A Research Paper on Trends and Dynamics of Organizational Development Interventions and its Relationship With Training

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ABSTRACT *In this research paper focus in on training as an OD interventions which are now and then being practically used in various companies both in India and abroad. This research paper starts with an overview of Organizational development which says Organization development offers a prescription for improving the "fit" between the individuals and the organization, between the organization and the environment, and among the organizational components such as strategy, structure and process. It also states that in OD, there is a reciprocal influence between culture, strategy, structure and processes; each is important and each influences the other. In this research paper history of OD is also discussed which includes second generation OD efforts. Through this research paper we also get clarity on what can be various objectives of organizational development programme before a beginning is made. It concludes with some of the experiences of Indian Organizations with Various O.D. Interventions.*

An Overview of Organization Development:

When an individual develops, organization develops automatically. OD refers to development of following elements of the organization:

Developments of individuals, teams and the organizations. Development can only take place when an appropriate knowledge is achieved and passed on to subordinates. Hence it is necessary to study various fields of studies that contribute heavily to the field of OD. In this context, study of psychology, social and industrial psychology, economics, politics, commerce, medical, and sociology is important. These fields of study are already rich. OD envisages acquiring skills through already proved models and applying the same for improvement based on situations on hand.

As per Wendill L. French and Cicil H. Bell, Jr. "Organization development offers a prescription for improving the 'fit' between the individuals and the organization, between the organization and the environment, and among the organizational components such as strategy, structure and process. The prescription is implemented through inventions and activities that address specific problematic conditions."

Review of Literature:

Beckhard (1969), has defined organization development as an effort (1) planned, (2) organization wide, (3) managed from the top, (4) increase organization effectiveness and health through (5) planned interventions in the organization's "processes," using behavioural science knowledge. Bennis (1969), OD is a response to change, a complex education strategy intended to change the beliefs, attitudes, values, and structure of organizations so that they can better adapt to new technologies, markets and challenges, and the dizzying rate of change itself. Beer (1980), the aim of OD are (1) enhancing congruence between organizational structure, processes, strategy, people, and culture; (2) developing new and creative organizational solutions; and (3) developing the organization's self-renewing capacity.

Organizational development is a set of behavioural science based theories, values, strategies and techniques aimed at the planned change of the organizational work setting for the purpose of enhancing individual development and improving, organizational performance, through the alteration of organizational members' on the job behaviours (Porras and Robertson, 1992).

OD is a system wide application of behavioural science

knowledge to the planned development and re-enforcement of organizational strategies, structures, and processes for improving an organization's effectiveness (Cummings and Worley, 1993). OD is a planned process of change in an organization's culture through the utilization of behavioural science technologies, research and theory (Burke, 1994).

From the above definitions following points emerge:

- OD is a field of applied behaviour science technologies.
- It is related to planned change.
- The study of OD is concerned with the total organizational systems and processes.
- OD is related to achieving congruence among organizational components like structure, culture and processes.
- OD is a long-term strategy intended to change beliefs, attitudes, values and organizational structures. It is carried out to achieve organizational effectiveness and meet the challenges of changed environmental factors.
- The study of OD is aimed at developing overall organization with particular reference development of organizations renewing capacity.

Latest Trends in OD:

Organization Development (OD) is applied behavioural science. It is a strategy to develop people in the organization. It aims at improving the people side of the organization by planned change. It focuses on people, relationship, policies, procedures, processes, norms, organizational structure and improving the very culture of the organizations. It is a mission initiated by the top managers and practised down the line in the organizational hierarchy. Total involvement makes OD efforts successful. It must be remembered that organizations are made up of human systems aimed at achieving individual and organizational goals, priority being given to the latter. In the present era of information technology and knowledge management, it has added a new dimension to the study of OD.

Organization Transformation (OT) may be called as the second generation OD as suggested by Porras and Silvers. They suggest that the "planned change interventions can be divided into two parts. The first comprises the more traditional approach, Organizational Development (OD), which until recently synonymous with term planned change.

The second generation as OT. Cummings an Worley describe OT as follows:

"Organization transformation can occur in response to or

in anticipation of major changes in the organization's environment or technology. In addition these changes are often associated with significant alterations in the firm's business strategy, which, in turn, may require modifying corporate culture as well as internal structures and processes to support the new direction. Such fundamental change entails new paradigm for organizing and managing organizations. It involves qualitatively different ways of perceiving, thinking, and behaving in the organizations".

It involves culture change, strategic change and self-designing organizations. It also involves development of behavioural science theories, models, practices and interventions to facilitate organizational transformation.

Objectives of organizational development programme:
1. Individual and group development.
2. Development of organization culture and processes by constant interaction between members irrespective of levels of hierarchy.
3. Inculcating team spirit.
4. Empowerment of social side of employees.
5. Focus of value development.
6. Employee participation, problem-solving and decision-making at various levels.
7. Evaluate present systems and introduction of new systems thereby achieving total system change if required.
8. Transformation and achievement of competitive edge of the organization.
9. Achieve organization growth by total human inputs by way of research and development, innovations, creativity and exploiting human talent.
10. Behaviour modification and self managed team as the basic unit of an organization.

Training as an O.D. Intervention:
Training, today in organizations is viewed as continuously evolving, dynamic networks of interactions between different participants and interest groups within and around the organization. This doctrine is very much different from the past perception of training as a static and mechanistic activity to address deficiencies. Training raises the consciousness of participants, makes people aware of the gaps between reality and ideals, provides a common language to articulate shared problems and difficulties, generates ideas for change, and creates greater energy for change. As a consequence of such dynamic and multifaceted approach, training has proved to be an effective O.D. intervention. One finds that inhouse training programs are commonly held at various levels of the hierarchy, whether or not the organization has formally launched any O.D. efforts.

Any O.D. process is initiated with athorough diagnosis of the 'symptoms'. Training workshops can be effectively used to diagnose organizational issues without sacrificing the educational objectives of these programs. This is vividly demonstrated through the experience of two O.D. Indian consultants, V. Nilakant & S. Ramanarayan at Chemcorp, a large successful public sector unit in the chemical industry. In 1983, Chemcorp realized an urgent need to train staff (three groups senior management, middle management and supervisory staff) throughout the corporation. The Tata Management Centre was approached for the same. Tata Management Center decided to first conduct a training needs assessment workshop to determine the scope and content of training followed by a workshop for the Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) and top management to agree on the strategic direction which would provide a basis for the training.

Some of the observations that were made on the basis of the training needs assessment workshop were:

- Senior management largely saw themselves as technical specialists rather than managers
- Wide discontent regarding personnel polices

- Lack of motivating & supervisory skills at the senior management level
- High parochialism with respect to one's function and department
- Highly bureaucratic culture

On the basis of the above observations, it was decided to conduct workshops consisting of a series of skill building exercises based on the themes of learning, interpersonal relations, teamwork and leadership. The workshops revolved around real task related issues in the organization and aimed at aiding the participants to reflect on their experiences, learn collaboratively, and work together to generate choices or options to solve key organizational problems. While the main focus of the training was on skill building, more issues emerged during the workshops. For e.g., the poor quality of service of the materials department surfaced in one of the workshops. This lead to a unique workshop for the department in order to improve its functioning. Other departments that were studied as a result of the training were the personnel department and the R & D department. As credibility and support towards the O.D. consultants grew, they were asked to design the structure and manpower plan for a new plant and also conduct a series of motivational workshops.

This effort of O.D. through training was seen to have a 'convergence' effect on the organization. Convergence can be described as a slow, incremental change aimed at making the organization more efficient through fine tuning existing structures, systems and procedures. The workshops helped highlight the difference between perceptions and realities. The training provided the employees a common language to explore their concerns and a forum where they discovered the shared and common conditions of their frustrations. They initiated incremental changes in the systems and processes, leading to overall organizational effectiveness. The most significant contribution of the intervention was that it created a climate that facilitated transformational change. While there was a greater expression of discontent, there was also a greater energy for change. The consultants experienced that the efforts were the first step towards a cultural transformation of Chemcorp.

The various reasons why training can be used as an efficient O.D. intervention have been summarized below:

- It provides a medium of participation and involvement
- It allows greater personal learning and insight about organizational problems
- It facilitates acceptance of the diagnosis since it emerges in a setting of common language & symbols
- It facilitates the establishment of trust and collaboration among the participants & between the participant and the trainers

A number of organizations essentially use training as an intervention. All training based interventions are not O.D. interventions. When training is taken up in a planned way to initiate change it is classified as an O.D. intervention. A large number of organizations and management professionals have been using training as a method of change at the unit level. For example the Aditya Birla Group has embarked on a large scale cultural change to make their units more professional, entrepreneurial and effective. The change was initiated through a world wide survey of the organizational culture of their units. The survey results were presented and a number of areas were identified for improvement. A series of training programs are being conducted to orient or reorient their top level managers in terms of their leadership roles, styles, delegation and other competencies. Simultaneously, attempts are also being made to introduce Assessment Centers for identifying and developing talent among the current employees for future roles. In all these, training is being used as a focal intervention.

In most companies that use Performance Management Systems, training in identification of Key Performance Areas, conducting performance review discussions is a common intervention. These organizations assume that such training in performance planning, performance coaching etc. will bring cultural change.

Conclusion:

Organization development offers a prescription for improving the "fit" between the individuals and the organization, between the organization and the environment, and among the organizational components such as strategy, structure and process. The prescription is implemented through inventions and activities that address specific problematic conditions. Organizational development is a continuous process. The programmes are implemented on short-term as well as long-term basis. Organization Transformation (OT) may be called as the second generation OD as suggested by Porras and Silvers. Organizational development is a set of behavioural science based theories, values, strategies and techniques aimed at the planned change of the organizational work setting for the purpose of enhancing individual development and improving organizational performance through the alteration of organizational members on the job behaviours.

In OD, there is a reciprocal influence between culture, strategy, structure and processes; each is important and each influences the other. When we study the profile of organization culture, it is identified as autocratic/feudal culture, bureaucratic, entrepreneurial, and technocratic. Innovations are carried out to solve complex organizational problems through laboratory training, survey research and feedback methodology, action research and socio-technical and socio-clinical approach to organizational development. Second generation OD efforts revolved around organizational transformation, learning organization, total quality management, visioning and virtual organizations. We should understand what are various objectives of organizational development programme before a beginning is made.

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