A STUDY OF
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
BEHAVIOURAL PROCESS INTERVENTIONS
IN AN ORGANISATION

by

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ABSTRACT

Over the last two decades there has been an enormous growth of interest in the social and psychological aspects of institutional and organisational life. This has been reflected in a substantial upsurge in research and training in the field of organisational behaviour. Attention in this development has focused on the interrelationship between the individual, the variety of groups to which he belongs and the organisational environment within which he and his group operate.

Organisations are formed to achieve purposes which individuals alone cannot achieve. Individuals join organisations to achieve personal goals they cannot attain on their own or which are better met through membership in organisations. Thus organisations are social inventions designed to achieve certain purposes and at the same time to fulfil members' needs. In effect organisations are social structures (formal arrangements of people and groups) and processes (behaviours and interactions between people and groups). The effectiveness of the organisation
can best be determined by the extent to which its social structures and processes facilitate the achievement of the purposes (economic and others) for which they are designed and the extent to which they provide fulfilment of members' needs and goals.

In order to enhance the effectiveness of organisations, organisation development (OD) emerged as a discipline encompassing a wide range of social science-based approaches to planned organisational change. OD may be defined as a planned effort, initiated by process specialist(s) to help an organisation develop its diagnostic skills, coping capabilities, linkage strategies in the form of temporary and semipermanent systems, and a culture of mutuality.

This research on "A Study of the Effectiveness of Behavioural Process Interventions in an Organisation" was undertaken to:

- Review diagnostic data pertaining to organisational processes collected from four Indian organisations.
- Draw generalisations characterising Indian organisations.
- Explore the processes of bringing about planned change in organisations by systematically presenting the flow of events.
- Present a picture of the behavioural process interventions in an organisation and to assess the effects generated as far as possible.

An action research approach was adopted combining the survey
method and the field study method during different phases of the study. Two questionnaires, one on Organisation Environment comprising of 12 dimensions, and the other on Motivational Climate comprising of six motivations was administered. In addition, personal interviews and group interviews were conducted to collect data during the various stages of the study.

The study was divided into three parts:

A Diagnosis of a plurality of Indian organisations. Four organisations were chosen for this purpose.

B Interventions carried out in a single organisation.

C Before-after comparison of the effectiveness of behavioural process interventions in a single organisation.

Some of the major findings were:

- The area of highest concern seemed to be that of Personal development.
- The motivational climate was predominantly one of Dependency and Control.
- Approach-avoidance conflict pervaded the organisations.
- Negative images held by people about each other were more than the positive images.
- People desired their organisation to be either "good" or "excellent".
- Following the period of interventions in one organisation, improvement was observed on almost all the dimensions of the
organisation environment.
- Decision making and Managing problems registered the maximum improvement.
- The impact was perceived most at the highest and the junior most Levels of Officers.
- The majority perceived a change in the positive direction in both the organisation environment as well as the motivational climate.
- A shift in the motivational climate was observed from a climate of Achievement, Control and Dependency towards one of Achievement, Expert influence and Extension.
- People reported changes in themselves, others as well as the organisational system.

Some of the limitations of this study were that it fell short of taking a holistic view of the total organisation in so far as its exploration was restricted to the human-processual aspects of organisational functioning. Furthermore, the before-after experimental design adopted is not as rigorous as other experimental designs, such as matched control groups, and this research did not lend itself to rigorous quantitative techniques of analyses. However, qualitative data was collected to offset partially this lacuna in the research design. In addition, exploration of an important aspect of the human processual dimension, i.e., of values and norms was not undertaken. There is a need to develop suitable instruments and carry out research in this area.
This research may stimulate thought in further refining and developing organisational diagnostic approaches, enhancing the scope and variety of interventions as well as evolving better designs for assessment and evaluation. This may also help practitioners to enhance their perspective on the design, conduct and processes involved in planned organisational intervention and change.