ABSTRACT

The proposed research explores the trend and differential movement of the managers from the process of social identity to the emergence of work identity in Indian organizations. The focus of the social identity is maintenance of relational matrix, while the thrust of work identity is the tasks and goals of the organization. The convergence toward the rubric of social identity or work identity is determined by four role coordinates and their role orientations viz., (A) Responsibility, (B) Authority, (C) Equality and (D) Identity - as expressed through five role acts viz., (1) Decision Making (2) Exercise of Authority (3) Communication (4) Evaluation and (5) Reward and Punishment. The existence of four role coordinates and five role acts can be constituted in a matrix of role coordinates and role acts, and which give rise to patterns of managerial behaviour and interaction in Indian organizations. It is hypothesized that manager's pre-entry to work life is largely governed by the process of social identity. These processes are internalized by the managers. With the entry to work organizations managers are confronted with the processes of work identity. A questionnaire was developed to test the trend and differential movement from social to work identity based on the content analysis of the data generated by the 200 managers from various organizations. Data was also collected on social contextual variables and subjected to cluster analysis and thereby a profile for each cluster was developed. Three organizations were selected. They are: (1) an organization
with foreign equity holdings (2) a family owned and managed organization and (3) a public sector organization. Thirty middle and senior middle managers from each of the aforementioned organization constituted the sample of this study. The findings suggest that the practising managers have not fully resolved the dilemma of the two conflicting demands of social and work identity. The affective cognitive culture they articulate belongs to the rubric of work identity, while the affective conative culture they experience belongs to the rubric of social identity. Exposure to modern education and later to organization cultures seem to have some modifying impact on the role acts, but very little, if any, impact on the role coordinates which are deeply ingrained and internalized through the childhood experiences. The findings also suggested that the Indian culture being in transition the concept 'role' is a dynamic construct of the inter-phase between personality structure and social structure. The role coordinates are mainly internalized through the processes of social structure. The simultaneous interaction between managers (with their internalized role coordinates), and their experiencing of education and organization cultures reflect both the processes of social and work identity. These complex processes sometimes co-exist, sometimes cohere and sometimes conflict.