

CHAPTER-VII

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

7.0 Introduction

This final chapter of the thesis begins with a recap of the background and the methodology of the study. It then summarises the salient findings, discusses certain implications, identifies some of the limitations and concludes with indicating avenues for further research.

7.1 Portents of the study: Recapitulation

Having taken cognizance of the significance of teams in modern Indian organisations, and having noted the virtual absence of empirical studies on the subject, the present study undertook to initiate an exploration of the existence of team building in Indian organisations. Towards this problem the study has been successful to some extent and some important lessons have emerged.

The study has led us to conclude that today, the use of teams is a fact of life and it forms the core of organisational behaviour everywhere. The job of management today is recognised, more than ever before, to be inextricably connected with building better teams. On the basis of ample empirical evidence, management scholars such as Katzenbach & Smith (1984), Glen Parker (1990), Skopec & Smith (1997), French & Bell, Jr (1999) and McCann (1992) have, beyond any doubt, established the importance of utilisation of teams in modern organisations.

Studies by the above mentioned researchers and several others since then have investigated the existence of teams in various industries and their impact on the performance and output in the organisation. According to these studies, teams have an undeniable impact on organisational effectiveness.

The utility of their findings notwithstanding, these studies were found to fall short of peering directly into the domain of teambuilding itself. A survey of the theoretical literature on the topic of teams provides a comprehensive conceptual framework that could guide a systematic investigation of the phenomenon of existence of teams, *directly*. A search for empirical studies on teambuilding in Indian context revealed that there were very limited Indian studies, which, besides being too few, were too limited in their scope, both theoretical and empirical: these followed the framework given by the outdated version of the theory, addressed populations that were not typically managerial, and their samples were too small.

Having taken cognizance of the significance of the use of teambuilding as an OD intervention technique in the Indian organisations and having noted the virtual absence of empirical studies on the subject, the present study undertook to initiate an exploration of teambuilding needs in the Indian industry, using the framework of the envisaged teambuilding needs in the industry.

7.2 Method of Study

The study was planned as an exploratory one, intended to map the existing use of teams in the Indian organisations. A survey-based, cross-sectional research design was adopted for the purpose. The sample for the managerial group was

randomly drawn from 26 industries from five Indian states. The managers were divided into three categories based on their role in the organisation. Data were collected by means of a questionnaire and an interview. Meticulous attention was paid to ensure sensitivity in the procedure so that rapport and confidentiality were achieved during collection of data.

Data were collected in terms of how the respondents felt towards various facets of team utilisation and its effect in Indian organisations. These included factors like the various types of teams, the stages of teambuilding, team leadership, team compensation, team performance appraisal, resistance in team, team structure and the effect of hierarchy and teams

Descriptive statistics were employed for analysing the data obtained from the questionnaire. Initially Chi-Square was used to test the level of significance between the two basic groups' viz., the various sectors and the various managerial levels. To examine the inter-relationships between the various groups, Pearson's correlation coefficients were computed. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to elicit inter-group variations among sub-groups of managers.

7.3 Major Findings

In the current scenario the senior level managerial staff are more in know of things and are better oriented towards employment of OD intervention methods in the organisation. Some important findings as far as the resistance to the use of teams in the organisation are concerned, are as follows:-

- (a) **Lack of conviction in the abilities of the team.** Managers at middle and higher levels lack the basic conviction in the abilities of the team in handling difficult and complex tasks. The team has to work against these handicaps to prove itself. Even after it proves itself the team still operates under conditions where senior managers are still apprehensive about the capabilities of the team.
- (b) **Fear in the leaders of loosing control.** There is a underlying fear among the managers of loosing control over things once the team takes over. This apparently is due to the fact that the managerial staff in middle and lower managerial level still functions from conservative mindset. They do not want to let go of control fearing loss of command and control once they hand over the control to teams and fear of becoming redundant in the organisation.
- (c) **Reluctance to abandon traditional managerial practices.** Most of the Indian organisations today are rooted in traditional managerial practices which were, till recently propagated and encouraged by the organisation. While some of them are moving towards modern managerial techniques, there are others which are reluctant to change primarily due to resistance to change.
- (d) **Individual factors.** At times individual factors restrict the organisation from changing. This could include the mindset of people, topography, education standard of the employees, cultural values etc. these

need to be addressed in the right manner, so that these impediments are rectified without causing undue worry or hurting sentiments of the employees.

(e) **Weak organisational support.** One of the major cause for restricted use of teams in Indian organisations is the fact that inspite of official policy encouraging the implementation of teams in the organisation there is still weak organisational support to the effective use of teams in the organisation.

(f) **Complacency.** At times complacency in the managerial staff at higher levels regarding their ability also restricts the employment of teams. Their own conviction in their abilities often restricts the use and growth of teams.

Another aspect which has emerged is the fact that armed forces response has been slightly different form the civil sector (public and private sector) in the following questions:

- (a) Has the organisation ever organised team intervention sessions.
- (b) Has a failure in the team resulted in an external intervention consultant's involvement?
- (c) External intervention is appreciated within the team.
- (d) In case of problems within the team, external intervention is sought.
- (e) External intervention is always helpful in improving the team's effectiveness.
- (f) Team training requirements are outsourced.

The main reason for this is due to the fact that Armed forces do not generally out source their training needs nor do they employ external consultant for intervention. However in the interview it emerges that they regularly send selected employees for training to institutes of repute like IITs, IIMs, IISC etc where they are trained. Once they are back into the organisation, they infuse modern ideas into the organisation including OD practises and they also are utilised as interventionists as and when required.

7.4 Implications

Given the importance of teams in increasing the output in an organisation, the findings of the present study have important implications, some of which are discussed in the following paragraphs.

A major finding of the study, as may be recalled, is that there is the reluctance among the managers to hand over the control to the team due to the perceived loss of authority. Another finding is that inspite of the fact that teams are felt to be necessary for improving organisational performance; there is a hesitation among the top managerial staff in handing over the authority to teams. This is due to the fact that the top level management feels that inspite of the existence of teams the

overall responsibility of running the organisation still is their domain. This finding does not augur well for the managers of tomorrow.

An organisation, therefore, whose managers are predominantly traditional, runs the risk of contracting the ills, such as indicated above. The need to minimise costs assumes even greater urgency in the wake of the economic liberalisation, launched recently in the country, a consequence of which will be an ever-growing competition from overseas operators and MNCs who with their modern managerial techniques and orientation will be able to operate more effectively vis-à-vis our own home grown organisations unless Indian organisations review managerial practices and reorganise the organisation using the OD tools of which team building is an important one.

Paucity of openness between managers and workers as well as among managers themselves was cited at the recent *National HRD Conference* at Bombay (January, 1994) to be an issue of major concern in Indian organisations. The findings of the present study thus appear to be relevant to other sectors, too. People do not say what they have in mind or they do not mean what they say for fear of being exploited or punished, given the differential power distribution among the employees. Lack of trust seems to be basis of this malady. Operating in teams would increase their trust in each other and help them in communicating with each other thereby helping them in trusting each other.

Management education, is another aspect which needs to be upgraded, by, including training in teambuilding skills, in addition to providing them with cognitive abilities. Developing these skills may call for a pedagogy which involves role-plays, problem solving exercises in groups, real and mock sessions of negotiations, etc., wherein participants can **experiment with interpersonal skills, for example, of how to operate in groups, where, when, how and how much to accept influence from others and also practise how to be appropriately open to create a trusting atmosphere that facilitates openness from others, which in this study has been found to be lacking. Such give-and-take practicals, while operating in teams will help in preparing managers who will make a difference in future.**

Finally, a general comment on the "Do unto others what you would have them do unto you" may be the only route to break out of the *chakravyuh*: Trust and you shall be trusted! Although trust may not always elicit trust, there seems to be no other known way to develop it. "Like begets like" seems specially valid in the realm of trust.

7.5 Suggestions for Building an Effective Team

Having spent the time and effort on this study, it would be necessary to list down some suggestions for building an effective team based on the findings of the study. Although the research has not been very conclusive about superiority over individual work or work groups, nevertheless some very clear guidelines can be offered for increasing their effectiveness.

7.5.1 Teams should have intrinsically interesting tasks to perform. A good deal of research evidence has indicated that people will work harder if they are asked to perform are intrinsically interesting, motivating, challenging and enjoyable. Where people are required to fit the same nut on the same bolt hour after hour, day after day, they are unlikely to be motivated and committed to their work. Where teams have an inherently interesting task to perform, there is generally high commitment, higher motivation and more co-operative working. This therefore calls for very careful design of the objectives and tasks of teams. In many companies influenced by Japanese management practices, individuals work in relatively autonomous self-managing teams, re-design work themselves to make tasks more meaningful and to improve quality of performance. Teams should be give tasks which are intrinsically interesting, but should also be given considerable autonomy in modifying task objectives to ensure that team's goals help to maintain overall motivation.

7.5.2 Individuals should feel they are important to the fate of the group. It is important for the members of the team should feel that they are highly valued within the team and should feel that their work is important to the fate of the team through the technique of role clarification and negotiation. By careful exploration of the roles of each team member, together with the identification of team members and individual objectives, team members can see and demonstrate more clearly to other team members the importance of their work to the success of the team overall.

7.5.3 Individual contributions to team should be indispensable, unique and Evaluated against a standard (appraisal). The research indicates that while individual evaluation is given sufficient importance, team evaluation and appraisal is not given adequate attention in Indian organisations. Therefore, it is important within team settings for each team member to feel that their performance will be evaluated against a standard within the group, at the end of a specified period of team performance.

7.5.4 There should be clear team goals with built-in performance feedback. For the same reason that it is important for individuals to have clear goals and performance feedback, so too is it important for the team as a whole to have clear group goals with performance feedback. However, goals can only function as a motivator of team performance if accurate performance feedback is available.

7.5.5 Timing of leader intervention. Teams are much more responsive to leader interventions at the beginning of their life, or when they reach a natural break in their work, or when the product has been produced or a performance period has ended. When a team is getting on with its work and is engaged in the process of doing the job intensively, it is generally a bad time for leader intervention since it disrupts the effectiveness of the group.

7.5.6 Coaching alone is not sufficient. If a team is badly set up in the first place or does not have appropriate organisational support, coaching and similar process interventions are unlikely to have favourable effects upon group performance. If a team lacks direction, coaching alone may well not help.

7.5.7 Need to make a good start. What happens when the team first comes together and begins to work has an enduring impact upon subsequent performance. It is almost as though the seed of the team's work determines its subsequent evolution. Therefore taking time to ensure an auspicious beginning to a team's life is valuable since the learning resources laid down at this point may have an important beneficial effect when a team encounters serious difficulties later on.

7.5.8 Attitude assessment in teams. One way of starting assessment in teams is to see whether people in the team feel that problems do exist. Some questionnaires are available for doing this (e.g. Woodcock, 1979)⁸¹, but there are two arguments against using such instruments. First, they tend to operate on the assumption that collaborative teamwork is the form which should be aimed for, and anything but this seems to be regarded as 'against teamwork' and therefore to be denied rather than assessed. Second, It is preferable to use a method of assessment which comes from the team itself; it should then be more suitable for their problems, and appropriate to the team's personal preference.

A useful approach is to try to work out what kind of team exists, to see what satisfaction there is about the present state of affairs, to find out what changes might be acceptable and then plan moves towards the change.

7.5.9 Seeking out side help. Another question which confronts the HR department is that of seeking external intervention in getting on with changing its way of work. Much of the management literature which suggests this is necessary is written by people who make part of their living as consultants. In spite of this the fact remains that outside consultants are useful where team members and the team leaders are inexperienced or apprehensive in dealing with group processes. A consultant can also be helpful when the team members are unhappy about speaking up, particularly if their leader is involved, where there is unresolved conflict or apathy in the team.

7.6 Limitations of the Study

Methodologically, the present study adopted a cross-sectional design, which provided us with useful and important snapshots of the phenomenon under study, namely, teambuilding and its effects in Indian organisations. More penetrating insights could be arrived at if mediating variables, such as culture, family background, birth order, number of siblings, etc., were included. Given the modest objectives of the present study, along with considerations of cost and time, the alternative designs were not pursued.

The composition of the sample could have been more complex, with a greater within-group differentiation. The years of experience of managers could have formed a variable in lieu of age. However, recognising the natural correlation between age and experience, the study did not deem it necessary to treat it as a separate variable. The dichotomous regional classification of the sample was too inclusive, thus possibly submerging finer regional variations. Also inclusion of more number of states thereby increasing the area of coverage under study could have

⁸¹ Woodcock, J. Team Development Manual, Farnborough, Gower Press. 1979. pp 24-28.

been done which would make the study a more comprehensive one. However, given the constraints of time and resources and the fact that efforts have been made to include all types of industries in the study this limitation has been offset somewhat.

Despite these limitations, the present study has shed light on the hitherto unknown interpersonal orientation profiles of the managers and management students in the Indian cooperative dairy sector. In the process of doing so, it also brought forth additional evidence of increasing use of teams over the entire spectrum of Indian industry. The study has also drawn attention to the need for probing into the teams effect postulate of compatibility, besides paving the way for further research in the area of interpersonal relations of managers.

7.7 Suggestions for further research

Teaming up relationships are the consequence of interactions amongst individuals and are affected by the personality and predispositions of the persons involved (Sullivan, 1953)⁸². The processes underlying the formation and development of these relationships involve different levels and types of behaviour. Research aimed at unraveling the interpersonal relations of managers with regards to use of teams will do well, therefore, to address the conceptual and affective components of the phenomenon, in addition to the behavioural component. Researching the phenomenon will help in achieving an integrative view of interpersonal relations within teams. Such studies can also provide additional angles of vision, from which to take a re-look at the present findings, which relate solely to the behavioural level of the phenomenon.

Studies, using direct behavioural observations in a variety of naturalistic and contrived interpersonal situations (besides self-report measures), will improve the quality of data. Longitudinal studies, though very time consuming and likely to suffer from sample attrition and other time-related problems, would shed light on the developmental aspects of in team building issues, which cross-sectional studies cannot capture. Studies, using experimentally varied factors in groups, will have additional value.

7.8 Conclusion

Integrative organisations are the future- the 21st century model. The future is in favour of organic organisations with fewer layers, lesser emphasis on written communication, and less reliance on rules and regulations. Managers would be more of facilitators and will operate as first among equals. Alvin Toffler in his book the Third wave⁸³ calls it the third wave type in which bureaucracy will be replaced by smaller, flexible, information based organisations. There will be small components loosely linked together in 'temporary configurations'. Employees will demand more in terms of job satisfaction, job enrichment and less job fragmentation. With leaner organisations in the offing and with control shifting for individual to team based decision making and with organisations becoming more complex by the day no one individual will be able to make all the decisions for the organisation. This is where

⁸² Sullivan, H.S. The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry. New York: Norton. 1953.

⁸³ Toffler, Alvin, The Third Wave. Morow, NewYork. 1980.

team work will come in to bridge the gap wherein team decision making will help the organisation take the required decisions with all the required inputs available for effective decision making.

Lastly, the manager, no matter how much s/he might seek to disengage himself/ herself from teambuilding effects, is inexorably involved in them as part of his/her job. Even where the organisation is well structured with excellent information and control systems, organisations do have to rely on the use of teams carrying out effective operations in carrying out their responsibilities. The results of the present study have important HRD implications for the Indian organisations and, perhaps, also for organisations in other countries. A systematic understanding of the managerial interpersonal dynamics can guide attempts at restructuring organisations and facilitate formation of effective work groups there. Management educators, too, may find the study relevant and useful: The findings can inform the syllabus makers so that the syllabus is made to cater to the ground realities prevailing in the world of managers. Management educators and trainers would do well to validate their syllabus and pedagogy, in doing which they might find the present study useful.