

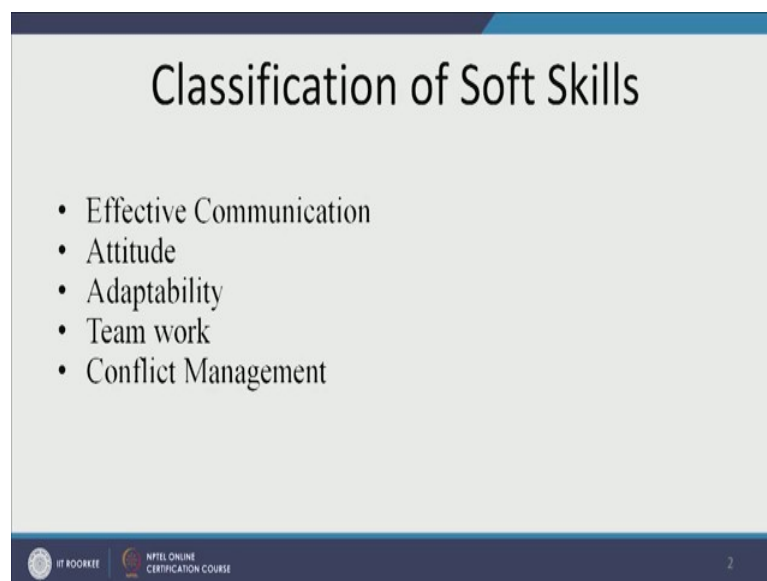
**Soft Skills**  
**Dr. Binod Mishra**  
**Department of Humanities & Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee**

**Lecture - 02**  
**Aspects of Soft Skills**

Welcome to the second lecture of Soft Skills entitled **Aspects of Soft Skills**. In the previous lecture, you learnt about the specifications of soft skills; what soft skills are, then we also discussed the importance of soft skills; both in a personal life as well as in business world. We also looked at the statistics of various jobs and their importance in terms or in the light of soft skills. You also looked at certain newspaper's statistics. By now, you might have been aware that in order to lead a successful life and a successful career, you need to have the requisites of soft skills.

Now, here in this lecture, we are going to talk about the various aspects of soft skills. What are these Soft Skills? Though the number; as I said earlier can be sometimes 10 to 20 to 60 and of varying degrees, but then when you are going to classify soft skills, we can categorize them into certain areas and though many people believe that communication skills are soft skills, but here we shall discuss that communication skills are a part of soft skills and we shall say in communication, though we say and we keep on communicating throughout, but what actually we need is effective communication.

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**Classification of Soft Skills**

- Effective Communication
- Attitude
- Adaptability
- Team work
- Conflict Management

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So, one of the key aspects of soft skills is effective communication. Now what is an effective communication? You come across people communicating throughout either face to face or on telephone or through chats, through SMS, through emails or through some other devices, but then the question is, do they really communicate effectively? What actually is effective communication? We shall discuss in detail when we go to the special segment on both written and spoken communication. Now in order to have a communication effective, what we actually can say is, a communication that serves a requisite purpose. You ordered for a book and you got the book in the limited period of time; perhaps, you were able to communicate effectively.

But sometimes when you are in organizations or even in life, you come across certain situations where you are not able to state what actually you want. There are different reasons for that. The reasons are manifold---- sometimes it is because of your language, sometimes it is because of the structural pattern, sometimes because of the sentence construction, sometimes because of some other reasons, but then your communication fails and it fails because of a number of reasons and then though you want to communicate, but you mis-communicate.

Nowadays, there is a fashion among the youngsters. And this fashion is that if they want some sort of confirmation, what they do is they actually give a miscall to a friend. Two friends talking to each other and they tell each other that when you reach a particular venue or the decided or the desired venue, they will give a missed call to each other. Dear friends, miscall have become a communication now. So, but then sometimes if you receive repeated number of missed calls that actually may lead to confusion. So, we have to find out how can we communicate effectively and then can we communicate effectively with words? No, not at all. There are certain other features also which can make your communication effective and we shall discuss all these factors when you go to the non-verbal part of the communication.

Now, what actually is communication? Two friends talking to each other, they communicate well, they go well, they are friends because they are aware of each other's background. So, when they are discussing a particular movie or a particular book, they actually go on communicating for a long time because of their familiarity which either each other's background. Communication, as all of you, might have come across is a word which has been taken from the Latin word *communicare* which actually means to

share and when you share you share an idea, you share some experience. So, when you share that idea or experience, you share it with the sort of a medium. The medium can be many today. There is actually a variety of medium available depending upon the receiver's background, depending upon the receiver's choice, depending upon the receiver's familiarity with the sender, a communication may succeed or fail.

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Another category of Soft Skills are attitude. Now, what is an attitude? You know, sometimes you will find you want to go and you want to buy a thing, sometimes you want a favor from somebody, sometimes you want a task to be done, sometimes you are working in a group and you find the group members are not co-operating with each other. So, here we find it is a question of attitude. Attitude is a sort of tendency, a sort of willingness that you display in order to get a work done in the right direction in the right way.

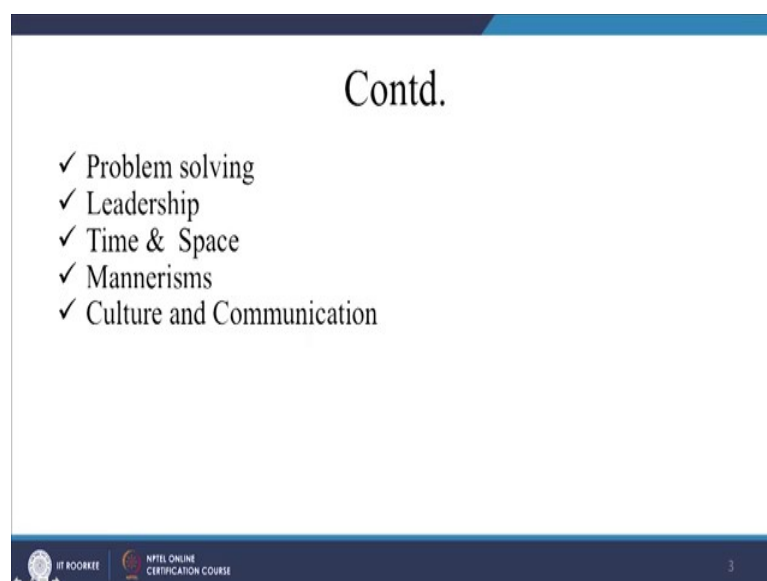
Then comes adaptability, which is another Soft Skills which is needed in order to survive in the present day world where things cannot go always according to you, there may be challenges ahead. You know, if somebody says that he is not comfortable with a particular version, he is not comfortable with working on a particular machine and then the boss some way or the other tells him that this is the way----- we can work on this machine, this is the way the correspondence goes in our organization. There you need to show that you are adaptable. In the present-day world, we actually look forward to

having people who can adapt themselves to differing situations, who can adapt themselves to different situations and because nowadays the nature of work as I said in my previous lecture is not one, you may have to do different tasks at the same time and for that you need to have the requisite skill of adaptability.

Then, comes teamwork. Today we are not in an age where you feel that you can work alone, you may work alone because you are qualified enough, but then when we have to achieve a goal, we have to work in a team and nowadays, most of the projects that you get, you get as a sort of team project and in the team project, you have to co-operate with others and since in every team, you have different sorts of people having different tastes, different background, different nature. So, what you need to do is you actually need to cohere with each other you need to accommodate with each other in order to fulfill the desired task in a desired time. And when you work in a team, of course, conflicts will arise, but then if you continue to go with the conflict that may be difficult for all of us to survive. You need to evolve mechanism to some way or the other, resolve the conflicts.

Now, wherever there are people, qualified people where people having different ideas, there will be a sort of conflict, for that, conflict should not result in a quarrel and conflict management actually involves certain Soft Skills which can be utilized in order to mitigate a difficult challenge in order to resolve a critical situation.

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Contd.

- ✓ Problem solving
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Time & Space
- ✓ Mannerisms
- ✓ Culture and Communication

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Then comes leadership. You will find if you are going to analyze some people who are at the top slot, you will find they are so because they have in them a sort of leadership skill. Now, can all of us be leaders? Can we be appointed leaders? No, dear friends, leadership is a trait that can be developed over a period of time, but for that again another soft skills will come to your help and that is to be aware. You need to be aware, when you learn because when you interact with other people in a variety of challenging situations, you learn certain leadership tricks and a leader.

As you will come to know, later is one who has got a constructive idea that you will learn when you are either in a group discussion in a group discussion also, you will come across the same situation. There are people who start exchanging their ideas. But in order to exchange their ideas, we actually come, we come cross with each other that actually should not happen and here comes the role of the leader. The leader will come and save the situation. So, we will save the group from getting sidetracked or getting deviated.

Then comes time and space skills. All of us have got limited time and all of us have got certain space in order to work effectively in a team and in order to do things before deadline, we need to respect time. Time is a great healer, but at the same time, time can punish you, if certain things are not done in time. So, a successful or an effective manager is one who manages time. All of us have got only 24 hours.

But all of us have certain skills in us----- how we manage time. Unless and until we manage time, we cannot accomplish a task in a given time and then comes mannerism. Work places have become wonderful places today, why? because of well mannered people, mannerism is a part of your inherent skills; of course, all of us cannot have the same sort of mannerism, but mannerism can be learnt and you know what is happening today is most of the organizations; they actually are looking for people who are well mannered, who know how to differentiate, how to distinguish, how to rationalize, how to analyze, how to behave and then how to reach a conclusion during a critical juncture, how to come out of a jinx.

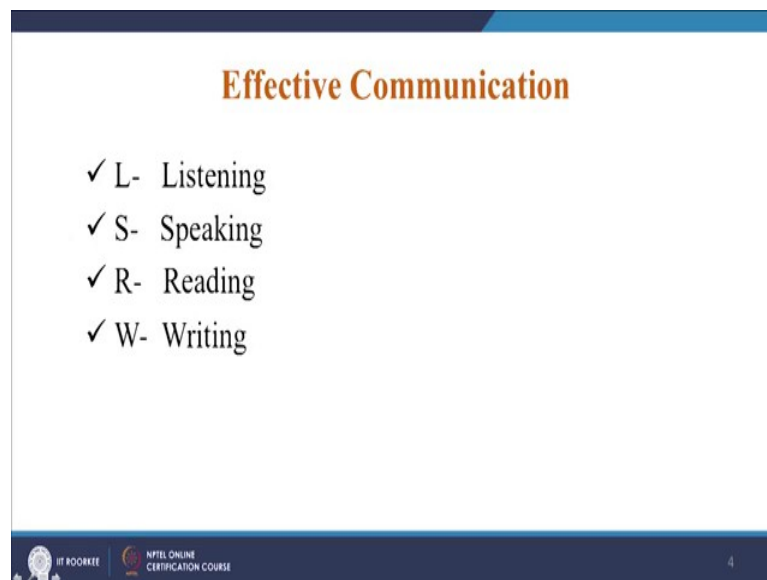
And then finally, since as we have discussed that we are living in an age where the geographical boundaries are shrinking and people of different cultures are also working in the same organization, we need to respect, we need to be culturally sensitive, we need to be communicatively sensitive while we are using words, while we are talking about

certain things, while we are allocating tasks. It is always true that if you allow more space to others, if you allow more regards to others, you will get the same sort of regards.

So, in order to survive and in order to succeed in the present-day world all you need to do is to be culturally sensitive and communicate in a manner that others' sentiments are not heard. Now, when we talk about effective communication, as I said in the beginning, there are 4 ways and the first is listening. The problem today is nobody wants to listen, everyone wants to speak and one should realize that unless you listen, you cannot speak.

Take the case of a group discussion, you will find at the outset of the discussion that you did not have any points, but if you kept patience and kept listening to others point of view, you could have some more ideas and then you could strengthen or you could further the discussion. Hence, listening is very important. You know in order to be a listener; you actually require certain requisite skills that we shall discuss in a separate chapter on listening.

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But remember listening is one of the key ingredients of communication try to become a good listener. Then comes speaking. Nowadays, you will find that most of the jobs, they not only require a good listener, but they also require a good speaker and even as an individual also, you will come across several situations where you have to speak situations like interviews, situations like collection of data, situations like group

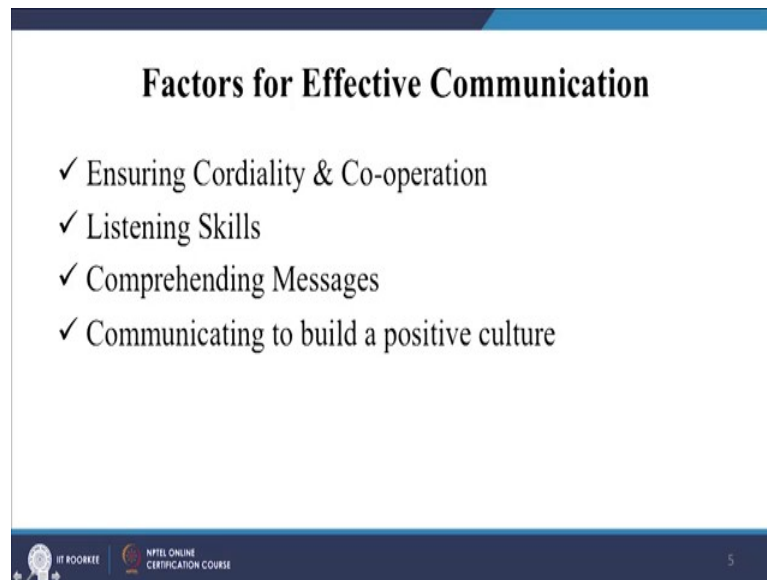
discussion, situations like launching a new product, situations like negotiating situations, like discussing a deal. So, in all these situations, you will have the occasion to speak.

Now, there can be times when you have to speak to one or sometimes you have to speak to 1000. Then comes reading. Of course, the reading because of the technological advancements is on the low ebb, because most of the people, they are reading even books and newspapers on either their laptops or on their tablets. And hence reading is on the decline, but remember in order to learn more tricks and in order to learn more skills, it is better that you read. You read things of latest developments. Every organization requires people who are well informed. And well informed people are those who actually go to read more. Day before yesterday, I was reading a news piece where it was mentioned that those, it was actually a research survey where it was mentioned that those who read at least some pages every day, they have better longevity than those who do not read at all.

So, such is actually the value of reading, even otherwise reading helps us. A famous writer had said “Reading maketh a full man”. Reading makes a full man. Actually, you are filled with ideas when you read something new and then comes writing. Writing is the most challenging, but it is one of the key ingredients of all these skills.

So, when we talk about communication skills, what we need to do is we need to own all these 4 skills on which you are being judged. Then comes certain factors that can make you a better communicator. How can you become a better communicator? You see if you can communicate well and if you can communicate keeping into consideration, the receivers point of view also, you will be able to ensure a sort of cordiality, if you do not talk to a person, you are unable to understand the person. If you really want to know a person, you have to talk to him, you have to communicate with him and one term that can be used is if you really want to communicate well, you have to have a good sort of homophilie, when I say homophile, what I mean is the common experiences. Somebody read a book on a particular author and if he goes to discuss this book with someone who has read it, naturally the communication will become faster it will become vital. Because every now and then when two people communicate, they have some sort of commonality, some sort of familiarity and that alone is the hallmark of a good communication.

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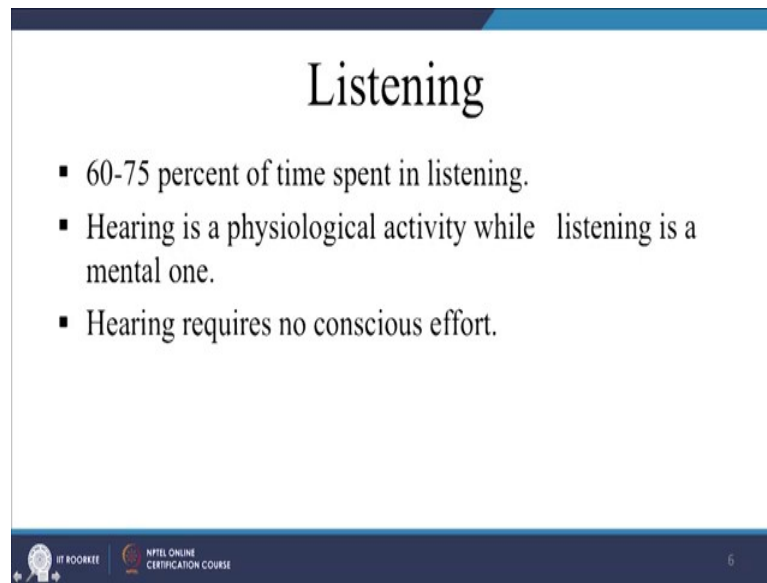


Then comes, if unless and until as I said, you do not listen and if you do not develop your listening skills, you cannot develop soft skills. Most of the organizations, when they allocate tasks, they see to it that you have understood the task well. And in order to understand the task well, you need to listen well, you need not pay only a lip service rather you need to listen and listening is an art. Then when you listen, you are able to comprehend a message.

And finally, if you comprehend the message well, you know your organization well and you will be in a position to build a positive culture of the organization. Why I am bent upon making people listen well is because 60 to 75 percent of your time, whatever job you are in, is spent in listening.



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## Listening

- 60-75 percent of time spent in listening.
- Hearing is a physiological activity while listening is a mental one.
- Hearing requires no conscious effort.

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And the more you listen; the more you are informed sometimes it so happens that people though they pose that they listen but they do not listen and then we say all that you hear is not listening, all hearing is not listening. In order to make something listen, you actually need to go an extra mile. Hearing does not require any conscious effort, whereas listening requires a mental one and that is why we say that one should develop the habit of active listening and that we will later call perceptive listening.

Then comes speaking, which is also one of the key ingredients of communication skills, and there are different situations as we have discussed, sometimes the talk between yourself and your boss, but sometimes between a group of people and you as the in-charge of the group. Now, in every situation because of the nature of the situation your speaking skills will differ and how you will be effective, will be seen after your communication is over. Because you know every communication it starts with a message, it starts with an idea and finally, it actually ends in a response. So, unless the response is proper, you cannot say that the communication process has been achieved well.

So, as I said, you will get chance to participate in group discussion and in group discussion, if you do not listen well, you will not be able to speak well.

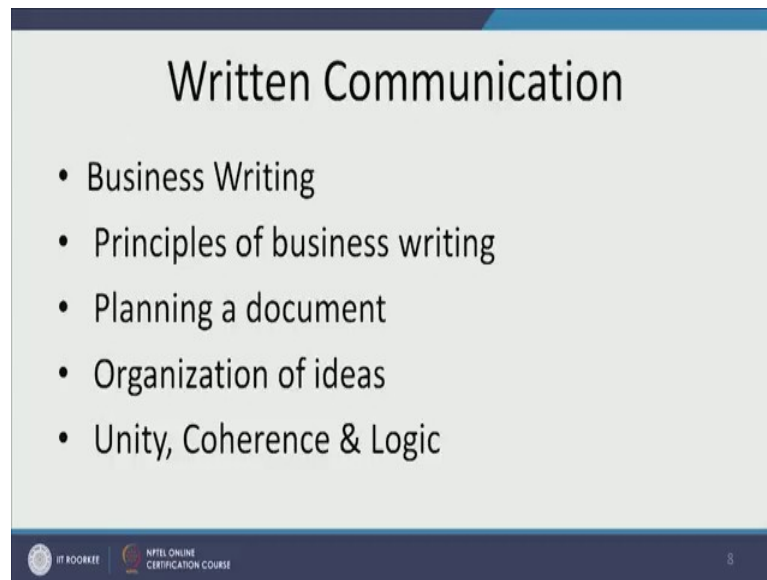
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Then in interviews which are very crucial and interviews also are of different natures, not only the job interviews, but even once you get the job again there are huge opportunities waiting for you to have so many interviews. Because being ambitious enough we actually are seeking promotions and all and for that we need to appear at interviews and how you fare at the interviews is because of your requisites speaking skills and then presentation which is also a key aspect of soft skills and speaking skills as well. Sometimes you need to give presentations in order to present the annual budget of your organization, sometimes you need to give a presentation while your company or organization is launching a new product, sometimes as a teacher. A teacher is always used to speaking and giving presentation and sometimes as a researcher also and as a project leader also, you are going to present your paper, your proposal.

So, in all these situations, your speaking abilities are required and then negotiation which is very important. You know as a representative of your organization, you have been sent to represent your organization; you have been sent to negotiate a deal, how do you negotiate? There are certain tricks involved in it and for all these tricks, you need to adopt different strategies of speaking and how you will do that we shall discuss later. Then comes the written communication.

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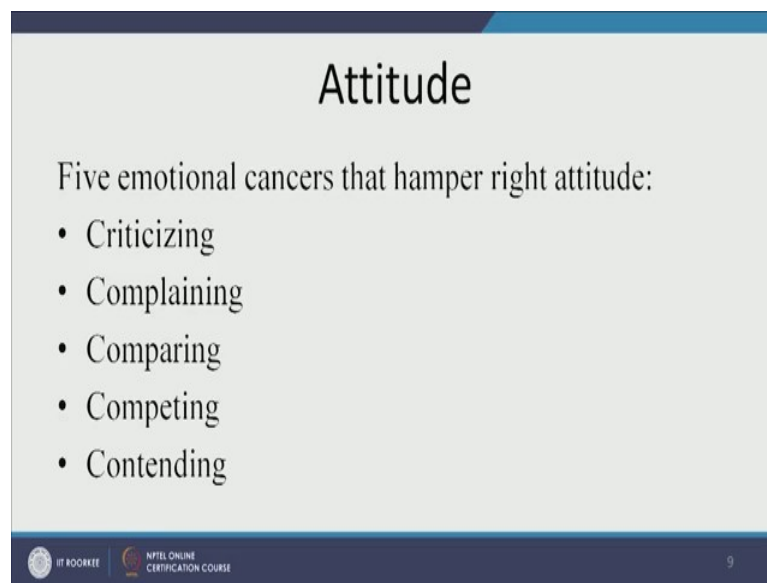


It is also a part of your communication skills. What you write, how you write, for whom you write and in which way you write, whether you are going to write a lengthy document or you are going to draft a brief document.

So, all these depend and vary from one situation to another depending upon the need but remember one thing, which is of at most importance is, that all sorts of business writing; they actually undergo certain principles and one of the most important principle is that business writing is meant to express and not to impress. What I should tell you here is sometimes we go to use words which are very pompous, words which are difficult as in my previous lecture; you might have seen the doctor uses a word like hypochondria, which is difficult for common people like us. Remember, in such a situation the communication cannot become smooth and cannot be effective.

So, when you are writing and writing especially for business; be very specific and please respect the structure and the order that a certain organization is following. Whenever you are writing or speaking or communicating, one thing that you should always keep into consideration is, we do not have a positive attitude and apart from the physical cancer that most of us are often frightened about,

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The slide is titled "Attitude" in a large, bold, black font. Below the title, it says "Five emotional cancers that hamper right attitude:" followed by a bulleted list of five items: "Criticizing", "Complaining", "Comparing", "Competing", and "Contending". The slide has a dark blue header and footer. The footer contains the IIT ROORKEE logo, the text "IIT ROORKEE", the text "NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE", and the number "9".

## Attitude

Five emotional cancers that hamper right attitude:

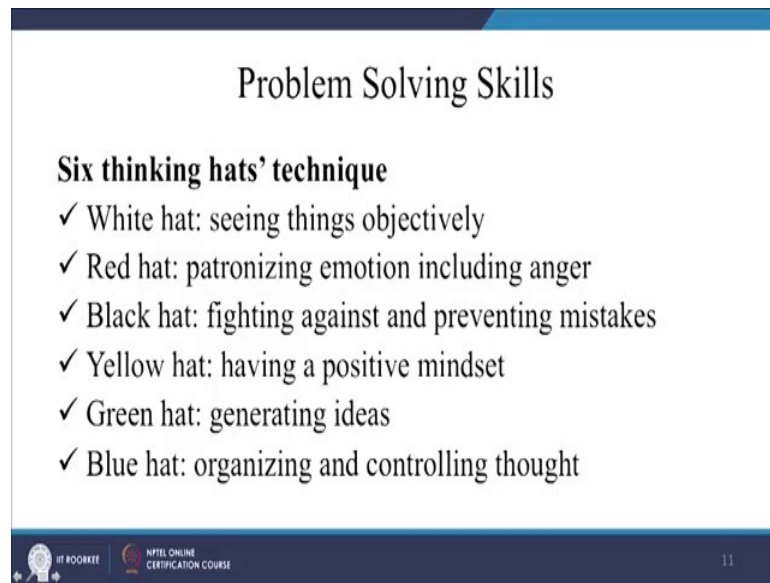
- Criticizing
- Complaining
- Comparing
- Competing
- Contending

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we should actually be frightened about the emotional cancers that are creeping in organization when it comes to attitude. We are most of the time criticizing, complaining, comparing, competing and contending, but not concentrating on our own work. There is often a saying, my shirt is whiter than yours or his. So, please in order to survive in an organization and in a world, it is always better not to criticize or to complain, but to concentrate on what we are doing.

Then comes the adaptability. As we have said, you need to adapt according to the situation that is one of the key skills of Soft Skills you need not be rigid, you need not go against the flow rather you should follow the flow, you should follow the norm. And then one of the key elements of soft skills is also problem solving skills. You will find in a particular situation when either there is a conflict or there is a situation where no decision is being taken, what is required is a person who can have the skills to solve the problems.

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The slide is titled "Problem Solving Skills" in a large, black, serif font. Below the title, the text "Six thinking hats' technique" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Underneath this, there is a list of six items, each preceded by a checkmark (✓) and written in a black, sans-serif font. The items are: "White hat: seeing things objectively", "Red hat: patronizing emotion including anger", "Black hat: fighting against and preventing mistakes", "Yellow hat: having a positive mindset", "Green hat: generating ideas", and "Blue hat: organizing and controlling thought". At the bottom of the slide, there is a dark blue footer bar. On the left side of the footer, there are two logos: one for "IIT ROORKEE" and another for "NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE". On the right side of the footer, the number "11" is displayed.

**Problem Solving Skills**

**Six thinking hats' technique**

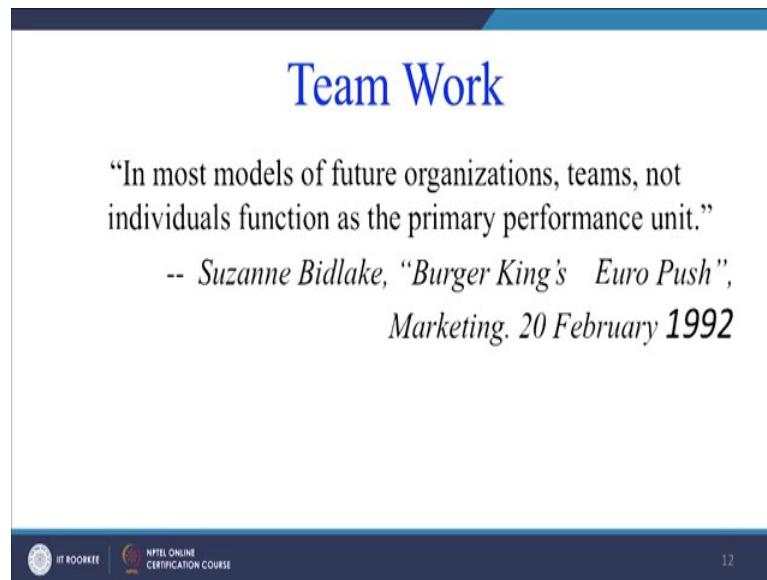
- ✓ White hat: seeing things objectively
- ✓ Red hat: patronizing emotion including anger
- ✓ Black hat: fighting against and preventing mistakes
- ✓ Yellow hat: having a positive mindset
- ✓ Green hat: generating ideas
- ✓ Blue hat: organizing and controlling thought

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And there are times when we are unable to solve the problems and for that let us refer to De Bono's 6 thinking; hats technique where it is said that when all these 6 people wear different hats and the color of the hats actually generate different sorts of ideas. For example, if one wears white hat, one sees things objectively if one wears red hat, one is actually full of emotion. When one wears yellow, he is having a positive mindset and when one is wearing green, this is actually generating ideas and when one wears blue hat it is just to control the situation.

Now, the question is when you are in a critical situation, you should try the 6 thinking hats' technique in order to get a more creative and more conclusive result in order that you may be helped and you may be able to solve the problem. You see, the problems are there and you alone do not have the solutions. When other people will come to give you, when other people will discuss things, they will discuss things in their own way and all people if they change their hats, they will have different sorts of ideas and that will be quite helpful.

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## Team Work

“In most models of future organizations, teams, not individuals function as the primary performance unit.”

-- Suzanne Bidlake, “Burger King’s Euro Push”,  
Marketing, 20 February 1992

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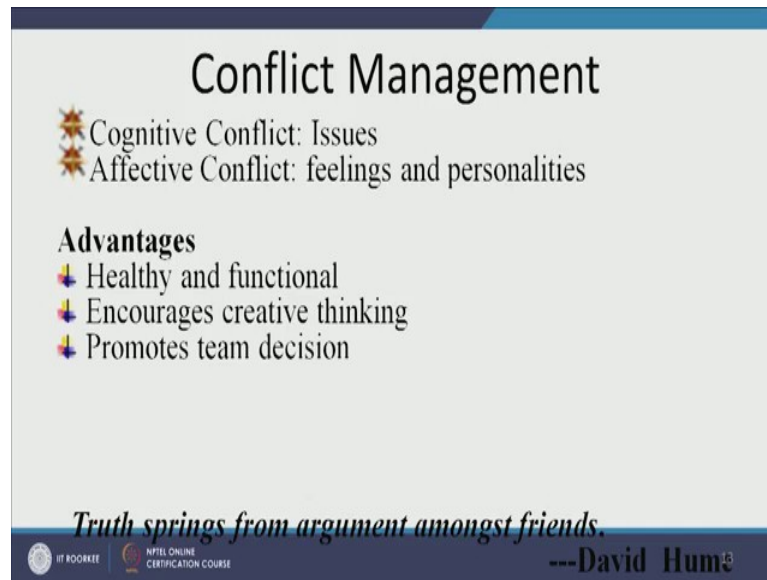
Then comes the teamwork. As I said, we do not get assignments projects in isolation, but then we actually get projects in team and teamwork is very important. You might have seen as youngsters; who are most fond of cricket, they often come across certain situations where if India wins or any other team wins, the leader always says, it is the team’s victory and not the individual’s victory.

So, once you develop the habit of team spirit and in teams, you will have people with different natures, different tastes, but then what you need to do as a leader is actually to bind them, to cohere them, to accommodate them and as Suzanne Bidlake says “In most models of future organization, teams, not individuals function as the primary performance unit”. Team about teams; we can often say that teams may sign and sink together.

So, here you cannot play the blame game, if things go wrong, we have a tendency to play the blame game, but then we should develop the tendency or to own, even in terms of defeat, own it, even in terms of victory please own it, and say it is actually the team’s win or the team’s victory. That actually is one of the key elements of soft skills. Without teams; you cannot survive it. So, happens that when you take a decision it may hurt because you took it as an individual, but when you took it as a team, every one’s responsibility is involved there and you can have solutions as well. Then, if you are in a team, there is bound to be conflict, but then you need to resolve the conflict, but

remember when you are resolving the conflict, you need not be affective. I mean emotions should not come in and between. The issues can create conflict but these issues have to be resolved there are they need to be conflict.

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The slide is titled "Conflict Management" in a large, bold, black font. Below the title, there are two bullet points: "Cognitive Conflict: Issues" and "Affective Conflict: feelings and personalities", each preceded by a small star icon. Underneath these, the word "Advantages" is written in bold. Below it, there are three bullet points: "Healthy and functional", "Encourages creative thinking", and "Promotes team decision", each preceded by a small star icon. At the bottom of the slide, there is a quote in italics: "Truth springs from argument amongst friends." followed by "---David Hume". In the bottom left corner, there are two small logos: "IT ROOKIE" and "NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE".

**Conflict Management**

- ★ Cognitive Conflict: Issues
- ★ Affective Conflict: feelings and personalities

**Advantages**

- ★ Healthy and functional
- ★ Encourages creative thinking
- ★ Promotes team decision

*Truth springs from argument amongst friends.*

---David Hume

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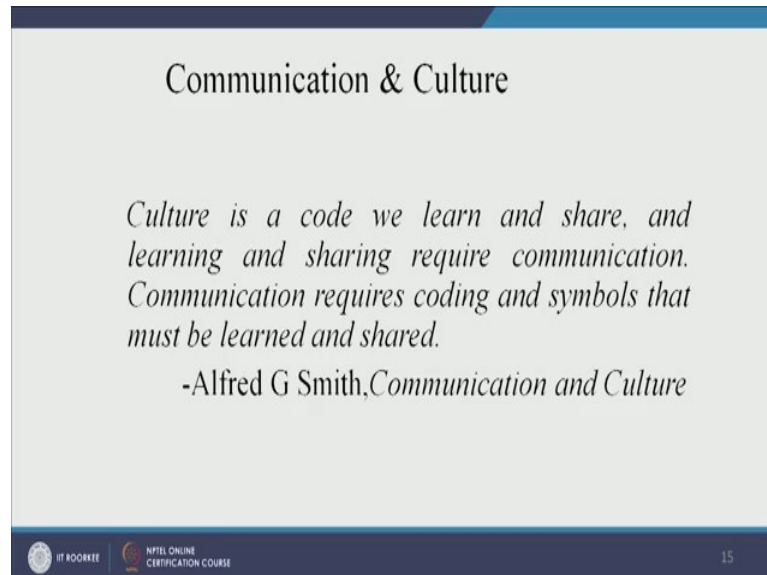
Because you know as David Hume says truth is springs from argument amongst friends let there be argument but let there not be any quarrel. Because when so many people argue with each other, new ideas are bound to come and these new ideas will always lead to a sort of resolution and the advantages of conflict management are that it is always functional, healthy, it allows and it ensures a creative thinking and promotes team decision.

Then, the leadership which is also a key skill of soft skill, who can be a leader. Not all of us can be leaders. If all of us become leaders, who will be the followers. So, the leader will often emerge out of a critical juncture, a leader will emerge and the leader will emerge of his own because of his merits, because of his constructive suggestions and ideas. And then he will act in such a way that all the members of the group will feel influenced, he will build support by working with supporters in the group logically weakening the opponent's point of view.

When we shall discuss a lecture on group discussion, we will find how a leader suddenly emerges when the group goes to deviate the leader comes and saves the group, he emerges as a savior and not only saves not only stops the conflicts, but then he actually

brings a change by his effective participation and as we are living in a world where we can say that we are living the world that is multicultural multilingual.

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So, in order to survive and succeed in a multicultural and multilingual world, all we need to do is to understand the cultural variations. Culture of one will vary from other so will vary the faith of one from another. As Adam Smith says, "Culture is a code, we learn and share". You know it will so happen that when you go to work across cultures, you will find so many dissimilarities, but as you have to survive and you have to build a positive image, all you need to do is accept others cultures as yours and then through learning and sharing, you will be able to communicate effectively; not everything in your culture is good and not everything in others culture is bad.

You need to accommodate, you need to assimilate and through accommodation and assimilation of ideas, you will be better able to work and work not only healthily, happily, progressively, but work as a team. As I say teams are the future of the nation as well as of the world. And teams include not only people of one culture, but of several cultures. Cultures may vary, but as individuals you need to respect others' culture and not belittle others culture because if you want to communicate effectively, you should understand that communication has a binding force and not a dividing force.

So, through all these aspect of soft skills, you might have come to realize that we perhaps do not pay much attention to these basic realities which are required in a



practical world where we have to interact with people of different faiths and cultures, people of different beliefs and people of different religions, but then, in order to survive and succeed and in order to create harmony, let us try to communicate effectively and that is possible only when we respect other's cultural values other's faith and other's beliefs equally; not with a sort of discrimination, but with a sort of distinction.

I do hope this lecture and the previous lecture could have generated in you a sort of consciousness to understand the dire or the basic reality that all of us require both in life as well as in jobs. When we come for the next lecture, we shall have a different topic and we shall analyze it from the point of view of Soft Skills and its importance at large.

Thank you very much.