HISTORICAL RETROSPECT

In the previous chapter we have already pointed out that the modernization of the industrial workers is the necessary correlate of the industrial modernization. The modernization of the workers in the sense of their adaptive behaviour can never properly be understood unless they are viewed in their historical perspective. Let us start with Frederick W. Taylor (1911) who had a purely mechanistic approach and who did not take account of psychological motives or social factors. He put forward the classical theory better known as scientific management. According to this theory workers were seen as motivated by economic rewards. A. Etzioni (1965) has expressed this classical view in the following words: "The classical approach recognized no conflict between man and organization. It viewed the organization from a highly managerial standpoint. It assumed that what was good for management was good for the workers. The classical school argued that hard and efficient labour will in the end pay off for both groups by increasing the effectiveness of the organization: Higher productivity leads to higher profits which in turn lead to higher pay and greater worker satisfaction."

Taylor's research was objected to because as a researcher he was on the side of employers and was concerned with increasing productivity rather than the general well-being. His approach envisaged men as "adjuncts to machines."
This old hypothesis, I mean the classical approach, regarded man as a machine. In sharp reaction to this theory arose the Human relations school represented by Elton Mayo (1970). He put forward the view that modern industrial organizations are not only technical systems but social systems as well and that a sharp separation of these produces a failure in collaboration and resistance to change. He thinks that modern industrial organizations have a tendency to sever the technical consideration from all the social interrelations.

A. Etzioni (1965) has expressed the view of the Human relations school in the following words: "The Human relations School pointed out that the workers have many needs other than purely economic ones and that the classical approach benefits neither management nor the workers. They (the supporters of the School) went on to suggest ways in which management could by paying attention to the non-economic social and cultural needs of the workers - increase workers' satisfaction and productivity". It is true that the work of Mayo forms a foundation on which all further researches must be made. But still it is not free from criticism. The severe criticism that has come from the sociologists has been expressed by J. A. C. Brown (1974) in the following words: "(1) Mayo has investigated the factory to the almost complete exclusion of its social background. (2) He shows bias in favour of management. A. K. Rice (1958), a consultant and a research worker at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations mentions that any system has at least three dimensions - the technological, the economic
and the social. By technological is meant the work system, the method of manufacture, the equipment used, the order of process and so on and by the social dimension is meant the relationship, attitude, beliefs and customs operating at a given time. Thus according to Rice any productive system is a socio-economic-technical system.

In between these two views viz. the classical approach and the human relations approach stands the structuralist approach represented by Reinhard Bendix (1956) and L. H. Fisher (1961) among others. The structuralist writers fully appreciated the organizational dilemma: the inevitable strain between organizational needs and personal needs, between management and workers. According to these writers the Human relations approach did not provide a full view of the organization. On the contrary, the structuralists regard the organization as a large complex social unit where many social groups interact.

Now if we emphasize the organizational dilemma as has been pointed out by the structuralists and the relationship between the workers and machinery as has been shown by Lambert (1966), we are to think anew and search for a clue. The clue is given by the present-day Industrial Psychology where the mind of the worker has been the main concern. The present-day emphasis has solely been on the consideration of motivation and morale. To-day it is clear that the most important single factor is the reaction of the worker towards his work and his work-mates. So ultimately it turns out that the question of
human element in industry is most predominant.

Technology employed in modern industry is closely related to human relation. In this connection we are carried back to a talk given by Henry Ford II (1952) before the American Society of mechanical engineers. "Machines alone do not give us mass production. Mass production is achieved by both machineries and men. And although we have gone a long way toward perfecting our mechanical operations, we have not successfully written into our equation whatever complex factors represent man, the human element."

Modern technology may dictate how much detailed supervision is needed and what opportunities there are for informal contact among the workers. At the same time technical aspect depends upon the human factors - the skill, motivation and discipline of the workers called for by the mechanical processes.

Thus the machinery cannot be thought of without the man or the worker who uses it. It may be aptly said in this connection that humanology overtakes technology. Previously persons engaged in organization were totally ignored. But present psychological approaches put emphasis on the workers engaged in organization. With the advent of industrial civilization new concepts of the nature of man and society evolved. Human behaviour became predominant from that period onwards. By now the close interdependence between technology and human relations has been felt. The idea of the past that the human beings were made to adapt to industry has been shaken off. Now the structure
of industry along with its traditions and superstitions is not accepted without question. Hence, an obvious question is: what is the nature of the industry and how far does it fit in with what we know of modernization of industrial workers as an adaptive behaviour?

In order to discuss this question we must know the nature of industry prevailing in industrial organization under capitalism and its influence on the workers. In capitalist economy the workers are in a technical sense "free" labourers. They work for the owners. They are "free" in the sense that they are "freed from", that is have no ownership interest in the instruments of production and in the further sense that they are free to sell their labour to those who do hold such ownership.

The said organizations have been structured in such a way that the needs of the workers become totally neglected. Jobs are simple and repetitive. Workers have no control over the machine and work process. Further, they become motivated to work by impersonal external control system. Consequently, the personality of the workers becomes stunted and impoverished. The basic characteristics of work viz. decision-making, choice and responsibility do not become fully expressed.

The attention of Karl Marx (1962) was drawn to this. He developed the problem of alienation which he derived from Hegel. It is a hypothesis advanced by Marx to explain the impact of technology on human relations in industry. According to him factory technology brought about the estrangement of
industrial workers from their work. To quote Fromm (1955) alienation means "a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien......estranged from himself." Alienation is thus nothing but separation of a man from work. Marx (1962) thought that alienation was the result of private ownership of the means of production. According to Marx the modern factory worker has become a "wage slave" who owns neither the means of production nor the product of his labour. Besides, Marx thinks that a modern factory is administered in a bureaucratic manner; this set-up, according to Marx, fosters the growth of alienation among industrial workers. However, present-day writers such as Feuer (1963) and Blauner (1964) do not subscribe to the above view of Marx; they think that alienation has come out from man-machine relationship.

Besides, Professor Amlan Datta (1962) holds that the diagnosis of Marx simply reveals his superficial understanding of this profound spiritual problem. However, Marx whose conception of alienation though attractive at the initial stage to the writers belonging to the humanistic School could not draw their attention afterwards.

Thus the simple faith is that industrialisation which is a painful process under capitalism becomes free from its strings when it is effected under socialism. But this again is an oversimplification of reality. The revision of thought perhaps lies in the basic assumption of the integrity of the individual. The value of the individual is to be recognized.
The above idea has gained ground in modern industry. What is now required in modern industry which is based on mass-production principle is "not so much manual skill or knowledge of tools or materials but partly theoretical and partly social skill" in the language of J. A. C. Brown (1974). This social skill is nothing but the capacity of the workers to work together; it implies social interaction. This social skill is here obviously linked team work. Workers' relationship with one another as well as with the management contribute to such behaviour as produces some skill. This skill is further developed. If individual skill is developed, it becomes social skill. If individual skill is thwarted, it is no skill at all. The need for social skill becomes predominant in modern industry in so far as it completely divorces the workers from the product and the means of production. The need for this social skill is a reason for the present-day emphasis on the social behaviour of the industrial workers as referred to earlier.

This social behaviour in its turn refers to the interrelationship between the workers and their work environment. In this connection we are carried back to J. Morgey's (1975) words: "We never react merely as biological pawns buffeted by external forces. All human life is social life. We cannot really talk meaningfully of man and society. Man is society. He is created by his society and in one sense creates the society anew every generation."
BIBLIOGRAPHY


