CHAPTER VI

PROBLEM AREAS VIS-A-VIS ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE & ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING IN TECHNICAL INSTITUTES

Organizations are the places where the most important resource is Human Resource. Since Human Resource is an important asset and an important resource, therefore, the management of the human resource is a vital issue for any organization. The Organizational Culture and Organizational Learning help in shaping the human resource. On one hand the Organizational Culture and Organizational Learning help in shaping the human resources, on the other hand, their optimal utilization for shaping human resources is highly constrained as there are certain problem areas associated with Organizational Culture and Organizational Learning. Some of the most important ones are discussed in the following pages to understand the dynamics and magnitude of the issue in hand.

Organizational Culture and Organizational Learning have assumed considerable place and importance nowadays because of their direct impact on the performance of the organization and in turn leading to the satisfaction amongst the employees which in long run leads to high performance by the organization in turn, thus adding value to the organization.

Each organization—whether big or small, functions amidst its own culture. It is Organizational Culture that can ignite a person/group to work or can demotivate a person/group. A well-managed culture has several benefits; it is a culture where group co-ordination is seen and people work with the sense of belongingness and there is a feeling of affinity and bond. People like to work in teams, and they are not even hesitated to take individual initiative. Each individual’s decision is welcomed by the others or the group. Conflicts either do not arise and if arise are settled amicably. Employees like working in such type of environment and even praise culture and as a result remain in the organization for...
longer term. They show their commitment towards the organization. This satisfaction automatically reduces the turnover rate.

Each generation of a society passes on its social heritage and cultural tradition to the next generation which is transmission of culture as N. Jayaraman'45 (1990) says is that what makes a man 'human". However, this transmission does not discriminate between the virtues and vices upheld by the progenitors.

The vices associated with human resource are also because of the humans. Wherever there are people, politics comes with them and same situation prevails in the organizations also. Politics, thus, becomes an integral part of organizations. Politics does not come alone but brings with itself hypocrisy, secrecy, deal making, rumor mongering, power brokerage and groupism, thereby affecting the Organizational Culture and Organizational Learning. As per the study by Accountants, organizational politics is becoming an increasingly serious problem. "Eighteen percent of an administrators' time -more than nine weeks out of every year—is spent in resolving conflict among employees"

In order to create a healthy environment and Organizational Culture, the Culture needs to be assessed, understood and implemented. While assessing the culture it becomes mandatory to know why the current culture is not supporting the organization well and what the problems with regard to the Organizational Culture are. Therefore, the shortcomings or the weaknesses of the culture need to be traced. However, in spite of its importance, the cultural aspects of the organizations are either not given heed to or made a just formality to go for such appraisals. Their true implementation lacks and gets suffocated under the blanket of politics, unscrupulousness, or non-participation of employees.

Organizational Culture is not build overnight. Rather it demands continuous research and processes, irrespective of its being perceived differently by different people. Many problem areas that can be traced in the field of Organizational Culture, like the absence of job rewards, employees' working only with the objective of earning their bread and butter, their showing zero commitment towards the organization- are not because the employees are not
willing to work but they are not motivated to work. This type of problem mainly occurs in most of the government organizations because of the rigidity of the system.

The employees are also not given recognition and nor do they find any opportunity for advancement. The employees feel hesitant to take initiative on their own because their initiative is not praised. Most of the times, they are ignored for their initiatives even if it brings laurels to the organization. As a result they refrain from taking initiative. Risk tolerance in innovative works is neither defined nor encouraged by the employer. The employees are not clear about the objectives of the organization and they even do not know as to why they are working and what is expected of them. They only work for the sake of working.

The management support is also lacking as they do not provide clear communication, assistance and support to their subordinates. The ideas, mission, and vision are all ambiguous.

Furthermore, the goals and objectives are not clearly defined, they are not clear to the employees and sometimes employers are found to hide facts from the employees. Feedback mechanisms are not proper or even inadequate and results into dissatisfaction amongst the employees and employers. Co-operation and coordination amongst the group is lacking, each one is found pleasing the superiors for grinding their own axe. There lacks feeling of belongingness; the organization becomes only a place of pastime. Nobody cares for others. Lack of proper communication channels and emergence of grapevines is also a major problem area, the delegation is not proper the messages of the superiors are often misinterpreted or misunderstood. The Universities/Upper Management in affiliated professional institutions are not interested to the ideas and suggestions of the people closest to the issue; they only levy their decision.

One major problem that is attributed to Organizational Culture is that of communication. Most communication is generated at the meetings of top people, and all communication is in writing and through memos. Too many formal procedures make people lose interest into these and step out from participation.
Absence of job rewards is another serious problem facing professional educational institutions, i.e. the employees are dissatisfied with the reward system. Either a reward system does not exist or if there is a reward system, it is not satisfactory or it does not suffice to motivate the employees. Secondly, the employees find no place for recognition, growth and opportunity for advancement. They are at times discouraged. Neither the employees are aware of the expectations of the employers; nor do their employers know their expectations.

Other problems that are related to Organizational Culture are: the workers of the organization feel helpless in relation to vital matters; the workers are afraid of expressing opinions and ideas that do not match their superiors' ideas; no value is given to good relationship and loyalty to the organization; and competitiveness and smartness are undervalued.

The problem areas vis-à-vis Organizational Culture and Learning can further be elaborated on related grounds. The so-called temples of education in the state do not give much consideration to values as values are either not at all shared in the organizations or they are shared only at selected infinitesimally small pockets. Tracing down the beliefs is as difficult as maneuvering in a jet dark room as these do not even have the patches of radium. The other common problem can be related to the hardware part e.g. rooms, furniture and gadgets. In most of the institutions, there is no proper arrangement of rooms, auditoria, libraries, etc. The furniture in most of the institutions is not appropriate for imparting education with technological orientation and most of the institutions lack the availability of Organizational Culture is not build overnight. Rather it demands continuous research and processes, irrespective of its being perceived differently by different people. Many problem areas that can be traced in the field of Organizational Culture, like the absence of job rewards, employees' working only with the objective of earning their bread and butter, their showing zero commitment towards the organization- are not because the employees are not willing to work but they are not motivated to work. This type of problem mainly
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The junior-senior relationships among the faculty and administrative staffs do work on 'Familiarity Breech Contempt' notion instead of 'Mentor Protégé' relationship. Seniors exercise their authority and the juniors least accept it. Seniors are also not found suitable for the posts they are in. The political
strategies are always a part of it. The subordinates instead of being encouraged for Research and Development and for Refresher Courses often become prey to the politics of the management. The administrative staffs are also found to be dissatisfied by the working of the management at the upper level. They are also not free from the political rope. University departments and government engineering colleges are higher political grounds than the private institutions as firing mechanisms in the latter refrain these from ongoing politics.

The monotony here comes on the part of students too. The students prefer the University departments and government engineering colleges because they think that they will get quality education there but later they keep on wasting a major proportions of their learning time in learning the nuts and bolts of politics and enablers to cope with them for fulfilling their interests. The irony is that people prefer private hospital than government but why not the private institutes than government institutes. The University departments also do not have a sound infrastructure as compared to the private institutes.

Although politics plays a role in the professional affiliated private institutes imparting management & engineering education as well, but it is not as serious as in case of the universities. Merit is rewarded more in affiliated professional institutes than University Departments and learning opportunities also are somewhat higher. Workshops, seminars, cultural activities, debates, and conferences are conducted with more enthusiasm in most of the private professional institutes. The students in some of these are given some room for development. But here the predicament is that mostly good students take admissions in the University departments and they are left with inferior ones. Though the private colleges intend to do everything for their teachers and students, they still lag behind because of the intake of poor students. However, where the intake of the students is very high, it becomes difficult for teachers to manage and keep track of every student.

It is often said (that bad experiences lead to good learning. Organizational learning acts as a pathway for the organizational success. Learning involves change and that change can be for both good and bad. However, this does not lead
to a conclusion that change reflects Organizational learning; but the relative “permanent change reflects learning where it also leads to behavioral change. Teaching these days is giving up to learning as its effectiveness is difficult to be claimed.

The quality learning opportunities make an organization a learning organization and such learning comes from sharing of ideas, their implementation and the corrective feedbacks. One of the problem areas related to Organizational Learning are that experts and experienced creative practitioners are not invited to share their ideas with the members of the organization, so the organization remains where it is or even goes below than what it was. Employees are always discouraged when they try to attend external programs; they are not given paid leaves, or sometimes even not given leave at all. One organization does not share its experiences with the other organization. Employees are not given resources and facilities to experiment. Innovations are not rewarded. No meetings are held for sharing the results of experiments. No meetings are held for sharing ongoing experiments. Employees’ seminars on new developments are not organized. Task groups are also not created to monitor and implement new projects and experiments. No detail plans reflecting contingency approaches are prepared. Task groups are not created to examine common elements between old practices and innovations. Records of experiences are not maintained. Periodic meetings chaired by top or senior management, are not held to review innovations and sharing of the experiences. Relevant existing skills are not utilized in implementing change. Task groups are not created to evaluate and report on positive and negative aspects of innovations. Task groups are not created to follow up on experiments. No realistic appraisals are made of the support needed for continued use of innovations. Implementation plans are not given any thought and efforts are not encouraged to prepare alternative forms of implementation.

One of the problems attributed to Organizational Learning is related to leadership, that is, in some organizations it is a practice that leaders are the role models, the workers are expected to follow the proper channels that are laid down, the leaders set the standards of performance or the leaders have to be
explicitly obeyed. However, most of the time misleaders gain prominence over the leaders in the actions. Another problem attributed to organizational learning is related with rituals in meetings, that is, people are indifferent to meetings and try to avoid them, the meetings are generally not held without top employees. Sometimes these meetings merely take the notion of "Meeting, Eating & Cheating" - as most of the people perceive it. People celebrate for misdeeds than deeds. Celebrations in the organization also leads to problems, that is, the high performance is not celebrated, people seem however busy streamlining rules, regulations and unscrupulous motives for such recognitions.

Professional organization learns from Research and Development. A reliable learning process is the one by which an organization develops common understandings of its experience and makes its interpretations public, stable, and shared. A valid learning process is one by which an organization is able to understand, predict and control its environment. The learning process is generally conservative, sustaining existing structures of belief, including existing differences. The most obvious learning problem is the necessary ambiguity of their interpretation. Among more problem areas related to Organizational Learning in the professional institutes and universities is a problem between seniors and rest of the employees. The senior employees are unable to know the feelings of rest of the employees because of their seniority. There is not a high level of participative policy making. Policy making takes place only at the top most level. Learning just becomes a cost factor and not investment in these professional institutes. The individual's prior experiences of learning also become a hindrance for learning.

Lack of resources like time, money and knowledge capabilities act as frequent barriers in the innovative processes of learning. Lack of managerial commitment and support for learning act as hindrances in the learning process. Organizational Culture also becomes a hindrance for Organizational Learning.

Steiner (1998) says that members of an organization are unlikely to learn in the absence of supportive norms and behaviors, when there is incongruence and/or lack of understanding between managements objectives and those of the
individual employee's and when there has been a history of negative experiences with learning. Other factors such as organizational structure and hierarchy (Easterby-Smith et al, 1999)\(^{148}\), trust (Coopey, 1996)\(^{149}\) communication practices and structure (Steiner, 1998)\(^{50}\) have also been described in the literature as potential barriers to learning in organizations.

The problem areas that can be attributed to Organizational Learning can also be best illustrated on the basis of learning mechanisms. The problem arises when the follow up mechanisms are not practiced in an organization and organization lacks feedback; the experts and experienced and creative practitioners are not invited by the organization; and contingency and incremental planning is not given priority. The problem also arises when temporary systems are not used as temporary systems have number of advantages as mentioned in Chapter II under the mechanisms of Organizational Learning.

In some institutions, sharing of knowledge is viewed as a threat. Faculty remains confined and isolated from collegial Sharing. The members refrain from sharing their professional knowledge in an open and trusting environment. They need to feel open to sharing the information with others to create an environment of trust and co-operation.

Sharing takes time. Time needs to be devoted to professional sharing or books, courses, and resources. This sharing time needs to be honored at staff meetings or grade-level meetings. When administrators do not encourage and honor this time, sharing is viewed as unimportant. The lack of such meetings and common gatherings make members further closed.

Some educators believe they spend enough time in the classes and aren't interested in taking courses or reading professional literature. Some administrators discourage professional conferences and industry visits, thinking it will take time out of the classes and away from their teaching. This culture prohibits them from involving into research activities and retards their literary contributions in the area of their expertise.

Additionally, research indicates that some adults are incapable of engaging in time-saving approaches to professional development, such as online courses,
because they lack independence, confidence, or resources (Lowry, 1989). Although Internet access makes resources more available, independence, confidence, and discipline remain a challenge to creating vital learning communities of independent learners. The students and faculty of professional institutes rely more on cut-and-paste approach in their publications than the assimilation of ideas and finding out the essence in the business phenomenon while attempting such publications. Searching the already searched ideas is what is called 'Re-search' these days. Pains in doing anything more than minimum. Improved levels of organizational effectiveness and hence competitive edge can be achieved by further developing the contribution of people in organizations. This requires the development of more rewarding, satisfying, effective jobs and work environments both rooted in the active encouragement of involvement at all organizational levels.

The policy of absenteeism also creates hurdles in fostering learning. The physical absence and virtual absence are both harmful to developing learning grounds. The faculty who is physically absent and the one who is not contributing anything on a particular day and a particular time are not different. The same applies to the students too. Some amount of free timings except the classes can make a difference and create better learning opportunities provided they are followed as intended. A credible and successful absenteeism policy is difficult to be derived.

The employees are unaware of proper notification procedures if they are unable to attend work for any reason. Owing to their absence, the alternative arrangements lack. This trend makes the environment perturbed and barricades the development of sound culture and learning mechanisms. Some sorts of pre-information and self-certification mechanisms can be introduced for minor acts of absenteeism and an open environment sharing trust and concerns can be facilitated. However, this is easier to be said than done.

To facilitate better organizational culture and learning, institutions need to understand the various factors affecting their output. Their inability to give heed to growing pressures requiring organizational change, the importance of
responsive and flexible organizations, and recognition of people as the key factor; and adopting a strategy for organizational effectiveness makes them inattentive towards the nurturing of sound organizational culture and enabling of better learning mechanisms.

The success of educational institutions as manufacturing and service organizations depends on their ability to satisfy their customers, viz. students as well as the corporate world. Achieving this goal requires a level of responsiveness to change, flexibility and organizational effectiveness not usually expected or attained in the much less severe competitive market conditions of the past. The institutions seem usually closed to the environmental changes.

Today's business climate is increasingly characterized by rapid change and fierce competition. Professional educational institutions must adapt to this environment if they are to survive and prosper. The pressures for change include:

- Global economy, global market, global competition
- Ever higher standards of reliability and performance, with increasingly demanding quality requirements
- Methods of facilitating teaching and learning that are-precise, efficient, in control and constantly improved

These pressures are causing organizations to examine themselves critically. The ability of established patterns of managing people and work organizations to cope adequately with this changing world is a particular issue for scrutiny. Educational institutions lack the willingness to take such appraisals for betterment.

The way an organization attracts, develops, motivates and retains people will increasingly determine whether it succeeds or fails in the long run. High rate of turnover of Directors, faculty & staffs in private institutions as well as of Heads and faculty in government sector institutions is really a cause of concerns that hinders the development of sound OC and OL mechanisms.
It will not be surprising to say that educational institutions in the state are lacking manpower that lead to:

- Improved organization performance through the development of people
- Increased co-operation and teamwork within and across all levels of the organization including movement towards intra or inter level partnership
- Increased commitment to doing a good job and improved quality performance
- Increased commitment to the values and goals of the organization
- The anchoring of the development of a quality organization
- Increased flexibility and responsiveness
- Introduction and development of new technology
- Increased worker satisfaction and better organizational environment
- Increased opportunities for personal learning and growth.

The Universities as well as most of the professional institutions do not pay any attention to foster sound ways of employee commitment to develop good organizational culture and learning and do not realize better Human Resource practices which ensure that:

- People will be better motivated if the work experience satisfies their social and psychological needs in addition to economic needs
- People work more effectively and efficiently if their participation is ensured
- Factors which satisfy people at work are essentially different from those factors which cause dissatisfactions
- Individual motivation can be enhanced by the design of jobs and work organization

The educational institutions need to go for an organizational change that requires changes in management style. New structures and new approaches to work organization will not be effective unless the practices and beliefs of management actively support the new environment. The private educational
institutions in the state, though attempt to copy the physical structures of the best ones, however, they don't realize the software part that need to operate them in the local environment.

In both the state of Punjab and Haryana Professional Affiliated Institutions lack a clear cut list of vision and priorities. Universities does not discriminate between the professional courses and the regular ones and at the same time Private Affiliated Institutions follows Universities or University Departments in the development of course curriculum and other such communications. Moreover, most of the private institutions are the business houses of the business people that look education as a traditional business shop. Therefore, the professional institutions need different orientations in today's world. The institutions demands autonomy and the role of the Heads / Directors demands change. Their role requires them to be the initiator, counselor and facilitator in particular managerial tasks as to:

- Provide a vision and communicate it up and down in the organization chain
- Encourage effective team work and co-operation at all the levels
- Encourage the free flow of ideas and initiative
- Develop subordinates rather than rigidly controlling them
- Oversee more-flexible less-authoritarian work structures and ensure they meet their objectives.

The need to initiate and manage change emphasizes on management leadership skills which is most of the time absent in these institutions. The development and enabling 'of good organizational culture and learning requires appropriate management skills and expects in their leaders the ability to-

- Build trust and openness
- Support self motivation
- Delegate decision making to the relevant locations and people
• Accept questioning and debate as part of the organization's search for the best answer
• Understand and manage the interactions of people individually and in groups
• Adopt joint problem-solving and continuous improvement approaches and techniques.

The absence of proper reward system is a major problem that develops employees who are generally uncommitted and opportunity seekers. While the affiliated private professional institutions do not offer higher scales to professional faculty at the same time Professional Educational Institutions don't even pay as per the prescribed scales. So, it becomes difficult to retain and attract well qualified and committed people who are encouraged to participate in the organization and support the development of the 'involved' organizational culture. Moreover, Faculty and staff are not compensated for workshops, courses, and time invested outside the classes and therefore, they lack professional commitment to individual learning goals.

The commitment of all organization members is not encouraged if some are treated differently to others. University Departments, Government Engineering Colleges, and Private Affiliated Institutions lack harmonization in one way or the other and this comes across the development of conducive organizational culture and facilitation of learning.

The institutions seem to approach technologies with their gesture to develop computer labs, bigger libraries, multimedia-classrooms, and independent VSAT links for internet connectivity. However, the restrictions in their use and strict adherence to the timings under the permission rule make them less contributory. Such differences are again seen as counterproductive and retard organization-wide adoption, use and advancement.

The selection process becomes critical as a means of matching the individual to the organization culture. It becomes difficult for the institutions to adopt a strategy that the selection system aims at the individual, who is well
disposed towards learning and developing and takes responsibility for his or her own behavior in the institution,

The Private Affiliated Institutions lacks process of selection that involve features involving extensive job previews for applicants and the involvement of people from the specialized work area in the selection decision.

Investment in people is fundamental to the strategy. This means actively facilitating the learning, growth and development of individuals. The professional institutions in the state lack commitment to training as an integral part of the organization's business strategy. Essential components of the training policy are likely to be missing here that share:

- The view that continuous training is the norm
- The assumption that training will be a life-long process
- Recognition of the need to update existing skills, replace redundant skills and train for new skills
- The need for developing multiple skills to cope with change.

The identification of individual training needs is not supported by a performance appraisal system which focuses on future development needs. The appraisal of faculty and staff by the students is almost missing in the professional educational institutions covered under the study. No attempts are made by the institutions for-

- Creating career plans which encompass not only training proposals but also areas of work experience, job goals and personal development
- Considering career tracks which may be as much about lateral moves designed to expand learning and competence as upward promotion
- Counseling for personal development of the employees.

The professional educational institutions in the state mostly work in isolation. They work on bare minimal interaction that too limited to the conditions
of affiliation for the conduct of examinations and award of the degree. Collaboration seems to be a distant dream and difficult to achieve in this climate as usual, as it relies on qualities not present in most organizations. Successful collaboration requires the development of new skills, mindsets and corporate architectures. People involved in educational alliances need to have an understanding of how effective educational alliances are developed and the issues which need to be addressed in their implementation.

Attending pedagogical training courses and workshops are minimal along with the conduct of such shared exercises at the departmental and institutional levels as a shared exercise. Such trainings that touch the organizational practices and structures are almost absent. Institutions fail to understand that developing the learning and teaching culture is the responsibility not only of the individual faculty, but also of the whole academic community including the students. All these elements that should be taken into account in systemic educational development are almost absent in the professional educational institutions covered in the study.

Research on learning and teaching, and on educational development in higher education, has increased in recent years in the country. Teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning, and of how these are related to students' approaches to learning, seem to be paramount in enhancing the quality of learning. Though, it is difficult to prove that educational development really has an effect on teaching and learning. However, an approach towards evolving a particular intervention strategy is badly needed in these institutions.

Educational development needs several approaches and theoretical underpinnings in order to implement, explain and further develop innovations and change programs (Kezar, 2001) It should combine individual, interactive and organizational aspects in order to foster a systemic and sustainable approach in the context of higher education (Knight, 2002) 133.

To be truly effective, multicultural education a total educational improvement effort is needed. Such efforts require a great deal of planning, collaboration, implementation strategies, and evaluation. Anything less may lead
to inadequate results. However, the state of Haryana with its bureaucratic heritage has not been able to exercise that in its education policies. The assistance of the state towards the development of professional educational institutions has not even got a cursory look till now. Even the state educators see little value in investing more time in professional development.

The teaching as well as learning requires going dynamic with reforms that leaves adherence to the static conditions. Most of the teachers resort to the past notes without realizing the need to update those in the light of changes witnessed in the environment. Reform requires that teachers learn new roles and ways of teaching that translates into a long-term developmental process requiring teachers to focus on changing their own practice.

Finally this can be put forward that the problem areas that have been cited above should be seen in the light of the fact that both organizational culture and organizational learning are relatively newer concepts in the management discipline. All these factors must be seen in different perspectives and their interrelations with different mechanisms are to be studied in much more detail and depth. The very thing that is important is to prepare the mindset for a change, because the existence in this dynamic world needs adaptation in the ever changing environment.

It has been said that change has no constituency but the status quo has many supporters. However, at the modern professional educational environment dictates a clear-cut doctrine for survival and that is 'Change or Perish'.

**Current Problems in Technical Education**

A number of problems/issues were identified that were hampering Technical Education in the country. The design of TEQIP Phase I, made serious efforts to resolve these shortcomings. However, due to limited funds and small number of institutions covered under TEQIP Phase I, the impact of these interventions was limited. Therefore, in large number of institutions the problems identified still persist. Some of such problems revealed by a GOIWorld Bank
study on “Scientific and Technical Manpower Development in India (August 2000)” are listed below:

1. Multiple control mechanisms and controlling regulations have stifled innovative initiatives in recruitment of faculty, admission of students, curricula revision and upgradation, and financial management in most institutions.

2. Resource constraints, low efficiency of utilization of existing resources and lack of mechanism for sharing physical and human resources of sister institutions have led to large scale obsolescence of physical resources, deterioration of quality of teaching/learning processes and lowering of competence of teachers.

3. Low internal efficiency of most institutions due to large drop-outs and failure rates.

4. Rapid obsolescence of curricula and course contents due to infrequent revision and much delayed response to technological advances and consequent market demands.

5. Failure to attract and retain high quality faculty due to archaic recruitment and promotion procedures, absence of incentives for quality performance, and non-existent staff development policies in most institutions.

6. Inadequate tapping of talent pools of women, minorities and persons with disabilities who still remain under-represented in technical profession and developing the critical mass of research and innovation capacity that can propel them into the knowledge economy.

7. The economic growth of 10% Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to be maintained which requires highly competent, skilled and trained manpower. It is estimated that an increase in the degree level engineering intake @ 15% would be required to cater to the requirements of industry and other sectors.

Apart from these major problems, other problems have cropped up due to unprecedented expansion of Technical Education System in the country as
identified in various documents published by MHRD, AICTE and other committees constituted from time to time. The problems have also been summarized in the World Bank document titled “India and the Knowledge Economy – Leveraging Strengths and Opportunities” published in 2005.