CHAPTER 5
Chapter 5

Category 2: Emergence of a Cohesive, Capable and Committed Team of Coaches

5.1 Introduction

Coaches and people who had been involved in Project ACE have talked extensively on selection and the process of their capability building in the interviews. There was an internal advertisement from the company in company website and applications were invited. The interviews and other associated material from the company archives and website is specially revealing in the way this process was carried out. Shri V. G. Ramaswami one of the Internal Coaches in his interview brought out the process of Capability Building in the team. This is one of the very exhaustive and focused interviews and is analyzed comprehensively and network diagram created.

5.2 Constant Comparison of Interviews and Coding:

Excerpts from his interview are as under:

‘The conversation and the focused dialogue (C&MD Shri M.B.Lal, Director HR Shri Arun Balakrishnan and former C&MD of BPCL Shri U.Sundarajan) clearly spelt out the change initiative needed in HPCL. At that point of time it was decided by consensus that HPCL to have Internal Coaches to drive the well-designed transformation process taking into account the envisaged duration of the change process and the prerequisite of knowledge and awareness of HPCL internal structures and procedures, engaging the outside consultant was ruled out and a search was made within HPCL to bring in a team of coaches to be trained and to be engaged for rolling out transformation process to the length and breadth of the country ...

Codes were derived from this part of the interview and the codes explained in line with the interview quotes. The codes that arise out of this are:

1. **HPCL commenced Change Initiative (ACE):** HPCL commenced the change initiative after discussions at the Top Management Level.

2. **Selection of Internal Coaches:** Selection of coaches from within the company who are aware of HPCL processes, structures and procedures

3. **Driving the Transformation Process:** Coaches to roll out the transformation process across HPCL

The codes are further strengthened by his later views in the interview:
‘This depicts the organization firm and shared decision at the top level on the need for carrying out the organizational transformation exercise through a set of officers who are aware of the culture and processes of the company. During numerous talks with Mr. Arun Balakrishnan then Director HR and other coaches in the team at that time also reinforced the above view. People who attended our workshops on visioning believed in us because they saw us as colleagues and co-travellers. One of during fellow coaches Mr. Surya Rao once said ‘people don’t want preachers from another world.’

Similarly the balance interview was continued to be coded. That part of the interview is depicted as under:

‘For this purpose HPCL HR has sent out communications to the entire officer’s community through an internal circular seeking volunteering offer for the position of internal coach.’
Dr. Kannan Ex –Director ASCI, Hyderabad was given the responsibility of coaching the entire team and for this purpose. The team had spent day and night at HPMDI . The ambience and the learning atmosphere of HPMDI were fully utilized by the team of internal coaches to read and assimilate Dr. Peter Senge’s work of Fifth Discipline which was the platform on which the coaching commenced. Dr. Kannan helped us for a long time to learn on coaching and the Fifth Discipline concepts. He enjoyed immense credibility as an expert since he had been a Director at ASCI, Hyderabad as also was certified by Innovation Associates Inc. USA, as a Master Coach, on the Fifth Discipline Concepts. Dr. Sundararajan was Ex-CM&D of BPCL and has been involved with several government committees like the deregulation of APM committee, and enjoyed high credibility as one of the most successful CEOs in the oil sector. This also added credibility to the process of capability building of coaches.
The process allowed the coaches to have their firsthand experience in creating vision and the entire process of co-creating future and equipped themselves with tools and techniques for driving change in the organization. The Five disciplines viz. Personal Mastery, Shared Vision, Mental Model, Systems Thinking and Team Learning were packed as a model to initiate change process in HPCL. The coaches dealt with the intricacies of the five disciplines and has made appreciable work basis achieving continuous Excellence (ACE) model of Dr. Peter Senge.’

On coding this part of the interview and defining the codes from the interview quotes, good insights were generated.
The codes that came out of this part of the interview are as follows:

**Capability Building of Coaches:** Coaches were trained through a structured process to build capability for effective change management interventions at HPCL

**Capability Building by Experts:** Mr. Kannan Ex-Director ASCI and Mr Sundarajan Ex Chairman of BPCL were experts on the skills of facilitation and change management and were hired to train the coaches.

**Learning Concepts of Fifth Discipline:** Coaches learnt extensively the book ‘Fifth Discipline – The art and practice of the learning organization, where concepts of Personal Mastery, Shared Vision, Mental Models, Systems Thinking and Team Learning are detailed. These concepts help organizations to initiate change in the organization.

Mr. Ramaswami further adds:

‘The coach’s team spent 5 weeks in HPMDI to get tuned to the structured process of conducting workshops for each team in HPCL. Apart from reading books and various articles across the globe each team member brought in their rich experience for formulating applicable strategy and insights for different functions. On one side a strong team emerged as a single unit shouldering the responsibility of driving change and on the other side executed the HPCL management’s expectations of bringing in transformation.

The sheer adaptability and the absolute commitment of the coaches made the impossible as possible. Involving 3000 + officers, about 1000+ non-management, about 500+ workers across the organization and the alignment emerged throughout the organization stands testimony to the unified efforts of internal coaches…

The coaches had to read, understand and co-relate to HPCL context was a herculean task…The team had imbibed the culture of sharing of all the learning’s by each team member. The unstructured presentations and sharing of insights post workshop brought in bondage and team effectiveness to the core…. certification process like Coaching, Appreciative enquiry etc., EBSCO (online learning of books, articles etc...) …employee engagement of Gallup…’
It can be seen from the above that the structures were put up which facilitated learning of the coaches and also that the coaches were selected based on the passion they had for organizational transformation and the willingness to sacrifice. They learnt the necessary concepts under the tutelage of Mr. Kannan and Mr. Sundararajan as well as underwent several certifications.

Their proximity, sharing with each other, learning from each other, spending time together for long periods, co-creating the Coaches’ vision all led to the emergence of a cohesive and capable team.

After coding the complete interview the codes that were derived were looked at and the fractured data represented by the codes were brought together by the relationships through and the entire network diagram is depicted in the next page.
Figure 5.1: Network Diagram – Capability Building and Internal Coaches
The grounded theory was used to code the interviews and the relationships to realize the properties and dimensions of the Category: Capability Building of Internal Coaches. Most importantly a new category grounded in the data and yet abstract that arose as a consequence of the network is: **Emergence of a Cohesive, Capable and Committed Team of Coaches.** The relationships to its properties, causal conditions, or consequences and strategies have been mapped in the network diagram below:

It is necessary for creating a robust theory and for better validation we have coding of another incident or interview which talks of development of coaches. Dy. General Manager South - Zone has talked on Coaches Capability Building. He was earlier one of the coaches involved in organizational transformation work. His interview excerpts are provided below and the same is analyzed with the help of Atlas.ti.

‘With the guidance of Advisor – Project ACE and Ex BPC Chairman (Shri Sundararajan), C&MD (Shri M.B.Lal) and Director – HR (Shri Arun Balakrishnan) finalised a Head Coach, Prof. Kannan and hosted an intranet advertisement for Internal candidates from HPCL basis their interest and passion. Upon receipt of applications, HR Department short listed about 25 employees … This Training Programme was facilitated by Professor Kannan and Shri Sundararajan. Shri M.B.Lal, C&MD, HPCL came to HPMDI on the first day of the Training Programme in the evening and had detailed interaction with the prospective Internal Coaches, Shri Sundararajan and also Shri Kannan. Prof. Kannan’s vast experience in both Academics at ASCI, Hyderabad and in Consultancy was a great learning experience during this training/induction programme. … both class room sessions as well as case study approach was adopted… the Coaches were asked to study the Fifth … various other relevant material and make a small presentation on daily basis regarding their learning…

A total of 14 employees joined… the 14 Coaches were assigned under Director – HR and stationed at PH Annexe. … Corporate Region was already created by HPCL Top Management with the facilitation of Shri Sundararajan and Prof. Kannan … Coaches used to come back to HQO and meet on fortnightly basis and share their learning experience amongst each other, retool their skills/capabilities/competencies to further improvise the process. It was a continuous learning for about 2 to 3 years for entire team of Internal Coaches. ….. Furthermore, the process of teaching the internal coaches by a Hay Group continued and all the Internal Coaches were certified as Executive Coaches …”
Figure 5.2: Network Diagram Capability Building of Project ACE Team (Validating concepts of first interview with the second interview)
Focused questions were asked from the emerging theoretical constructs from Shri M P Eshwar now Chairman and Managing Director of Instrumentation Limited (a Public Sector Unit) and an ex-coach at HPCL in his interview on Capacity Building of coaches brought out the process adopted by the organization and the coaches. Excerpts of his interview are as follows:

“The need of the hour for achieving growth is converting individual energies into organizational synergy. HPCL embarked upon Project Organizational Transformation to “Achieve continuous excellence”...

The exercise was carried out with the help of Shri. U. Sundararajan, former C&MD, BPCL. With a view to facilitate these workshops across the organisation, an internal cadre of Coaches was created who carried out this exercise throughout the length and breadth of the country across SBUs, Zones, and Regional Offices to cover all Employees.

The Coaches were basically selected from middle management cadre of HPCL from cross functional streams. The criteria for selecting …a) passion for being part of hugely challenging transformation and change management initiative and b) sacrifice i.e. to be away from their families for a considerable period of time during this journey. The Coaches team was immediately …crash course learning in MDI, Nigdi for two months. These two months spanned intense self-learning; team learning and capability building sessions…The team then created their Vision and embarked on the co-creation of a learning organization.

While Self learning was essential, it was the ‘Team Learning-’ one of the five Disciplines of Learning Organization (group of people who are continuously learning from each other to create accelerated/dramatic results they truly desire) propounded by Peter Senge- the celebrated author in his seminal book: “Fifth Discipline-The Art and Practice of Learning Organization” which was mainly responsible for the success of Coaches and success of the whole initiative…
a) Coaches would observe and learn how the other coaches are facilitating the workshop, b) if any points/aspects were missed out the same would be added seamlessly c) after facilitating the workshops, the coaches would sit and discuss what went well, what did not go well and what were their learning’s, d) during coaches meets progress of their learning used to be discussed for enhancing and consolidating their capabilities, Also what further tools they would require to get certified for gaining deeper knowledge of the concepts, e) sharing of relevant articles books collected by some of the coaches and having discussions on same, f) goals for learning g) writing articles/papers for international journals, h) participating in conferences/seminars at national and international level, i) ideating and coming up with establishing of FEIL … organizing Global Forums on EI, Leadership, Innovation, Competency Development, etc. in India.”

The interviews serve to validate the concepts from one to the other and ensure that the emergent theory is robust though substantive.

Multiple interviews look at the robustness of the concepts as we compare concepts versus concepts from one interview to the other and this constant comparisons are the heart of grounded theory process.

The concepts are linked by Atlas.ti in the Network Diagram 5.3 in the next page.
Figure 5.3 – Network Diagram
The vision of the coaches has been talked in each of the interviews. The vision is reproduced below:

Coaches Vision 2006 - Co-Created in 2003 (adapted from Project ACE Website of HPCL)

- We passionately facilitate the process of transforming HPCL into an innovative and learning organization
- We enable employees to continuously acquire new skills and capabilities to excel and achieve outstanding business results
- We, as committed role models, help to create an environment where teams align, co-create and fulfil their vision
- We are a cohesive and supporting team with mutual trust, honesty and integrity; continuously sharing and learning from each other
- We are a team actively working in a transparent and ethical environment

As is seen from the interviews strategies were put in place to meet the vision objectives for e.g. structured and unstructured learning by coaches to enhance capabilities, facilitating workshops for organizational transformation, and sharing with each other. Thus the relationship to co-created coaches’ vision and thereafter action and results is visible.

5.3 Concept Building and Network Diagram:
The major concepts in Capability Building of Project ACE Team from the codes are:

Table 5.1- Capability Building of Project ACE Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Relationship to Category 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Self-Learning</td>
<td>Property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Self-learning as understood from the interviews consists of reading EBSCO articles, studying fifth discipline and other books by self, reflecting by oneself on concepts, preparing presentations, writing articles for journals etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Team Learning</td>
<td>Property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Includes practices of sharing experiential learning from conducting workshops with other coaches, presenting concepts to the group.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning together etc.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 3 | **Coaching and Mentoring of Coaches:**  
  (Relates to **Content Expert** - Here Dr. Kannan Ex Director ASCI Hyderabad, and **Process Expert** Mr Sundararajan Ex CM&D BPCL for coaching and mentoring the Internal Coaches effectively for building capability for ensuring the right content and process to effect Organizational transformation.) |
| 4 | **Creating Personal and Organizational and Coaches Vision:**  
  Each of the Coaches made the personal vision, thereafter co-created the organizational vision and then the coaches’ vision. All three by the process of creation were aligned to each other. This was since the organizational vision would keep in mind the work environment and career experience of the individuals. After co-creation of organizational vision the same was reviewed against the vision co-created by top management as an alignment process and finally the coaches vision was made to help achieve organizational vision. |
| 5 | **Committed to Initiate Change:**  
  Internal coaches selected on the basis of passion, created personal visions, co-created a coaches vision for transforming HPCL which enhanced commitment and readiness to sacrifice by staying long periods away from family and home for same |
| 6 | **Cohesive Team:**  
  The coaches learned together at HP Management Development Institute at Nigdi, had a co-created vision, spent long periods together for years while learning and facilitating workshops, facilitated workshops together, shared learning from the workshops and worked and wrote papers together for national and international journals. |
| 7 | **Coaches act to drive Organizational Change:**  
  The Coaches Team did drive organizational change by helping teams and their members write personal visions, organizational and team visions. They also helped by facilitating other workshops for capability building. |
| 8 | **Emergence of a cohesive, capable and committed Team:**  
  Sharing time, learning from each other, co-facilitating workshops, spending months at HP MDI the Management Development Residential Institute of HPCL and a common vision made them into a cohesive, capable and committed team. Also the parameters for selection of coaches as passion for organizational transformation and willingness to sacrifice by staying long periods away from family coupled with the coaches vision, appear as bonding factors for the group. |

The Category: Emergence of a Capable, Cohesive and Committed Team and its relationship to concepts and properties are depicted in the following page ATLAS.ti diagram Figure 5.4
Figure 5.4: Capability Building of coaches and the Emergence of a Capable, Cohesive and Committed Team
The Capability Building of coaches is one of the very significant categories which led to a team which was focused, committed, capable and cohesive and acted with passion to create positive change in the organization.

5.4 Theoretical Contribution

Extensive review of the literature does not talk of a team of coaches who are drawn from different functions and selected on the parameters of their desire to sacrifice personal comfort and possess the drive for organizational transformation, being trained and coached to be a team entrusted with change initiative. Also, literature review does not bring out any research where coaches’ vision is co-created for effecting organizational change in any large Public Sector Fortune 500 company in India. It does not also talk of coaches spending time together for months at a time, during learning and facilitating change. Also, organizational commitment and allocation of resources for building capability in coaches is not seen in research literature.