UNIT 4 OVERVIEW OF ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Structure

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4.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the meaning, needs, and goals of Organisational Behaviour;
- correlate the study of Organisational Behaviour to its root-subjects;
- identify direction, and degree of changes taking place in the field of Organisational Behaviour;
- explain scope of Organisational Behaviour in basically three dimensions: individual, group, and organisational;
- integrate Organisational Behaviour with overall effective management of an organisation; and
- develop a sense of sequencing of various issues discussed in subsequent units in this subject.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In a simple term organisational behaviour refers to the behaviour of persons in an organisation. Everybody wants to understand others behaviour. Understanding others behaviour help the persons to influence them. As you must be aware that human behaviour is guided by the internal and external forces. The analysis of these forces provides an insight for understanding the behaviour. Moreover, managers have been grappling with the idea of the channelisation of human energy towards the attainment of the organisational goals. The understanding of human behaviour play very important role in this endeavour as well. Thus the study of organisational behaviour provides guidelines for influencing the behaviour of the persons in the organisation. In this unit, you will learn the concept, genesis, needs and goals of the organisational behaviour. You will be

familarised with the approaches of the organisational behaviour. You will further learn various perspectives of the study of organisational behaviour.

4.2 CONCEPT OF ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Before we begin discussion on the content of this chapter, you should be clear that understanding of organisational behaviour and understanding of organisation and management developed side by side. Therefore, it would be beneficial for you to keep in mind the contents of Unit 1 and Unit 2, before you proceed to understand this chapter. After reading those Units you have understood how organisation/management theories developed from classical era to modern era. Development of various schools of thought in various era, throw light on development of behavioural issues in organisations.

Thorough understanding of this chapter would make your task easier, i.e., you can understand subsequent chapters in a synchronized way. To understand Organisational Behaviour, let us first take the two terms involved: organisation and behaviour.

Organisation is a place where two or more people work together in a structured way to achieve a specific goal or set of goals. Goals are fundamental elements of organisations. According to Gary Johns, organisations are social interventions for accomplishing goals through group efforts. Various environmental forces influence organisations. There are two types of environmental forces: direct and indirect. Some of the main direct forces are: customers, suppliers, competitors, labour market, and regulatory agencies. Some of the main indirect forces are: economic, technological, socio cultural, political, and international. Behaviour is anything that the human does. Behaviour is response to stimulation that can be observed, thus it is any response or reaction of an individual. The basic unit of behaviour is activity. According to Luthans, in understanding the variable it is extremely important to separate the actual behaviour events from the outcomes of the events. Specific observable behavioural events and their patterns provide useful data in order to analyze the interaction, which precedes the behaviour and the consequences that follow the behaviour.

Running a large company, or even a small one, is no easy task. The field of Organisational Behaviour provides many helpful insights into understanding the complexities of people's behaviour on the job. Organisational Behaviour is the study and application of knowledge about how people act within organisations. The key elements in an organisation are: people, structure, technology, and external environment in which the organisation operates. When people join together in an organisation to accomplish an objective, some kind of structure is required. People also use technology to get the job done. So there is an interaction of people, structure, and technology. In addition, these elements are influenced by the external environment, and they influence it.

According to Keith Davis, Organisational Behaviour is an academic discipline concerned with understanding and describing human behaviour in an organisational environment. It seeks to shed light on the whole complex human factor in organisations by identifying causes and effects of that behaviour. According to Joe Kelly, Organisational Behaviour is the systematic study of the nature of organisations: how they begin, grow, and develop, and their effect on individual members, constituent groups, other organisations, and large institutions. According to Luthans, Organisational Behaviour is directly concerned with the understanding, prediction, and control of human behaviour in organisations. According to Robbins, Organisational Behaviour is a field of study that investigates the impact that individuals, groups, and structure have on behaviour within organisations for the purpose of applying such knowledge towards improving an organisation's effectiveness.According to Baron and Greenberg, Organisational Behaviour is the field that

seeks knowledge of behaviour in organisational settings by systematically studying individual, group, and organisational processes.

On the basis of definitions stated and various other definitions, we can draw following conclusions related to nature and scope of Organisational Behaviour:

- **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Organisational Behaviour integrates knowledge from various relevant disciplines. This issue will be clear to you after reading the section on genesis of Organisational Behaviour in this unit.
- **An Applied Science:** Organisational Behaviour is oriented towards understanding the forces that affect behaviour so that their affects may be predicted and guided towards effective functioning of organisation. This issue will be clearer to you after reading the section on goals of Organisational Behaviour in this section.
- **Behavioural Approach to Management:** Organisational Behaviour is directly connected with the human side of management, but it is not the whole of management. Organisational Behaviour is related with the conceptual and human dimensions of management.
- **Concern with Environment:** Organisational Behaviour is concerned with issues like compatibility with environment e.g. person-culture fit, cross-cultural management etc.
- **Scientific Method:** Organisational Behaviour follows the scientific method and makes use of logical theory in its investigation and in answering the research questions. It is empirical, interpretive, critical and creative science.
- **Contingency Approach:** There are very few absolutes in Organisational Behaviour. The approach is directed towards developing managerial actions that are most appropriate for a specific situation.
- **A Systems Approach:** Organisational Behaviour is a systematic vision as it takes into account all the variables affecting organisational functioning.
- **Value Centred :** Organisational Behaviour is a value-centred science.
- **Utilizes two Kinds of Logic:** It utilizes both objective and subjective logic. Objectivity is concerned with reaching a fact through empirical analyses. Subjectivity is concerned with deciding about an issue through intuition, common sense, experiences, gut feeling, metaphors, learning from stories and cases, persuasive literature etc.

Organisational Behaviour focuses on five levels of analysis. They are :

- Individual behaviour
- Inter-personal behaviour
- Group behaviour and group dynamics
- Organisational issues
- Environmental issues.

4.3 GENESIS OF ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Behavioural Science or Organisational Behaviour is not an elemental subject, rather than it is like a compound subject, with integrated weaving of various disciplines. In modern terminology, Organisational Behaviour is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of human behaviour in organisations. The study of

behaviour can be viewed in terms of various main disciplines. All disciplines have made an important contribution to the field of Organisational Behaviour. These disciplines are:

Psychology: Psychology is broadly speaking concerned with the study of human behaviour, with traits of the individual and membership of small social groups. The main focus of attention is on the individual as a whole person. Organisational Behaviour learns a great deal in issues like personality, perception, emotions, attitude, learning, values, motivation, and job satisfaction etc. from the field of psychology.

Sociology: Sociologists are more concerned with the study of social behaviour, relationships among social groups and societies, and the maintenance of order. The main focus of attention is on the social system. Organisational Behaviour has developed by taking many issues from sociology. Some of them are: group dynamics, communication, leadership, organisational structures, formal and informal organisations, organisational change and development etc.

Social Psychology: Social Psychology examines interpersonal behaviour. The social psychologists are concerned with intergroup collaboration, group decision making, effect of change on individual, individual's responsiveness to change, and integration of individual needs with group activities.

Anthropology: Anthropologists are more concerned with the science of mankind and the study of human behaviour as a whole. Issues like, individual culture, organisational culture, organisational environment, comparative values, comparative attitudes, cross-cultural analysis, are common to the fields of anthropology and OB. As far as OB is concerned, one of the main issues demanding attention is the cultural system, the beliefs, customs, ideas and values within a group or society, and the comparison of behaviour among different cultures. People learn to depend on their culture to give them security and stability, and they can suffer adverse reactions to unfamiliar environments.

Political Science: Political Science as a subject has many ingredients, which directly affect human behaviour in organisations since politics dominates every organisation to some extent. Many themes of interest directly related to OB are, power and politics, networking, political manipulation, conflict resolution, coalition, and self-interest enhancement.

Economics: Economic environment influences organisational climate. OB has learned a great deal from such economic factors as labour market dynamics, cost-benefit analysis, marginal utility analysis, human resource planning, forecasting, and decision making.

Engineering: Industrial Engineering area has contributed a great deal in the area of man-machine relationship through time and motion study, work measurement, work flow analysis, job design, and compensation management. Each of these areas has some impact on OB.

Medicines: Medicines is one of the newest fields which is now being related to the field of OB. Issues like work related stress, tension and depression are common to both: the area of medicine, and OB.

Semantics: Semantics helps in the study of communications within the organisation. Misunderstood communication and lack of communication lead to many behaviour related problems in the organisation. Accordingly, adequate and effective communication is very important for organisational effectiveness.

4.4 NEEDS FOR STUDY OF ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

A study of OB is beneficial in many ways. Some of the benefits of studying OB are following:

- It helps an individual understand oneself. It is a systematic study of the actions and attitudes that people exhibit within organisation.
- It helps managers in getting the work done through effective ways.
- It emphasizes the interaction and relations between the organisation and individual behaviour, thus making an attempt to fulfil psychological contract between individuals and the organisation.
- It helps to develop work-related behaviour and job satisfaction.
- It helps in building motivating climate.
- It helps in building cordial industrial relations.
- It helps in the field of marketing through deeper insight of consumer behaviour, and managing and motivating field employees.
- It helps in predicting behaviour and applying it in some meaningful way to make organisations more effective.
- It implies effective management of human resources.
- It helps to improve functional behaviour leading to productivity, effectiveness, efficiency, organisational citizenship, and also helps to reduce dysfunctional behaviour at work place like absenteeism, employee turnover, dissatisfaction, tardiness etc.

Study of OB can be said to be most important contributor towards building managerial skills. After studying this whole subject you would realize that contributions of OB towards building the following skills and values are unparalleled:

- Self development
- Personality development
- Development of human values and ethical perspective
- Managing stress and achieving mental hygiene
- Creative use of emotions
- Creating learning individual and learning organisation
- Managing creativity and innovation
- Motivation and morale
- Job satisfaction
- Effective communication
- Interpersonal effectiveness including persuasion, coaching, counselling, mentoring, goal setting, decision making, politicking, negotiation, conflict handling
- Team building
- Leadership
- Creating effective organisational culture

- Managing change
- Continuous development through behavioural interventions.

Activity A

Meet a training manager working in an organisation, who is responsible for providing behavioural training to executives. Discuss two issues with him/her: a) What are the five behavioural issues on which training programmes have been arranged for employees during past one year? b) In his/her opinion how these training programmes help employees to acquire human skills?

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4.5 GOALS OF ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Field of OB faces a special challenge. In the areas of physical science, accounting, mathematics etc. if you do not know a concept, you would not claim that you know it. However in the field of human behaviour, though we may not know a fact, yet through our accumulated knowledge it may appear that we know it and, in this long drawn conclusion you may be far away from the fact. For example it appears that high job satisfaction would necessarily lead to high organisational commitment but most of the studies have stood against this apparently obvious hypothesis. One of the objectives of a course in OB is to replace popularly held notions, often accepted without question, with science-based conclusions.

Since 1950s till date hundreds of thousands of research studies have been done on various aspects of OB, and several hundreds of research studies still continue to investigate facts. OB attempts to test theories through scientific research process. Once a theory has been formulated, predictions derived from it are tested through direct research. If these are confirmed, confidence in the theories is increased. If they are disconfirmed, confidence is diminished. At this point, the theory is either modified and retested, or completely rejected. Theory building and empirical research co-exist and reinforce each other. A good theory has to be of practical use and empirical validation would confirm this. Likewise, a good empirical research should have its foundation in a viable theory and should add to the body of existing knowledge.
There are mainly three goals of OB:

- **Understanding behaviour**
  - Which variables are important?
  - How strong are they?
  - How do they interrelate?
- **Predicting behaviour**
  - What patterns of behaviour are present?
  - What is the cause effect relationship?
- **Controlling behaviour**
  - What solutions are possible?
  - Which variable can be influenced?
  - How can they be influenced?

Check Your Progress A

1) What is organisational behaviour ?

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2) How can study of OB lead to managerial effectiveness ?

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3) Why is OB called an interdisciplinary field of study ?

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4.6 TRADITIONAL AND NEW APPROACHES TO OB

Study of human behaviour, being a part of general management, can be traced back to 4,000 B.C., when the Egyptian pyramids were built or even the dawn of mankind when people hunted in groups and protected their families or communities against hostile environmental forces. However for the purpose of our study we need to evaluate how OB developed during last two centuries.

In Unit 2 you have already studied about various theories related to development of organisation as well as concept of management. We can say here that along with changes in theories of organisation, our understanding of OB also developed. Before proceeding further you are expected to refresh yourself on following issues discussed in Unit 2

- The Scientific Management Theories and the School: mainly developed by F.W.Taylor, H.L.Gnatt, Frank and Lillian Gilberth.
- Classical Organisation Theory School: mainly developed by Henri Fayol, Max Weber, Mary Parker Follet, Chester Barnard.
- The Human Relations School: mainly developed by Elton Mayo through Hawthorne Experiments.
- The Behavioural Science School: mainly developed by Abraham Maslow, Douglas McGregor, James March, Herbert Simon.
- The Systems Approach.
- The Contingency Approach.
- Contemporary Approach.

After studying the historical development of organisational theories, you might have noticed that with passage of time following issues occurred:

- Human factor became more important successively.

- Focus shifted from individual performance to both individual as well as group (team) performance.
- Emphasis given on actualizing the human potential.
- Emphasis on developing managerial and human skills on continuous basis.
- Emphasis on human relationship and informal organisation.
- Emphasis on creating synergy through team work.
- Treating employees with more dignity as a wholesome person.
- Increasing importance to environmental factors influencing organisation.
- Importance to psychological contract between individuals and organisation.
- Increasing concern for people in organisation.
- Continuous effort to establish effective organisational culture and climate.

According to Robert Baron, four major features characterise modern OB:

- It has adopted a somewhat more positive view of human being in work settings than prevailed in the past.
- By drawing on several related fields, it has attained a high degree of sophistication about human behaviour.
- It has adopted a contingency approach to behaviour in organisation- assuming that there is nothing like permanent way of arriving at a particular solution effectively.
- It is integrative in nature. It seeks to comprehend bahaviour in organisations by combining information from several different levels of analysis.

Apart from the description above, modern OB is concerned with the issues like: managing intelligence quotient, emotional quotient, and spiritual quotient, improving mental hygiene and overall health of members, continuous improvement of skills and values through training, managing ethical practices, accomplishing fulfilment of psychological contract between individuals and the organisation, quest for quality, behavioural intervention in merger and acquisition as well as in rightsizing, cross-culture management, managing multinational organisations etc.

According to modern thoughts on OB, it is necessary to understand the interrelationships between human behaviour and other variables, which together comprise the total organisation. These variables provide parameters within which a number of interrelated dimensions can be identified - the individual, the group, the organisation, and the environment- which collectively influence behaviour in work organisations. In the next four sections, we shall deal in these four issues.

4.7 INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE

OB deals with individual behaviours in organisations, apart from dealing with group behaviours and behaviours in organisations. You shall get exposure to individual perspective of OB in detail while going through Block 2 and Block 3, comprising of Units 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11. However it should be clear to you now that why we study individual perspective in OB, and what are those issues dealing with individual perspective of OB ?

An organisation is as good as its people. For organisations to grow continuously, there is need for keeping its individuals growing through following measures:

- **Continuous Learning:** There are many ways through which an individual learns. Learning is any permanent change in behaviour, or behaviour potential, resulting from experience. In order to be effective organisations need to promote that behaviour, which are functional and need to discourage that behaviour, which are detrimental to effective organisation. The ways learning take place and the methods through which learning can be converted to desirable behaviour are the subject matters of Unit 5.

- **Creating Right Perception:** Perception is the process through which we select, organise, and interpret input from our sensory receptors. Your five senses (eyes through sight, ears through audition, nose through smell, mouth or tongue through taste, and skin through touch) are continuously gathering information from your surroundings. Now, it is your perception, which gives meaning to various combinations of information those you gather. The field of OB helps us to create right perception, which is pre-requisite for working effectively with people. This issue will be discussed in detail in Unit 6.

- **Building Positive Attitudes and Values:** Attitudes are lasting evaluations of people, groups, objects, or issues- in fact, of virtually any aspect of the social or physical world. Positive attitudes are important ingredient of effective relationship. Values are the basic convictions that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or adverse mode of conduct or end-state of existence. Values are at the base of attitudes and behaviour, hence it is important to learn values in OB. The issues of attitudes and values shall be more discussed in Unit 7.

- **Having Personality and Emotions Compatible at Work Place:** Personality is an individual's unique and relatively stable patterns of behaviour, thoughts, and feelings. There is need in organisations to create a right combination of person and job, so that full potential of an individual can be utilized. According to the requirements of the work, personality can be also developed.

Emotions are reactions consisting of subjective cognitive states, physiological reactions, and expressive behaviours. Cognition is the mental activities associated with thought, knowledge, and memory. An understanding about emotions help for self-development of individuals. You shall come to know about these issues in more detail while going through Unit 8.

- **Maintaining Stress-free Individuals and Environment:** Stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint, or demand related to what he or she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important. With growing competition and survival, and excellence becoming tougher, stress is the managerial discomfort of modern era. Unit 10 shall help you to know the causes and remedies of stress.

- **Keeping Individuals and Teams Motivated and providing Job Satisfaction:** Motivation can be described as perhaps the most important intangible resource of the organisation. Motivation is an inferred internal process that activates, guides, and maintains behaviour over time. Job satisfaction is a general attitude towards one's job. It also depends on the difference between the amount of rewards workers receive and the amount they believe they should receive. Unit 10 deals in

understanding motivation and Unit 11 deals in designing jobs, those can boost morale and job satisfaction.

4.8 SMALL AND LARGE GROUP PERSPECTIVE

In an organisation, an individual does not exist alone. Plurality of people is the essential ingredient of an organisation. You shall get exposure to small as well as large group perspective of OB in detail while going through Block 4 comprising of Units 12, 13, 14, and 15. However it should be clear to you now that why we study group perspective in OB, and what are those issues dealing with group perspective of OB.

An organisation makes continuous effort to create synergy in the group or team, in order to make the team more productive and more effective. Some of the important measures those OB suggests at group level interventions are:

- **Group Formation and Structure:** Group explains the situation where two or more individuals are interacting and interdependent, who have come together to achieve particular objectives. It deals with issues like, how groups are formed, how groups develop, when groups become more effective, what are the undercurrents of group dynamics, and how group decisions are taken. You shall learn more about groups after going through Unit 12.
- **Communication:** Communication deals with transference and understanding of meaning. Organisations make effort through formal structure as well as through informal interaction to establish sound communication system within and outside organisation. Establishing effective communication climate through right attitude of people and through modern technology are the subject dealt in detail in Unit 13.
- **Conflict Management :** Conflict is a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something that the first party cares about. Conflict may arise at various levels, like within the person (intrapersonal level), between two persons (interpersonal level), intradepartmental level, interdepartmental level, interorganisational level etc. Conflict is not necessarily bad, as it promotes difference of opinions, which may help for improving quality of decision. Skillful managers make creative use of conflict by turning challenges to opportunities. You shall learn more about managing conflict effectively through Unit 14.
- **Team Building and Leadership:** These two are highly sought after issues of OB. Team building leads to high interaction among team members to increase trust and openness. For team building effective leadership styles are required. Leadership is the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of goals. These two issues shall be discussed in detail in Unit 15.

- **Power and Politics:** Some amount of pushes and pulls are inevitable where more than two persons exist. Individual tends to exercise power to influence behaviour of others, so that others act in accordance with the wishes of the individual. Political behaviour deals with use of informal networking to make an attempt to influence others. When others are influenced for narrow gains, politics is dysfunctional, when influence is used for achieving overall goals in larger interest, political behaviour is functional, and also desirable for organisation. You shall enjoy learning more about power and politics through Unit 16.

4.9 ORGANISATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Organisational perspective of OB deals with larger issues of the organisations. Such issues influence an organisation in broader ways. Organisational perspective of OB deal with following issues:

- **Organisational Culture and Climate:** Organisational culture explains a common perception held by the organisation's members. It depicts a system of shared meaning. A sound culture leads to conducive organisational climate. For long term effectiveness organisations need to investigate into, as well as need to take measures for improving organisational climate and culture. You shall learn about these issues in detail in Unit 17.

- **Organisational Change:** This is an age of change. It is said that only thing that is permanent is change. In earlier decades there used to be longer duration of stability with off and on shorter duration of change in the organisations. Now the mantra itself has changed. We are passing through an age, where there is longer duration of change interventions in organisations with off and on shorter duration of stability. In Unit 18 you shall learn about strategies to implement change management for building effective organisations.
- **Organisational Development :** Organisational Development explains collection of planned-change interventions, built on humanistic-democratic values, that seek to improve organisational effectiveness and employee well being. Such interventions may be applied at individual level, group level as well as organisational level. Through Unit 19, you would gain insight about managing the process of organisational development.

Check Your Progress B

1) How views related with managing human factor changed along with changes in concepts of management?
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2) What is your understanding of flow of sequence of various issues in this subject of OB?
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4.10 INTEGRATIVE PERSPECTIVE

As individuals do not exist in isolation, organisations also do not exist in isolation. There is constant flux of environmental impact on organisation which in turn stimulate behaviour pattern within the organisation. The boundaries of organisations are becoming more transparent rather more fragile. If an organisation does not learn to muster flexibility, it would not perhaps exist for long. In order to integrate it well with the environmental changes, organisations are required to focus on many emerging issues. Some of them are:

- Continuous improvement of people and process.
- Integrating human factor with grand objectives of the organisation.
- More emphasis on quality of products, services, and process.
- Restructuring to suit requirements of service organisations, task force teams, as well as, in case of rightsizing and acquisition and merger.
- Managing diversity.
- Product innovation.

- Managing creativity and innovations.
- Cross-cultural management.
- Managing multinationals.

For combating the challenging situation, OB comes forward with strategies related to people interventions. Such measures have been debated in Unit 20.

Activity B

Meet with any executive having around 10 years of working experience in organisations. Discuss with him five changes in the area of human resource management, which took place during last two decades. Also ask his / her comment on the question: Are we really progressing in the field of Human Resource Management?

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4.11 LET US SUM UP

Organisational behaviour deals with the understanding, prediction and control of human behaviour in an organisation. It is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of human behaviour. The study of behaviour can be viewed in terms of various main disciplines like Psychology, Sociology, Social Psychology, Anthropology, Political Science, Economics, Engineering, Medicines, Semantics; etc. The study of organisational behaviour helps to improve functional behaviour which leads to productivity, effectiveness, efficiency and organisational citizenship. At the same time, it also helps to reduce dysfunctional behaviour at work place like absenteeism, employee turnover, dissatisfaction, tardiness; etc.

The study of OB is the most important contributor towards building managerial skills. The major goals of OB are : understanding behaviour, predicting behaviour and controlling behaviour. OB basically deals at individual level, group level, and organisational level. However one more dimension has been added to it, i.e., integrative dimension, because study of impact of environmental factor on behavioural aspect of organisation is gaining more importance. This Unit can also be treated as preface of all subsequent Units those you shall study in this subject. Your proper understanding of this Unit will help you to enjoy reading remaining Units in this subject.

4.12 KEY WORDS

Behaviour: Anything that the human does.

Contingency Approach: Approach directed towards developing actions that are most appropriate for a specific situation.

Interdisciplinary Approach: Integrating knowledge from various relevant disciplines.

Organisation: A place where two or more people work together in a structured way to achieve a specific goal or set of goals.

Organisational Behaviour: The study and application of knowledge about how people act within organisations.

Systems Approach: Systematic vision taking into account all the variables affecting organisational functioning.

Variable: A unit or factor of study.

4.13 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1) What do you mean by organisational Behaviour ? Explain meaning and scope of Organisational Behaviour.
2) How has study of OB integrated concepts from various fields of knowledge?
3) How is study of OB beneficial for making an organisation effective?
4) How has approach of OB matured over time?
5) Explain individual perspective, group perspective, organisational perspective, and integrative perspective of OB.

Note : These questions will help you to understand the unit better. Try to write answers for them. Do not submit your answers to the university for assessment. These are for your practice only.