you have legitimized old age home, you have made it fashionable that you can go and visit your ageing parent in that old age home, you don't have to keep the parent with you that is damned old fashioned irrelevant, outdated as if you will never become that old ever, as if your child will not treat you that way ever, no comments on it and it is supposed to be great ad; of course,

the grandfather being a part of this new ad gets very moved when he hears grandchildren singing from the computer “happy birthday granddad happy birthday”.

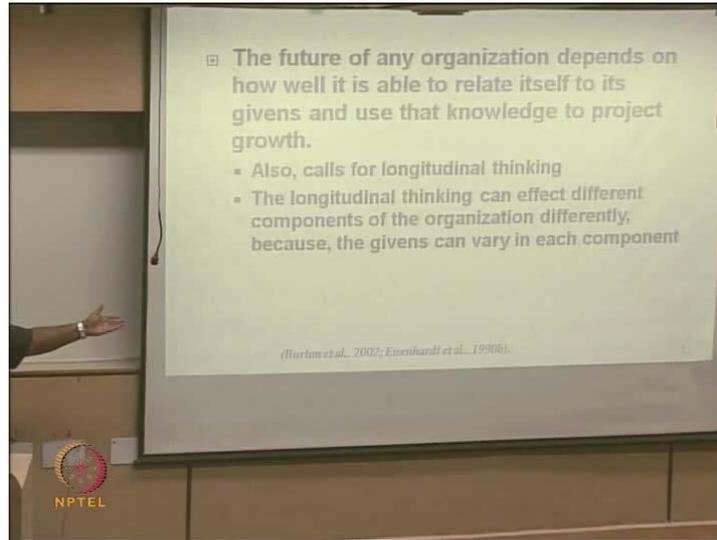
Does one need to comment on such facts? So much for what you get out of having a male child but has the society changed? I don't want to get into that by date but, I do wish you to understand and register that any organization is embedded in a society. There is no organization which is outside a society. Therefore, societal influences play upon the way the organizations work.

And there are different ways in which the societal influence permeates into an organization but that is a different aspect of organization management and we shall talk a bit more of that when we come to the environmental organization interface. For the present I want to confine myself to the legacy factors and help you to recognize that longitudinal thinking is an essential requirement for scientific thinking unless, of course you are such a genius that you are beyond a learning.

When I do my MDP's if you ever seen a management development program brochure, it always says for whom? My opening sentence under that head forever is, if you are a genius you are not likely to profit from this MDP because any genius knows everything. Then I go on to say that if you are however a normal mortal, the chances are that the MDP will add value to you. All that I am saying is you need to recognize that unless you wish to learn, you cannot learn and unless you wish to take a scientific approach to yourself, you will not grow.

Therefore, longitudinal thinking is as this transparency or the projection seeks to explain to you, it helps you to relate to its 'givens'. I have a few minutes ago listed to you the givens of the individual, you cannot alter it; your caste alas, is a given and that is how we run the society.

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It is a moot point that in India you can change your religion but you cannot change your caste. Nowhere does Hinduism say it, but that is the way we practice it and we practice it because it is politically fashionable.

See, you must understand organizations are an essential component for the struggle of power and which is why authority, power, influence are essential topics of understanding organization management. But, what study of organization management and what understanding of longitudinal thinking does is to help you realize that whatever caste you may be born in, it is nothing you have earned.

Whatever be the colour of your skin, you can't be held guilty for it. Whoever are your parents that is a given, you cannot argue with it. Therefore, wisdom begins by understanding the givens of your life; then you begin distinguishing what is a given component of your personality and what can be a chosen component of your personality. It is only when you begin focusing on the chosen component of your personality that you start growing.

Clearly therefore, longitudinal thinking is essential to a growth oriented personality. I have said so before, it will be a repetition and you can be rest assured that I will come back to it later on, no value judgments, please. There are certain absolute values, which are self-evident truths, so they are not the ones in question, even the liar knows that falsehood is wrong. It is a classical value we are not discussing that.

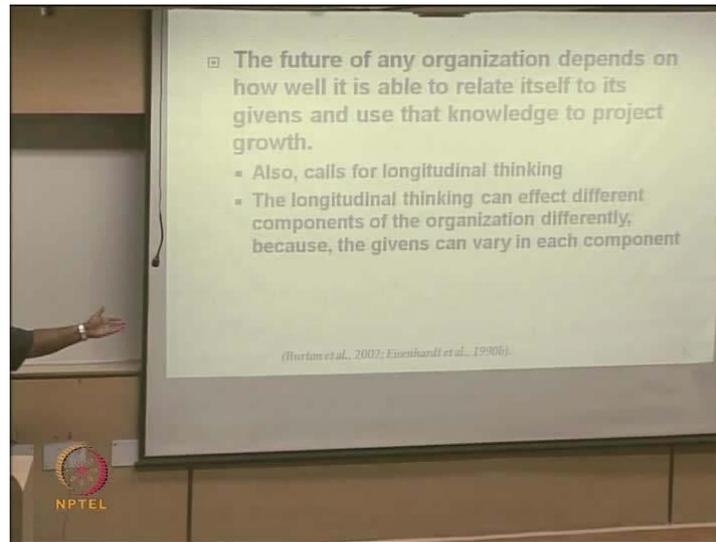
What we are trying to explain is nobody does what he does if he considers it wrong, he first justifies it to himself and then he does it.

Therefore, the problem is with his process of thinking, how can he justify it and it is convoluted type of logic. In the ultimate analysis therefore, it is the act of choice which makes you the kind of person you are and extend this analogy into an organization; organizations you heard me say earlier on also have their personalities, organizations also have their traditions, organizations also have their genetic code, in fact there are people who have written, learned dissertations on the organizational soul, on the organizational mind.

How organizations acquire a personality and what is it that you can do to change that personality and indeed to what extent can that personality be changed? Just as there are limits to organizational growth, the habit also limits to personality growth, which leads us to a very important conclusion in organization management and behavioral senses. There is a great virtue in discovering your own potential and letting that develop, because even if you try, you cannot be different to your basic capacities and capabilities. For example, it would be ranked thoughtlessness on my part ever to try to be say, an Amitabh Bachchan, not that I would want to be one, but whether I want to be one or I don't want to be one is an irrelevant question, I don't have the makings of it, I don't have the height.

There is nothing I can do to change my height, but then if I cannot be Amitabh Bachchan, Amitabh Bachchan cannot be Vinayshil Gautam either.

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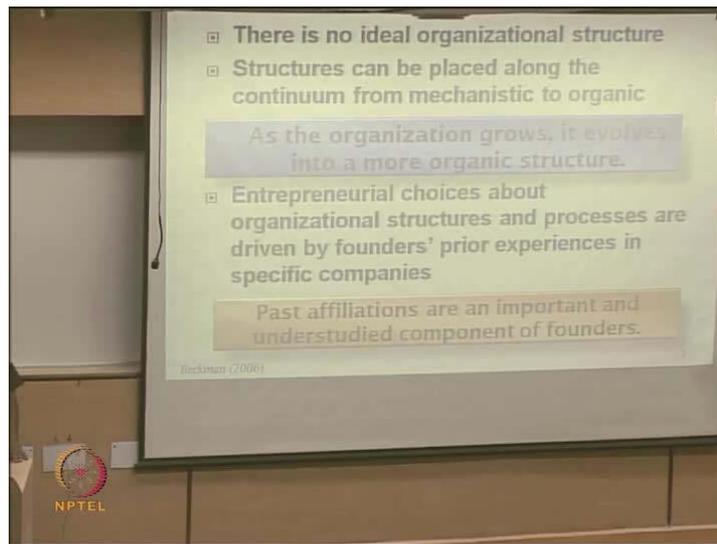
Again, we get back to the favorite hypothesis of organizational management, no value judgments please. Your attempt should be to develop your own potential, positively, constructively and to its rightful level and that is what growth is about. It is important to recognize that like human personalities, organizations also have their limits.

The basic technology of an organization does not change. You cannot manufacture a spaceship in a refinery, because the refinery deals with process technology, a spaceship requires assembling of components. Understanding the nature of organizations is as complicated a process as understanding the nature of individuals. Longitudinal thinking can affect different components of the organization differently, because the givens can vary in each component, now what is meant by that? An organization, if you go back to the previous discussion has structure, processors and people obviously, it also has a strategy, it has a productive capacity in each case, the legacy variable can be different.

The organization may have grown in certain way; you take the older IIT's of the 6 or 7 which are there. Each IIT has grown spatially in a way which has been determined by the space available to it. IIT Delhi has had less than 350 acres, there are IIT's with 900 acres.

Now, it does not make one a better IIT or a worse IIT, but it determines the character of the IIT in terms of its spatial planning. An observation which should helps you to understand that you cannot create or design a system without accounting for how that component of the system has grown.

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Consider organizations for example, the structure of the organization may have grown up in a particular way, because the main proposition is there is no ideal organizational structure. One organizational structure is as good as another and success or otherwise, of the organization structure is determined by a very simple touchstone. Does it help the organization to grow? Does it help the organization to cope with the environment? Does it help the organization to realize its potential?

Now, there is a range of organization structures, we shall be later on in this course be looking at them very carefully. For our purposes however, it will suffice to recognize that organization structures can range from the mechanistic to the organismic.

This is why in this course like in any basic course, it is important to read a book from cover to cover, a basic book to be able to understand these presentations. If you are not equipped to understand the basic concepts there is no way in which every concept can be explained to you in the course of the limited number of sessions which we have.

As the organization grows, it evolves into a more organic structure. Any organization which is vibrant will be organic in character and organization which is relatively younger can be run in a mechanical way, but it does not last very long. The truth is simple; any organization to survive must give to the people who are in the organization a sense of proprietorship. If people don't identify with the organization, there is no such thing as the organization.

Entrepreneurial choices about organization structures and processes are driven by founders, prior experiences in specific companies. This is an important concept in organization management. All organizations are set up by somebody, whoever that person is and wherever he may come from, he will have a style. You may or may not agree with that style but there is a way in which you will exercise authority.

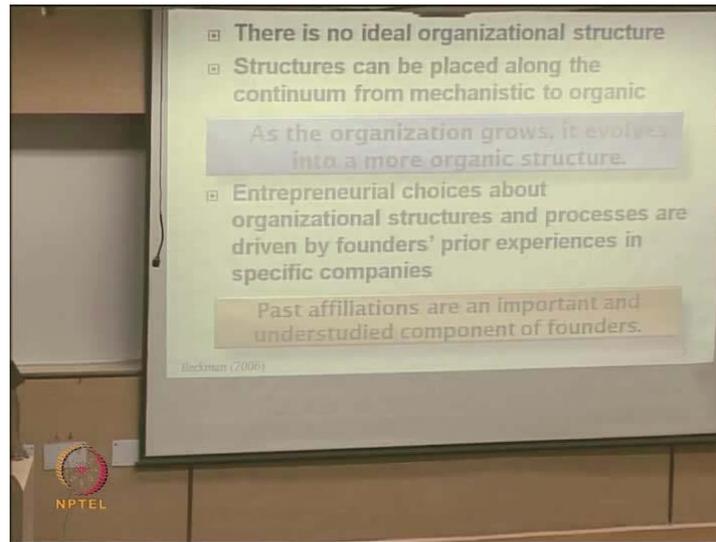
There is a way in which he will dispense justice, there is a way in which he will appraise people, there is the way in which he will communicate, there is the way in which he will organize work and no two people have identical ways. Those of you, who are doing more than one course, will be clearly noticing the difference in the teaching style of one teacher to another. It does not mean that one teacher is better than the other, but every teacher uses his own judgment to decide, how is he going to treat the subject? Of course, there are objective elements the nature of the subject, the kind of drilling which that subject needs for the concepts to be internalized.

The nature of the students in a group very often, the same subject matter has to be taught in two different ways, if they are two different types of groups because remember the emphasis is on the learning process. Some people are more proactive in learning, certain others are very slow in learning hence of course several are just not interested in learning.

Then you start organizing the group into subgroups, then you have to decide who is it that you going to spend time with, because you cannot punish the brighter and the proactive one, because there is the sleepy and that is the disinterested one. My theories of andragogy are very simple. There is absolutely no reason to pressurize a reluctant learner, he does not want to learn and he does not want to learn, period. He is therefore reasons best known to him. I am also clear that if you are not interested in learning there is absolutely no reason, why you should be making it impossible for others to learn. Now, those are my theories.

There may be another person who is simply not familiar with it and his attitude is, I will come and deliver my subject matter, does not matter who is listening and who is not listening. So, as long as I am here, I am explaining the topic.

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Yet another teacher may have the attitude that if you are not interested in learning, I will punish you to restart learning and one can go on giving examples. All I am saying is just as personalities vary, the personalities of founding figures of institutions vary and the personalities of the founding figures have a long range influence on the type of organization they create and that is the larger point I am trying to make.

JRD created Tata in a particular way and Mister GD Birla created the Birla Empire in another way, there is nothing in common between the two. You cannot say that JRD Tata did know what he was doing, but Mister Birla did or vice versa that Mister Birla did not know what he was doing but Mister JRD Tata did. It is all a question of different styles therefore, different types of organizations growth.

Recently the Tata's have announced a committee of five to select the successor to the serving chief. This is the first time in India that it has ever been done. Now, you may doubt that process, you may debate that process, you can be skeptical, you can be happy, I am not going to get into that discussion, but the fact of the matter is this means of identifying a chief has been attempted for the first time, no organization has done it.

When JRD handed over, he did not declare himself to be the chief mentor of the Tata house or Tata sons. It was a fade away, Mister Narayan Murthi declares himself to be the chief mentor and then he says, I have nothing to do with the organization and then Infosys become synonymous with him.

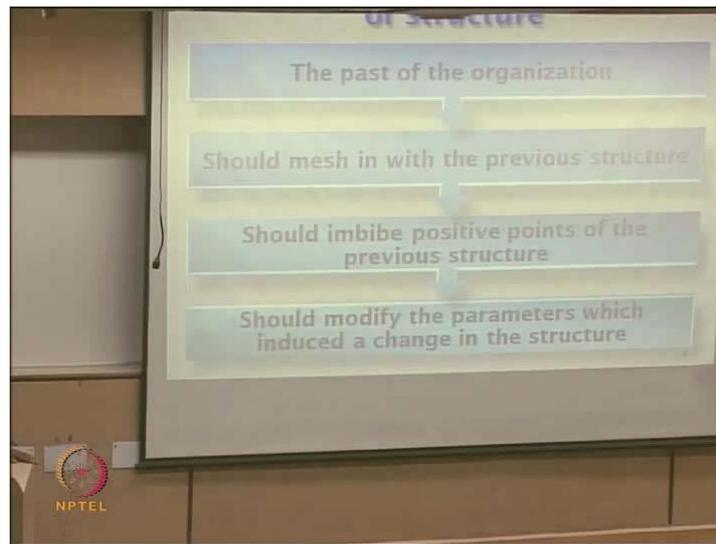
I am citing these examples from the corporate world for you to understand the following things: one, the founding figures affect the personality of the organization but the organizations can be reborn. For example, the Tatas were set up by Jamshedji, but they were reinvented by JRD. In other words, organizations undergoes serious transformation after a period of time and who the person is that is leading the organization at that point of time will create that same kind of an impact.

What works for one organization need not work for another organization, what works for one class need not work for another class, because there are people with different kinds of sensitivities, different kinds of personalities. Organizations have different types of structures, different types of processors and different types of styles of functioning, but in any case, indeed in every case, what the key figure at that time influences the organization for is determined on what were the key influences in his life.

People paraphrase their own experiences into creating an organization. Therefore, when it comes to longitudinal thinking or legacy factors are very important point has to be understood. The character of an organization is determined by the kind of experiences, the key figure in that organization as had. So, it is a very important interface into the experiences of an individual, which it transforms into the experiences of the organization.

Quite simply, longitudinal thinking therefore is a complex process, the intricacies of which are neither fully understood nor fully analyze to the detriment of organizing the growth processes, which is why I have concluded here that past affiliations are an important and understudied component of founders. There is a need for much more work to be done there.

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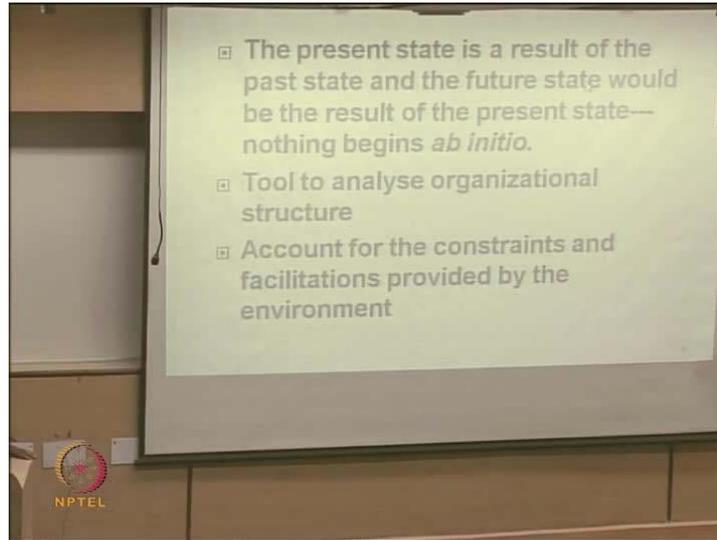


The factors that influence the choice of structures are listed here, the past of the organization; this should in mesh with the previous structure, should imbibe positive points of the previous structure and should modify the parameters which induced a change in the structure.

If you put this whole slide into one thought, it would be the emphasis to show that only that can be changed which the organization is capable of absorbing. If you want to put it in managerial terms, there are limits to change. You cannot change a person beyond a point, in other words there also the legacy factors dominate. In fact, there is considerable behavior theory which says people don't change unless they are subjected to a traumatic experience.

The change which you notice in a person is cosmetic to the extent that he is willing to make compromises to get a job done, his basic nature does not change. Though there is no agreement about the date, but once you achieve the adulthood people are not known to change. Yes, they make compromises, they make adjustments, they make cosmetic changes, now that debate is a debate which may lie unresolved, but you should be aware of it.

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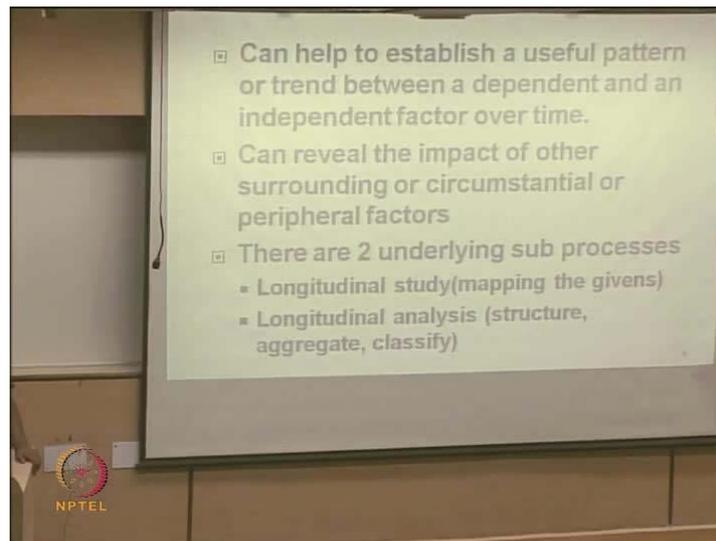
To sum up therefore, the present state is a result of the past state and the future state would be the result of the present state nothing begins *ab initio*.

Ab initio means?

Little louder

From the beginning, nothing begins from the zero point. Everywhere there is a legacy package or is very important to understand that legacy package. Therefore, there has to be tools to analyze the organizational structure and account for the constraints and facilitations provided by the environment. I have talked of the societal variables of the environmental variables sufficiently. To clarify that the environmental factors, societal factors, both facilitate an organizational change and impede an organizational change.

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Longitudinal thinking can help establish a useful pattern or trend between a dependent and independent factor over time. Now, this is putting all that I have been explaining to you in a scientifically accepted managerial physiology. If this is your legacy, this is how you will behave, there is a dependent variable and there is an independent variable. There is a cause and effect relationship. It can reveal the impact of other surrounding or circumstantial or peripheral factors in other words, your actual behaviour is determined by a lot of things, some of which you don't even understand.

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Longitudinal thinking as a slide tells you it has two underlying sub processes: longitudinal study and longitudinal analysis. Longitudinal study has to do with mapping the givens, longitudinal analysis have to do with structure aggregate and then it has to be classified. There are variables in longitudinal thinking and I shall return to this after a while.