A Case Study Based On Organizational Diagnosis – An Industrial Engineering Approach

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Abstract:
Any organization development effort starts with the diagnosis phase. In most of the O.D efforts it is seen that the organization diagnosis is undertaken by either Behavioral Scientists or Social Scientists. In contrast to this conventional and traditional approach, this case study on the one hand presents how effectively this new approach can bring to the surface the real problems and issues which are affecting a particular department and on the other hand it posses itself as an issue before the O.D practitioners about the need for integrating the various approaches, disciplines.

1.The Setting

Organization Development (OD) effort has been going on in the organization for the past 8-9 years. Most of the diagnostic and intervention effort was behavioral science orientated and was mostly in terms of diagnostic surveys, interactions, personal growth and team building programs. Only recently task group working was initiated on some problems of the organization. The survey also mostly covered the cultural dimensions viz; Motivational climate communication, decision making etc. The outside O.D consultants engaged are also predominantly behavioral science oriented. Since most of the interventions were behavioral science based training programs, most of the training and development effort was also focused on behavioral dimensions like TA Program, Personal Growth Labs, and Managerial Effectiveness Programs etc.

In the Training and Development department there is a small group of trainers called the OD Group(informal) which acts as 'Think Tank' of the OD effort and for the Human Resource Committee comprising the top management group. Since the OD consultants happen to be with behavioral science orientation, most of the OD cell executives (formally created within the Training and Development Department) have been exposed to internship programs in behavioral science organized by a professional body run by a clan of behavioral scientists. Attending these programs, as though, had become a prerequisite for doing the so called 'OD' work.In the organization also getting a Team Building Programme conducted was like an alibi for Head of the Departments for having started the OD process in their departments.

One Dy. General Manager of a department, Transformer Division, who have taken the charge recently, made a request for the Team Building programme to be conducted for his Transformer (Engg, Mfg and Sales) Department. It was then thought that before conducting such a programme a diagnostic study may be carried out. This was accepted as a challenge by one of the OD group members with Industrial Engineering/Systems orientation.

It may be mentioned here that having merely training interventions to the exclusion of intervention in the structure, systems, technology, tasks, and goals sub-systems cannot only be futile but can also detract from the OD claim of making management development more effective. This fact, however, is neglected by the OD consultants having organization behavior / behavioral science orientation. Keeping in view the following assumptions in Industrial Engineering Framework for diagnostic purposes was developed.

2.Assumptions

- The problems are best known to the executives of the concerned department / organization.
- Most of the problems of the organization relate to the role - functions - resource – systems aspects and individuals are rarely the problem.

- Since people have to work in an interactive inter-functional situation on day to day basis, sharing of their perceptions with each other may help to identify the problems at the same time increasing their awareness about each others' difficulties.
- All the statements of problems or perception will be oriented in terms of problem/ solution, cause or effect.

3.Objectives

- To diagnose the problems and their causes, which are coming in the way of productivity and growth of the department?
- To bring to the surface the perceptions of the executives about their own problems as well as about each others 'roles and functions and thus making the whole group aware of the same.
- To enable the participating executives to appreciate each others' difficulties and problems and prepare a ground for developing positive attitudes, cooperation and support.
- Through brainstorming develop some tentative ideas for further work.

4.Methodology

Based on the above, it was decided to call all the middle and senior level executives of the department covering all the related functions viz: Manufacturing, Engineering, Sales, Quality Control, and Technology etc. in two separate groups each for half a day interaction.

A frame-work in the form of a Role / functions v/s Resources Matrix as shown in the Annexure – I was developed and used for obtaining executives perceptions through group interactions.

Each member of the group was given this matrix to serve as a checklist. The executives after initial briefing were given 25-30 minutes to jot down their perceptions. In order to increase their productivity, the group was spilt into 3 sub-groups. Each sub-group was to confine their perceptions within the domain of $1/3^{rd}$ of the matrix vertically as indicated on the annexure by the group numbers. Each member was asked to make four extra copies.

For the next 15 minutes the participants exchanged their notes within the group and shared their perceptions. Thus each member became aware of other's difficulties. They were also to discuss and add or supplement these lists as a group work.

After a brief break of 15 minutes for tea, the group was given conceptual briefing about the (i) Goal, (ii) Task, (iii) Structure, (iv) People and (v) The Technology Sub-systems of the organization.

The group was then split into 5 syndicates, rather they were asked to form these syndicates according to the dimension they would like to attach maximum importance so far as their department is concerned. In each syndicate one copy of every member's perception was made available. Thus each syndicate had all the perceptions of the whole group. Each syndicate was then asked to pick out only such perceptions which the particular syndicate group considered important for their department and which could be classified under the organizational sub-system represented by their syndicate. They were also asked to identify the three most important perceptions. The time allotted for this exercise was about 40-45 minutes.

In the last session the five syndicate leaders presented their findings to the whole group in the presence of the Dy. General Manager and the General Manager.

The perceptions were also analyzed in terms of their problem orientation, solution orientation, or both cause orientation and effect orientation or both to determine their relative importance. The findings of all the groups are summarized as under-

4.1.Summary Findings

- Lack of realistic planning both long term and short term in terms of manpower, career, materials, technology etc.
- Lack of quality consciousness and quality control.
- Need for more effective downward communication on technical and functional aspects.
- Need for better interpersonal relationship and trust.
- Lack of motivation among drawing office staff.
- Financial constraints – prompt payments to suppliers.
- Need for adherence to schedule and methods in Production.
- Need for job rotation to take care of stalemate and proper placement.
- Competence based job manning is needed.
- Need for modernization and replacement of plant and equipment.
- Mistrust and lack of confidence between different functions.
- Need for updating technology and development of second time of specialization.
- Lack of recognition, reward, delegation and human respect.

The diagnosis was by and large acceptable to the whole group and to both the Dy. General Manager and the General Manager (in-charge of the department). The participants left with the sense of satisfaction and achievement. They also shared their expectation that some action will emerge and implementation will follow. The framework proved to be a very effective tool as a net for fishing out perceptions.

5.Dilemma

However, when this experience was shared in the OD group, some members criticized and labeled it as non – behavioral, and made remarks such as 'did not bring out human or process dimension' etc. Even the internal OD facilitator (who had developed a

fancy for behavioral science) was critical about it. The OD consultants also kept the findings aside and preferred to have a series of interaction meetings – fresh diagnostic survey. Based on their diagnosis a team building programme was also conducted by them for the product group. The group of executives however is still wondering as to what happened to the earlier diagnosis where in they had come out with certain very concrete issues and ideas which if were tackled would have gone in building up the department. On the contrary 3 or 4 of the very senior executives including the Dy. General Manager have already left the department. The product has still not achieved desirable profitability.

Resource Role functions	Men	Machines	Material	Methods	Time	Money	Market	Technology	Information
PLANNING	1,2	1,2,6	1,2		7		1,2	1,2	7
ORGANISING	1,6,8	6		6	4,7		3	3	5,7,8
DIRECTING	6								5,8
COORDINATING	2	2	2						5,7
MOTIVATION	4				4				7,8
CONTROL	6	6		6		7			7
INNOVATION								3	8

Table : 1 Role / Functions V/S Resource Matrix

6.References

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