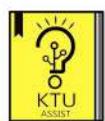


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## MODULE IV.

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### UNDERSTANDING A SOCIAL SYSTEM.

#### Social system.

A social system is a complex set of human relationships interacting in many ways. For eg:- a social system might break a larger population into family groups, races, religions, genders, wealth categories, social classes etc.

Each small group is a subsystem within the larger group. Within a single organisation, the social systems includes all the people in it. and their relationship to one another and to the outside world. Two important points which comes in the complex interactions among people include

- 1) The behavior of any one member can have a direct or indirect impact on the behaviors of others. Thus a change in one ~~system~~ part of a system affects all other parts.
- 2) Second important part is system boundaries. Social systems are open systems that interact with their surroundings. Thus the members of a system should be aware of the nature of their environment and their impact on other members both within and outside their own social system.

A system is said to be in social equilibrium when there is a dynamic working balance among its interdependent parts. Equilibrium is dynamic concept, not a static one. When minor changes occurs in a social system, they are soon absorbed by adjustments within the system and equilibrium is regained. But, if a single significant or major change or a series of smaller but rapid changes may throw an organization out of balance, which will affect the process, till it reaches a new equilibrium. This means that when an organization is in disequilibrium, the parts are working against one another instead of in harmony.

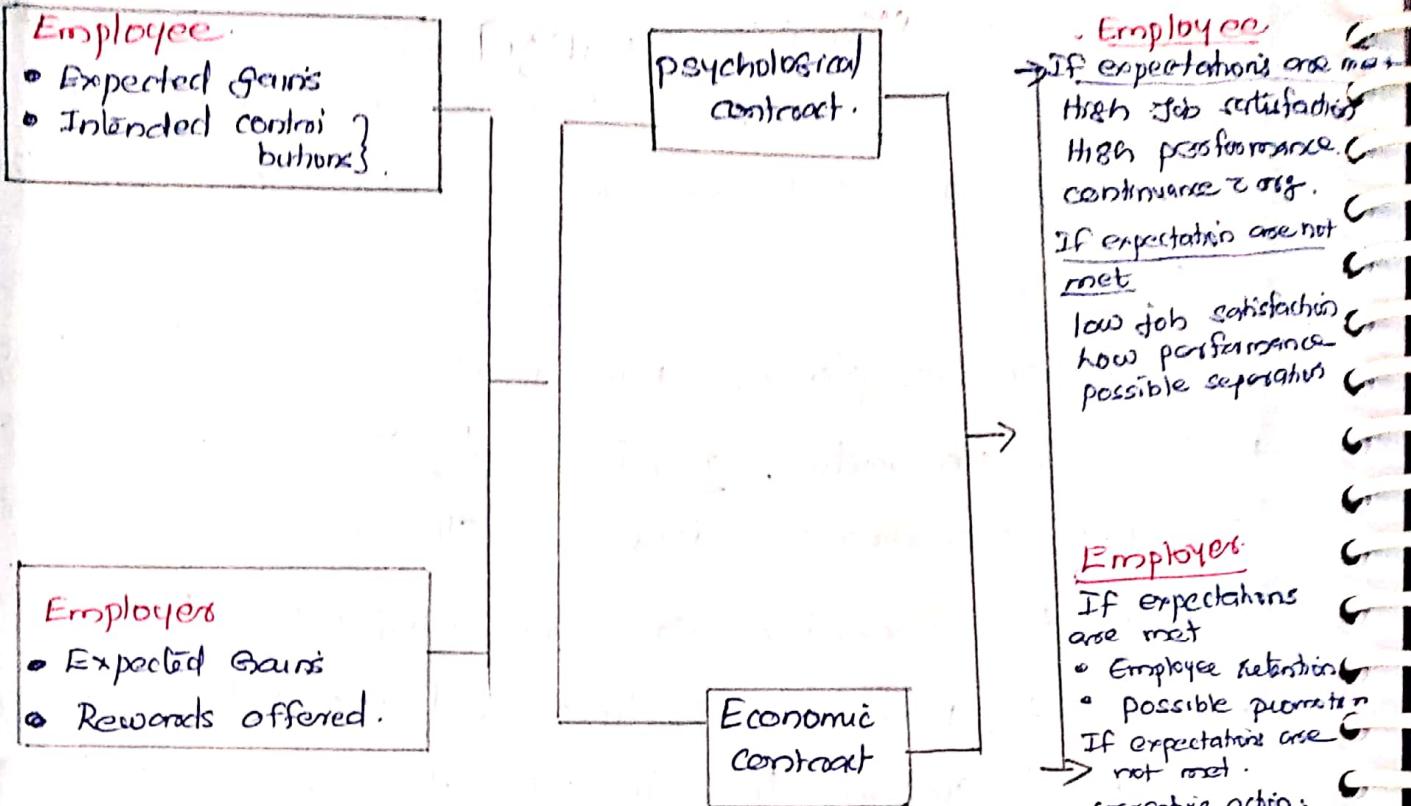
A change in a social system will have functional and dysfunctional effects

If the change seems to be favorable for the system, then we can call it as a functional effect. But if the change or action creates an unfavorable effects (e.g.: decline in productivity) for the system, then we call it as dysfunctional effect. The employees can also have functional and dysfunctional effects on the organization. They can be creative, productive and enthusiastic and actively seek to improve the quality of the organization's product or service. If the employees want to exhibit functional

behaviors, they need to receive clear expectations and promises of rewards. Furthermore, in exchange, the organization needs to receive a commitment from the employees.

When employees join in an organization, they make an unwritten psychological contract, even if they are not conscious of doing so. The psychological contract defines the conditions of each employee's psychological involvement, both contributions and expectations, within the social system. This includes loyalty, creativity and extra effort from employees part and in return, they expect they expect more economic rewards from the systems. They seek job security, fair treatment, rewarding relationship with co-workers and organizational support in fulfilling their developmental expectations.

If the organization honors only economic contract and not psychological contract, employees tend to have lower satisfaction, because not all their expectations are being met. They may also withhold some of their work related contributions. On the other hand, if both their psychological and economic expectations are met they tend to experience satisfaction, stay with the organization and perform well.



## SOCIAL CULTURE

Whenever people act in accordance with the expectations of others, their behavior is said to be social.

The environment of human created beliefs, customs, knowledge and practices is called social culture.

Culture is the conventional behavior of society and influences all actions of a person even though it seldom enters in to conscious thoughts.

Social cultures are often portrayed as consistent within a nation, thereby producing a so-called national culture. At the simplest level, national cultures can be composed on the bases of how their members relate to each other, accomplish work and respond to change. However, distinctive

social cultures can exist within a nation, as well, as seen in the tragic dispute b/w people of various ancestry within the former country Yugoslavia. Social cultures can have dramatic effect on behavior at work. Some of the ways in which cultures differ include patterns of decision making, respect for authority, treatment of females and accepted leadership styles. Knowledge of social cultures is especially important because managers need to understand and appreciate the backgrounds and beliefs of all members of their work unit.

People learn to depend on their culture. It gives them stability and security, because they can understand what is happening in their cultural community and know how to respond while in it. However this one-culture dependency may also place intellectual blinders on employees, preventing them from gaining the benefits of exposure to people from other cultural backgrounds. Cultural dependency is further compounded under conditions involving the integration of two or more cultures into workplace. Employees need to learn to adapt to others in order to capitalize on the opportunities they present, while avoiding possible negative consequences.

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Employees in almost any organisation are divided into subgroups of various kinds. Formation of groups is determined by two broad set of conditions. First job related differences and similarities. Such as type of work, rank in the org and physical proximity to one another, some times cause people to align themselves into groups. A second set of non job related conditions. arise primarily from an individual's personal background (Eg:- culture, race, sex, socio economic status). These conditions are highly important for legal, moral and economic reasons.

This cultural diversity or rich variety of differences among people at work, raises the issue of fair treatment for workers who are not in positions of authority.

Problems may persist because of a key difference in this context b/w discrimination and prejudice. Discrimination is generally exhibited as an action whereas prejudice is an attitude. A promising approach to overcome discriminatory practices include the attempt to change attitudes. The differences need to be recognised, acknowledged,

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appreciated and used for collective advantage.

EEO laws. An early attempt to deal with cultural diversity at work and fair treatment for employees was through federal and state legislation. Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) is the provision of equal opportunities to secure jobs and earn rewards in them, regardless of conditions unrelated to job performance. It was established by Title VII of Civil Rights Act of 1964 and has been extended and supported by a variety of subsequent federal and state legislation and executive orders. It requires employers, labor unions and employment agencies to treat all people equally, without regard to race, colour, religion, national origin, gender, handicap, sexual preferences or age in all phases of employment.

EEO laws prohibit discrimination on factors other than job performance. In response, many organizations voluntarily developed affirmative action plans, in which they adopted non discrimination policies, reviewed their personal practices, and monitored their progress. Affirmative action programs, designed to expand the opportunities for

qualified people, have three major goals.

- D To provide redress for past (societal) discrimination
  - 2) To correct current discrimination.
  - 3) To pursue greater diversity as a valuable objective.

The potential benefits of EEO are shown in the figure.

pls. refer pg 81

# Book: organisational Behaviour, 11<sup>th</sup> edition Human behaviour at work

Newstoms & Davis

## Social Culture Values.

Work ethic means that they view work as very important and as desirable goal in life. They tend to like work and derive satisfaction from it. They usually have a stronger commitment to the org. and to its goals than do other employees. Those characteristics of the work ethic make it highly appealing to employers.

The work ethic is a subject of continuing controversy. The two conclusions include.

- 1) The proportion of employees with a strong work ethic varies sharply among sample groups. Differences depend on factors such as personal background, type of work performed and geographical location. The range is quite broad, with the proportion of employees in different jobs who report that work is a central life interest extending from 15 to 85%.
- 2) The second conclusion is that the general level of work ethics has declined gradually over many decades. The decline is most evident in the different attitudes b/w younger and older workers.

Not only are younger employees not as supportive of the work ethic, but the level of support that young people once exhibited has dropped substantially. This decline carries serious implications for industrial productivity, especially as international competition intensifies.

### Social Responsibility

Every action that org. take involves costs as well as benefits. In recent years there has been a strong social drive to improve cost-benefit relationship to make it possible for society to gain benefits from organisations and for the benefit to be fairly distributed. Social Responsibility is the recognition that org. have significant influence on the social system and that this influence must be properly considered and balanced in all organisational actions.

The presence of strong values such as social responsibility has a powerful impact on org. and their actions. It leads them to use a socio-economic model of decision making, in which both social costs & benefits are considered along with the traditional economic & technical values. Org. take a broader view of their role within a social system & accept their interdependence with it.

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## Why has work ethic declined?

Dramatic social changes have brought about work ethics deterioration. Compelling social values have emerged, such as leisure ethic (a high priority placed on personal gratification), desire for intimacy (an emphasis on close personal relationships), and entitlement (a belief that people should receive benefits without having to work).

In addition, changes in social policy and tax laws have reduced incentives to work and occasionally even penalized hard work and success (in the minds of some workers, at least). Finally "instant wealth" phenomenon has blossomed in recent times. This occurs when thousands of people become millionaires after just a few years of work. The dramatic change they experience in their financial assets has led to a belief among some people that vast sums of money can be made by simply being in the right place at the right time, regardless of their belief in work ethics. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century managers are no longer able to rely on the work ethic alone to drive employees to be productive.

## MODULE IV SYLLABUS.

- Understanding a social system
- Social culture
- Managing Communications
- Downward, upward and other forms of communication

### Ref:

organizational behaviors; human behaviors at work  
John. W. Newstrom Keith Davis  
Tata McGraw Hill Edition

contd

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## MANAGING COMMUNICATIONS

Communication is the transfer of information and understanding from one person to another person. It is a way of reaching others by transmitting ideas, facts, thoughts, feelings and values. Its goal is to have the receiver understand the message as it was intended. Communication always involves at least two people - a sender and a receiver. Communication is what the receiver understands, not what the sender says.

### The Importance of Communication

Organizations cannot exist without communication. If there is no communication, employees cannot know what their coworkers are doing, mgmt cannot receive information inputs and supervisors and team leaders cannot give instructions. It is clearly evident that every act of communication influences the organisation in one way or another. When communication is effective it tends to encourage better performance and job satisfaction. Through communication, people understand their jobs better and feel more involved in them. Studies shows that open communication is generally better than restricted communication. If employees know the problems an organization is facing and hear what managers are trying to do, they will usually respond favorably. In an organisational set up

(6)

managements' role is critical, because mgt. not only initiate communications, but also pass them on to and interpret them for employees. Managers need timely, useful information to make sound decisions. Inadequate or poor data can affect a broad area of performance because the scope of managerial influence is quite wide. Thus it is clear that managerial decisions affect many people and many activities. People understand their jobs better and feel more involved in them. In some instances, they even will voluntarily give up some of their long-established privileges because they see that a sacrifice is necessary.

### DOWNWARD COMMUNICATION

Downward communication in an organisation is the flow of information from higher to lower levels of authority. Almost one-half of managerial communication is with subordinates, with the remainder divided among superiors, peers and external ~~and~~ recipients. To communicate downward some executives rely on colourful booklets, flashy powerpoint presentations and elaborately planned employee meetings. These approaches, while attention getting, often fail to achieve employee understanding — one of the goals of effective communication. The key to better communication lies not just in use of colours, actions & electronic aids

but in the presentation of information by more sensitive managers who prepare carefully and convey their messages with candor and warmth. Managers who communicate successfully are sensitive to human needs and open to true dialogue with their employees.

Managements' failure often occurs due to ineffective communication. In such a situation certain factors act as a pre requisite for brighter future. They are

#### prerequisites & problems

- 1) Managers need to develop a +ve communication attitude. They must convince themselves that communication is an important part of their jobs.
- 2) Managers must continually work to get informed. They need to seek out relevant information of interest to employees, share it and help employees feel informed.
- 3) Managers need to consciously plan for communication and they must do this at the beginning of a course of action.
- 4) Managers must develop trust, the trust b/w senders and receivers, which is very important in communication. If subordinates do not trust their superiors, they are not as likely to listen to or to believe managements' messages.

## communications overload.

Managers sometimes operate with the philosophy that more communication is better communication. They give employees enormous amounts of information, until employees find that they are overwhelmed with data, but understanding is not improved. What happens is a communication overload, in which the employees receive more communication inputs than they can process or more than they need. The keys to better communication are timing and quality, not quantity. It is possible to have better understanding with less total communication if it is of high quality and delivered at the appropriate moment.

### Acceptance of a communication.

Acceptance of a message by the receiver is critical without acceptance, communication breaks down. Conditions which encourage the acceptance of a communication are

- 1) Acknowledged legitimacy of the sender to send a message.
- 2) Perceived competence of the sender relative to the issue.
- 3) Trust in the sender as a leader and as a person.
- 4) Perceived credibility of the message received.
- 5) Powers of the sender to enforce sanctions on the receiver either directly or indirectly.

If overload can be prevented and likelihood of acceptance can be ensured through these 5 conditions

## Communication Needs.

Employees in an org. have a no: of communication needs. They can be classified as

- 1) Job instructions
- 2) Performance feedback
- 3) News
- 4) Social support.

### Job Instructions

One communication need of the employees is proper instructions regarding their work. For better results the managers should state their instructions and the potential problem areas in a better way. The consequences of inadequate job instructions can lead to many complications. The managers should give objective information, otherwise the high expectation of employees may often conflict with reality. and they become easily dissatisfied. To prevent this usually firms use realistic job previews, where candidates are given a small sample of organizational reality. This helps the employees to have both positive and negative information about the work environment. When this method is used , turnover of new employees is reduced.

Managers also need to adjust their communications according to the task needs of their receivers. For eg:- as the uncertainty of a task

increases, there is a predictable need for increased information flow in order to maintain a comparable level of performance. Thus an employee performing a standardised, repetitive machine task needs little communication input about the task. On the other hand an engineer working on a new product may require substantial communication input in order to perform successfully. Such variety task needs are reflected in the emerging trend toward just-in-time training, where key information is available to employees in convenient small modules, to be accessed when needed.

## 2) Performance feedback.

Employees also need feedback about their performance. Feedback helps them to know what to do and how they are meeting their own goals. It shows that others are interested in what they are doing. Assuming that performance is satisfactory, feedback enhances employees' self image and feelings of competence. Generally performance feedback leads to both improved performance and improved attitudes.

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Giving feedback is a challenging job for managers. Some dedicated employees engage in feedback-seeking behavior in which they search for information about their prior performance and possible areas of improvement. Feedback seeking employees can actively monitor cues regarding their own performance.

### Needs

Downward messages should reach employees as fresh and timely news rather than as a stale information confirmation of what already has been learned from other sources. Historically employers distributed information through newsletters, posting on bulletin boards or inserts in pay envelopes. More contemporary method include closed circuit television, daily recorded telephone messages that employees can receive by dialing a certain number, electronic mail systems and websites.

### Social Support

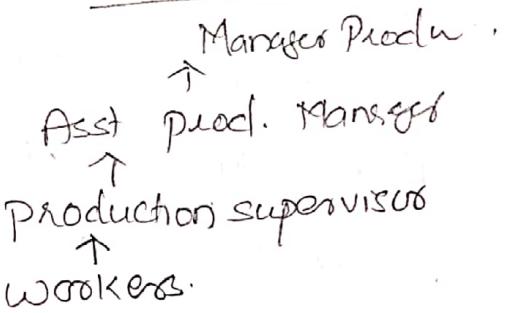
Social support is the perception from employees post that they are cared for, esteemed and valued. When interpersonal warmth and trust are displayed by managers, there may be a positive impact on physical and psychological health as well as job satisfaction and performance.

## UPWARD COMMUNICATION

The two-way flow of information is broken by poor upward communication. Thus the management loses touch with employee needs and lacks sufficient information to make sound decisions. Therefore it will become unable to provide needed task and social support for employees.

### upward communication

### upward



Upward communication keeps managers aware of how employees feel about their jobs, policies and procedures and the business in general. In an organisation upward communication is the process of information flowing from the lower levels of hierarchy to the upper levels. This type of communication is becoming more popular in organisations as traditional forms of communication are becoming less popular.

## Difficulties in upward communication

In upward communication filtering occurs when messages pass through an intermediary in the communication channel. Filtering can often alter the original message. Upward communication filtering occurs when employees pass a message intended for upper level management through an immediate supervisor. The employees immediate superior may change information in the message to reflect the supervisor's opinion or understanding of the situation. Filtering also occurs when the message's recipient allows the message to pass through multiple individuals before reaching its final, intended party.

Delay is an important limitation of upward communication, is the long and slow movement of information to the higher authority. Some lines in an effort to avoid filtering, people short-circuit around their superiors, which means that they skip one or more steps in communication hierarchy. On the positive side short circuiting reduces filtering and delays, on the negative side, since it upsets those who are bypassed, employers usually discourage it. Another problem revolves around an employee is the need for a response.

Since employees initiate upward communication they are now the senders and they have a strong expectation that feedback will occur soon. If mgmt provides a quick response, further upward messages will be encouraged. Also, lack of response discourages future upward communications. Another difficulty is the risk of distortion of messages. In upward communication subordinates unwillingly distort the message because they fear if they tell the original fact to their bosses, they may face some problems.

### Upward Communication Practices

Various practices are needed to improve upward communications. Policy statements, counsil sections, grievance systems, participative mgmt, suggestion system, job satisfaction surveys are some among them. Additional practices include questioning, listening, employee meetings, open door policies and participation in social groups.

Questioning Managers can encourage upward communication by asking good questions. Questions can be of open ended and closed ended questions which can provide certain clues

to the manager. Effective and active listening

from the managers side helps him not only to hear what the person is saying but also learn about the feelings and emotions of that person. One useful method of building upward communication is to meet with small group of employees called employee meeting. In this type of meeting employees are encouraged to talk about job problems, needs and management practices that help in job performance, also helps to tackle some job issues.

An open-door-policy is a statement that encourages employees to come to their supervisor or higher mngt with any matter that concerns them. The employees are usually encouraged to see their supervisor first. If their problem is not resolved by the supervisor, then higher mngt may be approached. The goal is to remove blocks to upward communication. In this way managers will learn more than they ever would by simply sitting in their offices. This practice can be described as. mngt by walking around

in which manager takes the initiative to systematically make contact with large no: of employees.

Also informal, casual recreational events furnish superb opportunities for unplanned upward communication, which can be called as participation in social groups. This spontaneous information sharing reveals true conditions better than most formal communications. Eg:- parties, sports events, picnics, employer-sponsored activities etc.

## OTHER FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

Apart from the upward and downward flow of communication, several other forms of communication also happens in organisational set up. They include mainly 1) Lateral communication and 2) Electronic communication.

Managers engage in lateral communication (also called cross communication) very often. This type of communication is the communication across chains of command. It is necessary for job coordination with people in other departments. People prefers this type of communication because this is more informal. Thus lateral communication often is the dominant pattern within management.

Employees who play a major role in lateral communication are referred to as boundary spanners. Boundary spanning employees have strong communication links with their department, with people in other units and often with the external community. This helps the boundary spanners to gather large amount of information. This information they may filter or transfer to others. This gives them a source of status and potential power.

Another important factor is network. A network is a group of people who develop and maintain contact to exchange informal information which is of great interest to others. An employee who becomes active in such a group is said to be networking. These types of networks can be seen inside and outside of an organisation. These networks are formed because of external interests like recreation, social clubs, professional groups, minority status, career interests etc. Thus this type of network helps to build interest among employees by keeping them informed about the technical developments and make them more visible to others, which will be beneficial to the organisation.

Other form of communication in the organisation is ombudsman | or ombudsman is an official (public advocate) who is independent, confidential and impartial resource to help employees in work-related issues. They investigate complaints that haven't been solved by the organisation. Ombudsman investigate complaints when something has been handled badly or unfairly, making someone to suffer. This is sometimes called maladministration.

Electronic Communications is a general term that embraces all kinds of computer mediated communication in which individuals exchange messages with others, either individually or in groups. This include email, social media, newsgroups, chat rooms, video conferencing, instant messaging, phone and fax. Electronic communication is fast, cost-effective and convenient. The technology enables people to keep in touch at all times also can invade privacy and cut into valuable relaxation time.

Telecommuting also known as working from home or e-commuting. It is a work arrangement in which the employee works outside the office, often working from home or a location close to home. There are a no: of potential benefits for employers when they establish well-designed telecommuting programs for their employees. Some of the benefits include increase productivity, better address work and family demands.

A virtual office is a part of the flexible workspace industry that provides businesses

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A virtual office is a part of the flexible workspace industry that provides businesses

with any combination of services, space or technology, without those businesses bearing the capital expenses of owning or leasing traditional office. Thus in virtual office employees can work from anywhere, but still utilize a mailing addresses, phone, answering and messaging services, meeting rooms, video conferencing and more at a lower cost and with greater flexibility.

### INFORMAL COMMUNICATION

Informal communication in workplace is a communication that takes place outside the formal or communication structures of the work place.

The informal communication is an advantage to business because if employees have friends to communicate with, then they will enjoy their job more which can increase the productivity. The disadvantage to informal communication is just that it is informal.

The grapevine is an informal communication. It is the process of spontaneous exchange of information b/w two or more person at different status without following any prescribed or official rules, formalities and chain of command in the organisational structure. The grapevine is influential both favorably & unfavorably.

The major problem with grapevine is rumors. The word rumors is sometimes used synonymously with grapevine. The rumors is grapevine information that is communicated without seconde standards of evidence being present. It is unverified and untrue part of the grapevine. It could by chance be correct, but generally it is incorrect, thus it is presumed to be undesirable.

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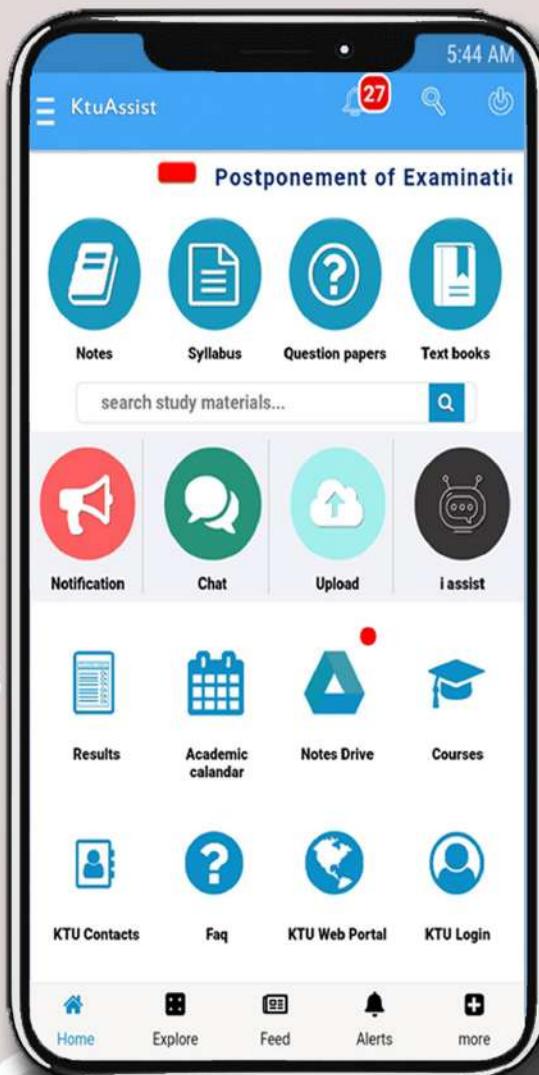
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