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PGDHRD-02
Organisational Design, Development
and Change

THIRD BLOCK
Work Organisation



Indira Gandhi National Open University



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**Organisational Design,
Development and Change**

Block

3

WORK ORGANISATION

UNIT 5

Analysing and Organising Work **5**

UNIT 6

New Forms of Organisation **15**

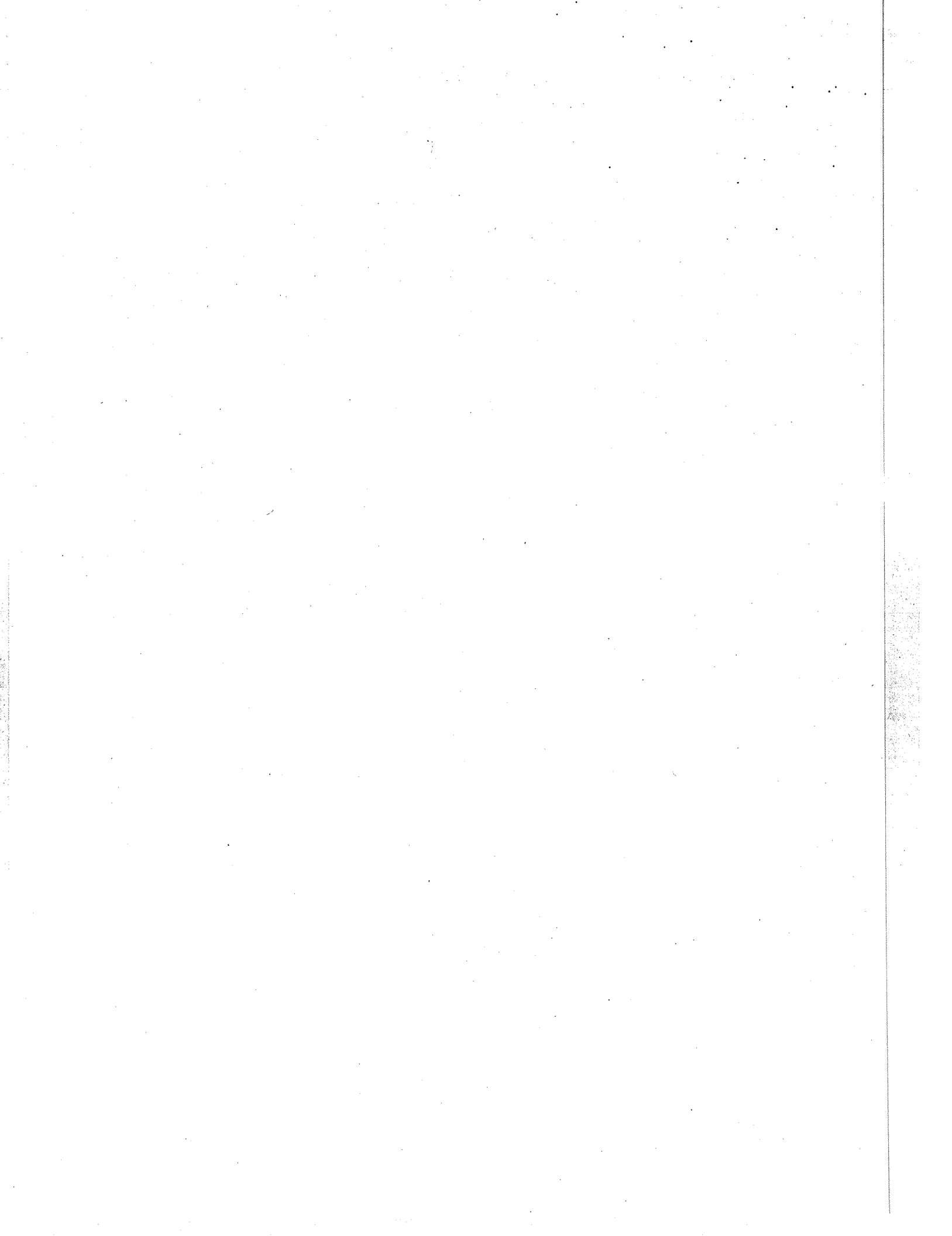
UNIT 7

**Emerging Issues of Work Organisation and Quality of
Working Life** **29**

BLOCK 3 WORK ORGANISATION

There are multiple interlinkages among the work system, the 'organisation', the individual and the society at large. It is necessary to look into the institution of work and examine the nature of interlinkages between work and some aspects of socio-cultural and psychological milieu.

Work system changes have wider implications for society as a whole because improvement in quality of life in any society presupposes enhancement of quality of working life. From unit 5 you will be able to know the conditions of work and how to organise the work. unit 6 deals with new forms of work organisation with recent illustrations and unit 7 deals with quality of working life, and how important it is for today's organisation.



UNIT 5 ANALYSING AND ORGANISING WORK

Objectives

After going through this unit, you must be able to :

- examine the traditional approaches for analysing and organising work.
- identify problems associated with work organisation based on traditional principles.
- examine the impact of traditional approaches on people and productivity.

Structure

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Need for Organising Work
- 5.3 Traditional approaches to the organisation of work
- 5.4 Bureaucratic Organisation Theory
- 5.5 Scientific Management
- 5.6 Traditional Principles of Organising work
- 5.7 Problems Associated with work organisation Based on Traditional Principles
- 5.8 Implications of Traditional Approach
- 5.9 Summary
- 5.10 Self-assessment Test
- 5.11 Key words
- 5.12 Further readings

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Technological advancement has brought about far-reaching changes in the organisation and methods of work. Industrial reorganisation, changing methods of production and economic difficulties have led workers to fear redundancy. At the same time growing numbers of workers, especially younger workers, are no longer prepared to accept the organisation of work as inherited from the past. Their discontent gets manifested in lack of interest of a large number of workers as regards their work or the conditions in which they perform it. In the present unit we seek to analyse this phenomenon and to outline the approaches adopted (in industry) to obviate it.

5.2 NEED FOR ORGANISING WORK

A systematic attempt to design work was first made in the wake of emergence of machine technology and mass production system immediately after industrial revolution in Western Europe. Since then several experiments in this field have been carried out at different times by different enterprises around the world. In India too, as elsewhere, the need to bring about changes in the way work is organised has arisen from the following socio-economic conditions :

- 1) Organisations, today, are increasingly getting automated and using new technology to attain the organisational objectives of increased efficiency. This has had a corresponding effect on a greater specialisation, simplification, standardisation and routinisation of a larger number of jobs.
- 2) Transfer of technology from a developed country to our own along with the associated organisation of work which may not fit with the prevailing socio-cultural framework of India may have an adverse effect on the social structure and system of values of the people.
- 3) Organisations have become larger and more bureaucratic in their functioning. This has resulted in increased authoritarianism and inflexibility of management. Decision making is becoming more and more centralised.
- 4) Even as organisations have continued to increase in size, became mechanistic, and more task-oriented etc. the people working in the organisation are younger, highly skilled, better educated and therefore want to be involved in decisions affecting them and their work. They are today less willing to accept routine,

monotonous work and look for opportunities to utilise and develop their potentialities. Thus, it appears that the way most organisations function is in conflict with the needs and expectations of the people working in them. This failure to adequately match the needs of the organisation from an efficiency point of view with the needs of employees on whom the organisation depends are reflected in increased alienation, poor performance, absenteeism, disputes etc.

In view of such problems, it is believed, that ways of structuring jobs and managing organisations that worked earlier may not work now, simply because the people who work in such organisations will no longer put up with them. An important question facing organisations, thus, relates to how they can achieve a fit between persons and their jobs so as to obtain both high work productivity and a high quality organisational experience for the people who work in them. The answer lies in the way work is organised and managed in organisations.

5.3 TRADITIONAL APPROACHES TO THE ORGANISATION OF WORK

The traditional approach to the organisation of work has been one of rationalisation, involving the specialisation and subdivision of tasks, the minimising and standardising of skills and the development of methods of management prediction and control.

The approach has a long history beginning from the writings of Adam Smith who in the "Wealth of Nations" had analysed the division of labour in a pin factory.

"One man draws out the wire, another straightens it, a third cuts it, a fourth points it, a fifth grinds it at the top for receiving the head: to make the head requires two or three distinct operations: to put it on is a peculiar business, to whiten the pins is another; it is even a trade by itself to put them into a paper, and the important business of making a pin is, in this manner, divided into about eighteen distinct operations, which in some manufactories, are all performed by distinct hands, though in others the same man will sometimes perform two or three of them".

Of all the principles of management expounded by the classical theorists, the principle of 'division of labour' has the greatest implication for how the work is designed in organisations. The principle specifies that maximum work efficiency will be achieved if jobs are simplified and specialised to the greatest extent possible. In other words, people in an organisation, be they workers or managers, will function more efficiently if they perform the same specialised functions repeatedly rather than spreading their energies on a number of complex tasks.

5.4 BUREAUCRATIC ORGANISATION THEORY

The importance of the division of labour principle was also argued by Max Weber, in his model of bureaucratic work organisation. According to him the bureaucratic model of work organisation was the most efficient form of work organisation in which impersonality and rationality are developed to the highest degree. Bureaucracy, in Weber's analyses, describes a form or design of work organisation which assures predictability of the behaviour of individuals in the organisation. To achieve the maximum benefits of the form, Weber believed that certain design strategies must be adopted, specifically:

- 1) All tasks necessary for the accomplishment of goals are divided into highly specialised jobs. Similar argument in favour of the division of labour principle was put forward, namely, that job holders could become expert in their jobs and could be held responsible for the effective performance of their duties.
- 2) Each task is performed according to a consistent system of abstract rules to assure uniformity and coordination of different tasks.
- 3) Members of the organisation obey the law of the organisation because it is their duty

and because those who administer it are superior in technical knowledge. It is also legitimised by the fact that it is delegated from the top of the hierarchy. A chain of command is thereby created.

- 4) Each official in the organisation conducts business in an impersonal formalistic manner, maintaining a social distance with subordinates and clients. This rationality and impersonality can be seen as a protection against arbitrary and abusive rule, a way of making his life in the organisation more predictable and stable and less dependent on the personal whims of an arbitrary leader. In turn, the member is expected to do his duty.
- 5) Employment is based on technical qualifications and promotions on seniority and achievement.

The bureaucratic model of formal organisations is rarely found in pure form. Yet, in some way, all organisations exhibit some degree of one or more of its characteristics. It is a pervasive pattern of organising work in most large organisations including government and educational institutions. The reasons for this lie in the strengths of the system and its appeal to rationality and orderliness. Apart from being logical, it is the most complete system of organising work. Another important strength of bureaucracy is its ability to deal with emergency situations. Studies of floods in India by different scholars have shown how successfully the bureaucratic machinery was set into motion to deal with the problems without loss of time.

Other recent studies have also shown that bureaucracy has marked advantages for emergency administration, though having serious disadvantages for more innovative and developmental tasks. In their study of district administration, Dayal, Mathur and Bhattacharya found that bureaucracy allows grassroot administration to be carried out in a more orderly manner than other systems of management. The rationality and rule-bound approaches (typical of bureaucracy) involve the confidence of the public in its impartiality.

One may, therefore, conclude that all features of bureaucracy are built around the structure of a large-scale administration. Obviously, such organisations rely heavily upon hierarchy, specialisation, rules and impersonality with a view to accomplishing their goals efficiently. However, bureaucracy possesses several dysfunctional traits frequently overlooked by its advocates. For example, hierarchy, which theoretically purports to maintain unity of command, coordination and communication in the organisation, in practice, frequently wastes efforts of people and hampers the growth of their personality. Again, bureaucratic rules as implied in red tapism (obstructiveness), usually become goals in themselves for human behaviour rather than means for accomplishing organisational objectives. Pai and Reddy in their study of the Secretariat and heads of Departments, analysed 69 files to determine as to how the actual process of administration operates, how orders are given and how they are executed. The analysis revealed that government administration was highly inefficient. It was noted that the maximum time taken for the disposal of one case was 1,010 days, the average time taken being 211 days. Finally, the impersonality feature of bureaucracy overwhelms the personalities of its followers to such an extent that they eventually become the slaves of rules, procedures and discipline.

5.5 SCIENTIFIC MANAGEMENT

Probably the most characteristic exponent of rationalised production is F.W. Taylor whose approach is outlined in his book "Principles of Scientific Management". The major theme of scientific management is that objective analysis of facts and data collected in the work place could provide the basis for determining the one best way to design work. Taylor's ideas on scientific management can be summarised as follows:

- 1) The work to be done should be studied scientifically to determine, in quantitative terms if possible, a) how the work should be partitioned among various workers for maximum simplicity and efficiency and b) how each segment of the work should be done most efficiently. Such analysis specify, for example, the exact details of equipment that should be used for dealing with various kinds of material and the exact spacing of rest breaks for maximum workday productivity.
- 2) Employees selected for the work should be as perfectly matched to the demands

- of the job as possible. Workers must, of course, be physically and mentally capable of the work, but care should be taken as well to ensure that they are not overqualified for the job.
- 3) Employees should be trained very carefully by managers to ensure that they perform the work exactly as specified by the prior scientific analysis of the work. In addition, many planners and supervisors are kept near workers to make certain that they are in fact performing the work as they are supposed to, and that there are no distractions or activities that workers must attend to other than the productive work itself. The work of the supervisors is subdivided into functional specialities just as is done for rank-and-file workers. In describing well-engineered shopwork, for example, Taylor specifies seven different supervisory roles: the inspector, the gang boss, the speed boss, the repair boss, the time clerk, the route clerk, and the disciplinarian.
 - 4) Finally, to provide motivation for employees to follow the detailed procedures and work practices that are laid out for them and enforced by supervisors, a substantial monetary bonus should be established and paid upon successful completion of each day's work.

The 'scientific management' principles and procedures have been developed and perfected by industrial engineers and today there are highly sophisticated procedures for analysing jobs to determine the most efficient movements to be used in carrying out the work. The objective is about the same, namely, improved efficiency through standardised operations and simplified work.

Criticism of scientific management was quick to develop. However, studies carried out by Davies et al in 1955 and repeated on similar basis by Taylor in 1978 reveal that many of the assumptions implicit in the scientific management approach still had considerable influence on the design and organisation of jobs and work practice.

5.6 TRADITIONAL PRINCIPLES OF ORGANISING WORK

In spirit, scientific management in its cold rationality resembles the classical bureaucratic theory. The conception of man is not far from that of an automation whose performance can be improved through the application of logical engineering principles and simple economic incentives. Taylor developed what appeared to be a **logically** unbeatable combination: efficient motions, efficient tools, optimum working arrangements, together with strong incentives. Both approaches are dedicated to rationality and efficiency in organisational operations. Both specify that these objectives can be achieved through the simplification, standardisation and specialisation of jobs. Both approaches are also universalistic, i.e. they are based on the assumption that simplification and standardisation create efficiency for all types of organisations, jobs and employees. The basic principles common to both schools of thought can be summarised as follows:

- 1) Scientific analysis of work with a view to discovering the best way of achieving technical efficiency.
- 2) Fragmentation of tasks into smaller operations.
- 3) A standardisation of performance in each fragmented operation. (For example, each workman was to be instructed as to the best scientifically determined method for performing a job instead of leaving it to individual judgement).
- 4) Work simplification leading to less challenging and demanding skills, thereby reducing the cost and time on training employees to acquire through simplified skills.
- 5) Narrow specialisation.
- 6) Standard criteria for evaluation, mainly economic and technical efficiency.

The building block of the organisation thus becomes one man one job with centralised supervision, coordination and control from external sources.

An example of a work organisation based on industrial engineering principles was the Calico Mills in Ahmedabad (as studied by A.K. Rice). The mill was reengineered according to the basic industrial engineering procedures. Each job had carefully assigned work loads based on engineering study. In one room there were 224 looms operated and maintained by twelve occupational groups. Each weaver tended twenty

four to twenty two looms, each battery fitter served forty to fifty looms, and each smash hand served an average of seventy five looms. The other nine occupations were service and maintenance, and each worker had either 112 or 224 looms. Although the mill appeared to be superbly engineered, it failed to reach satisfactory output. Research disclosed that close teamwork of all twelve occupations was required to maintain production, yet the existing organisation prevented this teamwork.

Activity A

Think of a job and a work situation about which you have some personal knowledge. It could be the job you now have or one that you had. What principles of work organisation can you identify in it?

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5.7 PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH WORK ORGANISATION BASED ON TRADITIONAL PRINCIPLES

1) The Assumption of Rational Economic Man

Taylor and his followers acted on the "economic man" concept which has two basic assumptions; (1) "man is a rational animal concerned with (2) maximising his economic gain". The concept of man as a rational animal presumes that each man is an isolated individual not affected by fellow workers or other external pressures. It assumes that a man can be treated in a rather standardised way, something like a machine. The concept that man will produce in direct relation to the money paid to him assumes that money is the most important reason man has for working. This may be true till the basic subsistence levels are reached but there is no evidence to prove that money continues to be the prime motivator beyond this level. There are many other reasons why people will or will not work.

2) Economic Incentives as Sources of Motivation

Associated with the 'economic man' concept is the notion of money as an incentive. Taylor proposed the "piecework incentive system of pay" as an answer to the problem of motivation: that is, the more pieces a man produces, the greater is his pay. Taylor relates a story — a classic in the development of scientific management — to illustrate his approach. In 1898 he was hired by the Bethlehem Iron Company to introduce more efficient work methods. One of his tasks was to improve the work of pig-iron handlers. Taylor studied the job of pig handling and concluded that with less fatiguing methods, first class workers could handle 47-48 tons a day — about four times the average. In order to introduce his method Taylor selected a "little Pennsylvania Dutchman", fictitiously called Schmidt, who he felt would be receptive to his approach. Schmidt, who wanted to build his own house, seemed to have frugal and regular habits at home. Taylor suggested to him that he could earn \$ 1.85 a day instead of \$ 1.15 he was then making provided he would follow their instructions in every detail: how to pick up the load, how to carry it, with what speed to move and when to rest. The production increased from 12½ tons to 47½ tons per day. The income of the employee of course increased as well.

Scientific management, from the outset has been criticised for treating people as machines. Specifically Taylor came under attack from various quarters for his treatment of Schmidt and for the ethics his approach seemed to imply. Trade unions, specifically, raised objections to scientific management which they asserted was a device to exploit workers.

3) Emphasis on Rational Legal Quality

Weber's bureaucratic model of organisation is a rational legal system characterised by impersonality and rationality. Bureaucracy is a system of law – a system in which rules cover all contingencies and where obedience is assured through the appointment of technically expert supervisors who administer law with precise and cold impartiality. It is an autocratic system with rigid chain of command: the person on the top gives orders and those down the line obey. The orders are always within the framework of law and thus obedience is also to the abstract law, of which supervisor is only an instrument.

In the above system individual differences, motivation and personality are relegated to a secondary role. Not much attention is paid to the members of the organisation, to the details of their work and to job motivation. The traditional theories either ignore the individual or make oversimplified assumptions about them. As a result one finds a breach between theory and practice in organisations. The famous 'Hawthorne studies' scientifically documented the important human aspects of organisation and made it clear that social psychological principles were more important than simply rules and laws of the organisation.

4) Multiplicity of Human Needs and their Satisfaction not Considered

The traditional approach to work organisation places emphasis on the importance of economic factors in determining people's motivation at work. As Taylor said "Management must recognise the broad fact that workmen will not submit to this more rigid standardisation and will not work extra hard, unless they receive extra pay for doing it". The basic assumption underlying this approach is that man is essentially lazy and disinterested in the organisation and therefore must be motivated by economic incentives.

However, man does not live by bread alone. In addition, to the physiological and the safety and security needs, research evidence on the subject shows, that to motivate employees it is necessary to satisfy some of their social needs too. The worker, besides being an "Economic Man" is also a social animal. Long ago, Mayo and his associates had emphasised the importance of interpersonal relations at work and how the behaviour of workers was influenced by their membership of work groups.

Psychologists have drawn attention to the psychological factors influencing motivation. They argue that while money and social factors may influence behaviour what people are really seeking is some meaning and sense of fulfilment from their work. The work of psychologists like Maslow, McGregor and Herzberg have made a very significant contribution to our understanding of the factors that can contribute to work motivation. (Their theories have been discussed earlier. The motivational factors identified by Herzberg, for example, of achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, growth and work itself relate more to the content of people's jobs rather than to the context in which they work. This has implications for job design. To the extent that we can design jobs such that people have the opportunity to fulfil these needs, there is the potential for greater job satisfaction and motivation.

5) Closed System Approach

The traditional approach to work organisation adopts a closed system approach as if there is no interaction with the environment. Recent research has identified a number of factors and variables, other than those present in the work situations, as important influences on people's responses and behaviour in practice.

The traditional theorists have tended to over concentrate on principles of internal organisational functioning disregarding the differing organisational environments and the nature of organisational dependency on environment.

One error in the traditional closed system approach is the conception that the same initial conditions must lead to the same final result. For example, there is one best way to assemble a gun, one best way for the baseball player to hurl the ball in from the outfield and, therefore, we standardise and teach these methods. Now, the open system approach says that there does not have to be a single method for achieving an objective.

5.8 IMPLICATIONS OF TRADITIONAL APPROACH

In spite of the limitations inherent in the traditional approaches, the evidence suggests that jobs and work are still designed and organised in such a manner as to maximise the degree of specialisation and to minimise the skill and training time required. If such is the case, what are their effects on people/employees and on performance/productivity?

Impact on People/Employees

In terms of its impact on people there is considerable evidence that the traditional approach to job design and work organisation cause much of frustration and alienation experienced by employees in their work.

One of the best known studies of the relationship between technology and alienation is the work of Blauner. While he saw fragmentation as the underlying feature leading to alienation he identified, several important dimensions to the problem, namely powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation and self-estrangement. Such feelings arise when the worker is performing a minimal, repetitive and relatively meaningless task, with little control over his situation or work pace and is separated and isolated from his colleagues. He, therefore, adopts a purely instrumental attitude towards his jobs, viewing it as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. While these problems may apply equally to white collar and blue collar workers, there is some evidence that they are greater in some types of jobs than other, e.g. in assembly jobs.

The problem of alienation is greater in some types of work than others. There is less evidence of alienation in craft type occupations and process work than in assembly line operations. The craftsman has a task in which he can become involved. The process worker, while having periods of routine activity also has periods of intense activity when emergencies and breakdowns, for example, demand his total involvement. This contrasts with the situation of the worker on an assembly line where the work is highly repetitive with comparatively few problems which might challenge an operator's capacities.

One may, therefore, conclude that the feelings of meaninglessness and consequent alienation are likely to be greater where the jobs and function of the worker are highly standardised and where he has little control over his immediate environment and where his freedom in the work situation is limited.

Blauner's ideas on alienation have also been tested in relation to white collar jobs, for example, in banking and insurance. These demonstrate a very similar relationship is that the meaninglessness and self-estrangement increase with the degree of automation and mechanisation involved. In these studies three factors were found to be most positively associated with feelings of estrangement and alienation from work:

- a) lack of control over the immediate work process
- b) the performance of narrow work roles due to advanced specialisation.
- c) lack of opportunities for promotion.

Probably the most obvious target for criticism of the impact of technology on people is the traditional assembly line. A classic study of this problem was undertaken by Walker and Guest on the attitudes, opinions and immediate job reactions of work people in what was a new but typical car assembly plant in America.

In the plant, although the majority of men valued the work for the pay and security it provided, most of them reacted unfavourably to the mass production working conditions. Further, although the work that people performed was physically tiring the main source of fatigue was probably more from the pacing of work. Similarly, other features that were disliked were the monotony and lack of job interest. People also commented about the lack of opportunity to use the brains, to develop new skills or become more versatile. The study demonstrated that the production characteristics of the plant were not only reflected in the attitudes and opinions of people but also in their behaviour in terms of absences, grievances and labour turnover.

Impact on Performance/Productivity

Now, if employees view their work as a means to an end and take a 'contractual' view of their employment, the proponents of traditional approaches to work organisation may ask — does this matter as long as they do their work? If people's jobs are dull and monotonous then a strategy based on money as the reward and compensation for work may be the most effective both in terms of motivation and performance and productivity.

Activity B

Recapitulate the traditional principles of work organisation that you identified in your work situation (Activity A). What are the effects of this work system on the people holding these jobs?

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Experience in industry, of the application of this strategy and the use of work study-based incentive schemes, tend to counteract these arguments. Although, on the face of it, incentive schemes have produced invariable improvements in performance and productivity, in many instances, they tend to overlook the other motives that may affect people once they are in the work situation.

Insights into the problems of productivity and performance were revealed in a detailed research undertaken by Hickson on the motives of people at work who restrict their output. During the course of the study it was noted that the team engaged in foundry work had created a ceiling on output of 6,000 components per man shift, which was considerably below the potential output of the machines. One of the reasons for this was due to the time allowed for the job being classed as temporary by management. This, in the eyes of the workforce, suggested that at a future date when the newly introduced machines had settled down the time allowed could be revised probably downwards, thus restricting the foundry worker's earnings potential.

However, there were other motives for restriction of output. For example, they restricted individual earnings to avoid disparities within the group. This practice also appeared to provide positive sources of satisfaction to the workers concerned because setting limits on individual competition actually provided greater opportunities for mutual cooperation. Thus, workers who had no problems with their machines and attained their ceiling output would use time available to help others who were experiencing mechanical difficulties on their own machines.

The significance of this research from the work organisation point of view is that there was the obvious conflict between the approach to the organisation of people and work adopted by the management and motives and interests of the workers. The management approach was based on the principle of specialisation and individual tasks and on the assumption that people were largely motivated by individual incentives and financial rewards. While to some extent this was true, it ignored the other factors of the worker's needs for security of earnings, social interaction and the satisfaction of operating as a mutually supportive group.

Another important problem stemming from extension of specialisation and management control is that of 'quality'. The employment of more inspectors, or people checking other people's work, carries with it the underlying implication that people cannot be trusted to produce good quality work. Evidence to support this can be seen from the results that many companies have achieved in terms of improved quality when they restore workers' responsibility for quality of their output.

Labour turnover and absenteeism are other expressions of employees' dissatisfaction with work. Clearly the ultimate way of expressing dissatisfaction with jobs is to

leave. In fact, more people adopt this solution rather than attempting to get changes made to their existing jobs. Absenteeism is a more subtle way of expressing dissatisfaction, for its causes are not so readily apparent. The heading of 'uncertified sickness' can mask a number of unexpressed reasons for temporary absence from work in which boredom frustration and stress can be important causes. These are some of the negative effects that the traditional approach to work organisation can have on employee performance and productivity.

Activity C

Suppose you have an office with three secretaries who divide their time evenly between typing, filing and keeping a reception desk. What are some of the ways that you could organise their work, and what would be the probable effects of each way?

- a) If one of them typically is rude and unpleasant with other people, would it make a difference? Explain.
- b) If one of them clearly is the best typist but typing is the least desirable job, would that make a difference? Explain.
- c) Suppose one of them has a 50 percent hearing loss that cannot be corrected would that make a difference?

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5.9 SUMMARY

Traditional approaches to organisation and increasing efficiency, have often failed to achieve the needed improvements in employee motivation, performance and productivity. While increased specialisation, de-skilling of jobs and more centralised management control are felt necessary for increased efficiency, they often result in more boring and monotonous work, a lack of sense of responsibility and involvement, leading sometimes to indifference or alienation from work. Our failure to adequately match the needs of the organisation from an efficiency point of view with the needs of employees on whom the organisation depends gets reflected in low motivation, poor performance, absenteeism, labour turnover and sometimes in strikes. In view of such limitations to the approaches adopted traditionally to design and organise work there is a strong case for chance and a need to look at what may be more effective alternatives.

5.10 SELF ASSESSMENT TEST

- 1) What are the characteristics/principles of
 - a) Scientific Management.
 - b) Bureaucratic Work Organisation
 What similarities can you identify between the two?
- 2) What are the strengths and limitations of the traditional approaches to work organisation?
- 3) "The way work is organised has a significant effect on employee behaviour and performance at work." Elaborate and discuss.
- 4) Why are employee feelings of alienation from work higher in assembly line jobs than in other jobs?

5.11 KEY WORDS

Work Simplification : the systematic analysis of all factors that affect work (or that will affect work) in order to save effort, time or money. The technique allows work to be classified as a series of small units of work.

Standardisation : scientifically determined method for performing a job.

Specialisation : fragmentation of operative tasks into limited specialised constituent activities.

Rationalisation of work : a logical or rational work system where conformity to prescribed patterns of action (rules) is demanded. There is no place for personalised relationships.

Scientific Management : a body of literature (developed by Frederick W. Taylor) which reports the ideas and theories of engineers concerned with such problems as description and analysis of jobs, incentive systems and selection and training.

Bureaucratic Theory : the theory developed by Max Weber that defined the characteristics of an organisation which maximises stability and controllability of its members. The ideal type bureaucracy is an organisation which contains all the elements to a high degree.

5.12 FURTHER READINGS

Bailey, J. (1983), *Job Design and Work Organisation*.
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Blauner, R. (1964), *Alienation and Freedom*, Chicago :
Chicago University Press.

Hackman, J.R. and Oldham G.R. (1980), *Work Redesign*.
Phillipines : Addison—Wesley.

Taylor, F.W. (1911), *Scientific Management*, New York: Harper and Row.

UNIT 6 NEW FORMS OF WORK ORGANISATION

Objectives

After going through this unit, you must be able to

- examine the contribution of research to the development of new principles of organising work.
- review and learn from the experiments conducted in India and abroad with different approaches to work organisation.
- examine the impact of work redesign on different aspects of the organisation e.g. role of the supervisor, top management, reward system, etc.

Structure

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Emerging Principles of Organising Work
- 6.3 Systems Approaches to Work Design
- 6.4 Alternative Forms of Work Restructuring
- 6.5 Current Attempts at Work Structuring
- 6.6 Introduction of a New Form of Work Organisation
- 6.7 The Impact of Work Structuring
- 6.8 Summary
- 6.9 Self-assessment Test
- 6.10 Key Words
- 6.11 Further Readings

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In unit No. 5 we had highlighted the problems with traditional approaches to organising work and how attempts to increase efficiency through specialisation and control have frequently undermined employees' motivation and produced alienation from work. In this unit we will focus on approaches to structuring people's jobs and work such that their needs as well as those of the task and organisation are met.

We shall first briefly trace how research and experience have influenced thinking in this area and have led to the development of new principles of organising work. The latter section will present and examine some of the experiences in introducing new forms of work organisation.

6.2 EMERGING PRINCIPLES OF ORGANISING WORK

The problems with traditional approaches to work design led to a development of a number of behavioural approaches to the design of work. Special mention, here, must be made of the developments in the theories of motivation, e.g. of Herzberg, McGregor and Maslow. Herzberg's research in 1960s on motivation/hygiene theory led to efforts to improve job content through job enrichment (where added responsibility or vertical loading) created opportunities for employees to plan, organise and control their own work. The most recent development of the job content theory is Davis' work on job design.

The focus of much of the recent research has been on identifying the characteristics or attributes that are desirable in jobs and those which lead to improved motivation and employee involvement. Turner and Lawrence, in 1965, had developed operational measures of six characteristics that they described as requisite task attributes (which were predicted to be positively related to worker satisfaction and attendance). These characteristics were:

- a) variety in work
- b) level of employee autonomy in performing the work

- c) amount of interaction required in carrying out task activities
- d) number of opportunities for operational interaction
- e) level of knowledge and skill required
- f) amount of responsibility entrusted to the job holder.

Working from the findings of Turner and Lawrence, Hackman and Lawler (1971), in a study of telephone company jobs, focused on four job characteristics: (a) variety (b) task identity (doing a whole piece of work) (c) autonomy and (d) job based feedback. They predicted that if these characteristics were present in a job, then jobholders would experience a positive, self-generated effective "kick" when they performed well and this internal reinforcement would serve as an incentive for continued good performance.

The approach was further extended by Hackman and Oldham, with emphasis on ways the job characteristics theory can be made most useful in carrying out work redesign activities. In order to implement improved work designs they suggest five implementing concepts, each aimed at improving the quality of work experiences and productivity. These are:

- a) forming natural work units
- b) combining tasks
- c) establishing client relationships
- d) vertical loading
- e) opening feedback channels

A review of the traditional and the psychological approaches to work design indicates some lacunae. Traditional approaches often ignored the personal needs of people who carry out work and thus oriented towards the efficiency of the technical system so much so that critical aspects of the social system may be ignored. Psychological approaches, such as the motivational theories, etc. tend to give insufficient attention to the operation of the technical system when work is designed and also under estimate the importance of group relations and organisational environment in affecting what happens in the work place. What is, therefore, needed is an alternative approach that would address social, technical and situational factors that affect how work systems function. Such an approach is discussed below:

6.3 SYSTEMS APPROACHES TO WORK DESIGN

Since work is performed in organisations it is important that we understand how organisations, as social systems, influence the way work is designed and managed. Of the numerous useful system-oriented approaches to the analysis of work organisations, the theory having the most relevance to the design of work is the socio-technical systems theory based on the work of Tavistock Institute and of Rice, Trist, Bamforth, Emery and Thorsrud.

The Socio-technical Approach

The socio-technical approach to work design focuses on creating work systems in which the social and technical aspects of those systems are integrated and supportive of one another. Essentially the socio-technical approach to work design follows the following principles.

- 1) Jobs and work groups need to be designed according to **task requirements**. Since, in modern industry, one finds tasks to be highly related, such tasks cannot be performed well by people in segmented unrelated work roles.
- 2) Jobs need to fulfil certain psychological and social requirements, besides task demands (and beyond safety, security and wage demands as stated by agreement or law). Consequently, it was essential to make jobs more meaningful, as also to enable workers to learn more and to exercise control over their own work. Planning, decision making, mutual help and social support were also put back into jobs and work groups.

Through the application of this socio-technical approach in the Norwegian participation projects a new design principle emerged. It was based on building additional functions for learning, planning, etc. into people and organisations. Interest in new forms of work organisation grew in countries like Norway and Sweden mainly because they were associated with reforms like workers' participation and industrial democracy. In other countries such concepts caused increased scepticism.

- 3) The most basic principle of socio-technical design is that a work organisation is seen as an open system. This means that changes in the environment of the enterprise have a continuous impact upon the organisation and lead to internal changes over time. In turn, the organisation also has an impact upon its environment and influences its markets, local community etc. For example, the impact of new industrial nations like Japan was felt on world-wide trade. Companies were forced to review their product and pricing policies as well as their organisation policies.

Development of Socio-Technical Theory

The first practical application of the socio-technical systems design was conducted by A.K. Rice in the Calico Mills in Ahmedabad, India in 1953 (mentioned in the last unit too). Here a controlled experiment was established in which it was demonstrated that while it had been necessary to break down the task of weaving into its component operations, each performed by a different worker, it was possible to re-integrate the workers into a work group that performs the whole task on a group of looms. This change resulted into an increase in the earnings of the experimental group which were 55% higher than other groups. Although the costs in the experimental group were 13% higher, output was 21% greater than in other sheds and the number of damages 59% less. The experiment also demonstrated the importance of establishing collaborative relationships between all concerned in arriving at the 'best fit' between the needs of the technical and social systems.

The next phase in the development and application of the socio-technical system theory came as part of the Norwegian industrial democracy programme. In one of the experiments initiated in the above programme in wire drawing, for example, it was successfully demonstrated that workers on the shop floor, with the aid of outside action researchers and the backing of their shop stewards and plant management, could effectively reorganise their own work. They changed from one man/one machine fragmented jobs paid on work-studied piece rates to a group system of work where a group of men took responsibility for a group of machines. They started to take the initiative and make decisions that had previously been beyond their control and increased productivity and earnings by upto 20%.

Norwegian experiments led to new criteria for job design and work organisation which have received wide degree of acceptance. These take the form of a broad set of psychological requirements that a job must fulfil relating to its contents, its design and meaningfulness in the wider settings:

- a) the need for the content of a job to be reasonably demanding in terms other than sheer endurance and yet to provide a minimum of variety (not necessarily novelty).
- b) the need for being able to learn on the job (which implies standards and knowledge of results) and to go on learning — again a question of neither too much nor too little.
- c) the need for some minimal area of decision-making that the individual can call his own
- d) the need for some minimal degree of social support and recognition in the workplace.
- e) the need to be able to relate what the individual does and what he produces to his social life.
- f) the need to feel that the job leads to some sort of desirable future.

The above requirements, being rather broad, provide a general guide for designing work. More specific requirements were developed by F.E. Emery and E. Thorsrud. These are:

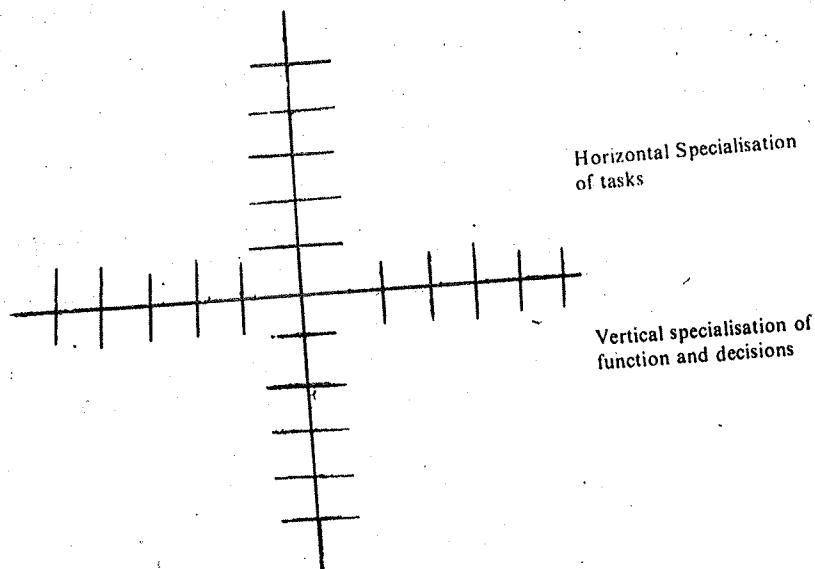
- i) Optimum variety of tasks within a job. Too much variety can be inefficient for training and production, while too little variety can be conducive to boredom or fatigue.
- ii) A meaningful pattern of tasks that gives to each job a semblance of a single overall task. Tasks need to be related, i.e. completing one task helps the next task or produces a better end result.
- iii) Optimum length of work cycle: Too short a cycle means too much finishing and starting; too long a cycle makes it difficult to build up a rhythm of work.
- iv) Quantity and quality: There should be some scope for setting standards of quantity and quality of production and a suitable feedback of knowledge of results.

- v) A whole job : The inclusion in the job of some of the auxiliary, preparatory and finishing tasks in order to bring overall control into the jobs — giving responsibility and involvement in the job.
- vi) Respect: The tasks included in the job should include some degree of care, skill, knowledge or effort that is worthy of respect in the community.
- vii) Contribution: The job should make some perceivable contribution to the utility of the product for the consumer.
- viii) Formation of semi-autonomous or autonomous groups based on the above principles: Providing for 'interlocking' tasks, job rotations or physical proximity where there is (a) interdependence between jobs for technical or psychological reasons; (b) high or sudden stress in the job; and (c) little perceivable contribution to the end product contained in the individual job.

6.4 ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF WORK RESTRUCTURING

Work structuring can take different forms. In this connection it is useful to recognise the opportunities that exist for work structuring on the horizontal and vertical planes. (See Figure 1 below)

Figure 1 : Types of Specialisation in Organisations.



As indicated in the above Figure specialisation takes place in organisations both on a horizontal plane in terms of specialisation of tasks at the same level and vertically in terms of specialised functions and decisions. This helps to identify the alternative categories and types of work structuring that are possible.

- a) **Job Rotation:** This involves rotating people between jobs on the same horizontal plane, either in an agreed or informal basis. It goes some way to achieving some of the desirable job characteristics of increased variety, use of different skills and the opportunity to learn. However, it makes only a limited contribution to improving the motivational content of the jobs.
- b) **Job Enlargement:** This involves combining a number of tasks on the horizontal plane to increase the cycle times and create more complete and hence meaningful jobs. It reduces the degree of specialisation involved and may reduce the degree of pacing in an individual's job. However, as with job rotation, some of the other characteristics of autonomy in decision making, interaction and responsibility are not fulfilled.
- c) **Job Enrichment:** This introduces changes in the vertical plane by giving operators greater responsibility for decisions relating to their work. Thus, they may be involved in the planning and organisation of their work, for checking

and quality control or for auxiliary tasks such as record keeping, etc. The aim of this change is to enhance the motivational content of the jobs in terms of increased autonomy, decision making, responsibility, recognition, etc. This can be achieved to some extent by changes on the horizontal plane, i.e. giving employees total task and control over their pace of work. However, vertical job enrichment does have implications in terms of organisation, since it gives employees greater involvement in decisions which traditionally have been the responsibility of management.

- 1) **Group Working:** This recognises the significance of groups at work. The advantages of group working are seen as increasing the confidence of workers through recognition of important skills, development of social skills and the opportunity to influence and exercise leadership. The group provides support, encouragement and security and since individuals are interdependent, there is more scope for delegating complete task responsibility to the group.

6.5 CURRENT ATTEMPTS AT WORK STRUCTURING*

Attempts at work structuring have shifted from the individual jobs as a unit of analysis and design, towards the group and a more holistic approach to work organisation design and development. The earlier technique of job rotation; job enlargement and job enrichment are perhaps now recognised as having somewhat more limited application, while the broader approaches involved in group working and socio-technical system design can often provide an umbrella under which the objectives that the earlier techniques sought to achieve are fulfilled.

Examples of Work Structuring from India and Abroad

Many organisations, in India and abroad, have attempted work restructuring with varying degrees of success. We shall review here a few such attempts.

Post office, Shimla

A staff group of the National Labour Institute, based on on-the-spot studies of post offices, selected the Chaura Maidan post office at Shimla to conduct an experiment on work reorganisation. The post office in question had 44 employees, 43 full time and one part time. Among these three were union leaders, two being postmen and one a telegrapher. Some of the active employees, including the sub-postmaster in charge of the post office, were involved in the preliminary diagnostic study, which showed that :

- a) the working space in the office was inadequate and congested with abundant antiquated and dysfunctional furniture and old records.
- b) the lighting was poor.
- c) there was no physical facility at the counters for customers who had to fill in forms or sitting accommodation for the old and infirm.

It was felt that before any new form of work organisation was created, these problems should be resolved. Action was immediately taken, more space was created, functional furniture was brought in, the old stock of records was disposed of and a recreation room for the staff was created. Simultaneously, a more careful analysis of the work system was carried out by the employees who were encouraged to come forward and work with the change agents. The analysis showed that the activities of the post office consisted of :

- a) Collection and delivery of mail, including accountable items such as registered letters, money orders etc.
- b) Counter services, which included savings bank function, booking of money orders, registration of letters and parcels, the sale of postage stamps and postal orders, registration of broadcast receiving licences, etc. Each function was performed at one counter, while postage stamp selling was carried out at another counter.
- c) Cable and telephone activities, including receipt and despatch of telegrams, settlement of telephone bills and maintenance of telephone booth.
- d) Control functions, including treasury and correspondence activities.

Work in the post office was typically bureaucratic along strictly one-man, one-job

* The Indian case studies discussed in this Unit are based on the work of Nitish R De referred to at the end.

lines. Sorting postman carried out, sorting activities, delivery postman did the detailed sorting and delivery clerks maintained records of accountable items and so on. The result was that the same customer, depending on the nature of his needs, would have to go to different counters, one after another, and in the process stand in line and take his turn for the particular service provided at each counter. Apart from delay, this was a cause of irritation resulting in negative image for the postal system.

A series of meetings were held with the employees and the change agent in search of a better system that would relieve them from undue pressure of work and at the same time render better customer service. It was decided that the delivery personnel would start working as a group instead of individually. Consequently, a delivery group was created consisting of the sorting postmen, the delivery postmen, the clerks concerned with maintenance of records and assistant postmaster. The work layout was redesigned and the group decided to reallocate work itself. Gradually the system became stabilised, with the result that sorting and delivery of mail was cut down by about three quarters of an hour per shift.

Encouraged by this experience, the employees decided that the four counters meant for the public should become multiple counters, each one providing all the counter services except savings bank accounts which was retained as a separate service provided at one counter only. Apart from being helpful to the clients this arrangement distributed equitably the pressure on the counters and variety was introduced in the work itself. It was also possible for the counter clerks to take their lunch break in turn, closing down one counter at a time. There were occasional problems but the employee groups were advised to sort out their own problems with the sub postmaster.

Encouraged by the results of this group system of working the experiments were tried out in two other post offices in Shimla.

Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd., (BHEL) Hardwar

BHEL is one of the largest public enterprises in India with six major manufacturing plants and several divisions. The Hardwar unit, employing over 10,000 employees is mainly concerned with manufacture of heavy electrical equipment such as steam and hydraulic turbines, generators and other related equipment. Though, it was, 10 years old, the unit was not coming as expected and production was not satisfying.

Survey undertaken in the unit to diagnose the training needs of the middle management level, it was found that in some of the key areas managers were lacking knowledge and there were information gaps. The situation was not conducive for an effective performance of their supervisory functions. Another study to find out the linkages between the quality of family and community life and the quality of workers life, showed a clear dichotomy between the life of the workers at the workplace and their life around the family.

The above were some of the factors which contributed in undertaking a work design experiment at a favourable work site. Block V, where 25 workmen were engaged in fabrication of the upper part of condenser unit was selected, in view of its compact character, reasonable layout and the positive attitude of the manager and the shop-floor trade union leaders. The reasons for selecting the group were : (1) the condenser was an expensive piece of equipment, (2) for the setting up of the power status it was necessary that a condenser unit should be placed at the site before the steam turbine was installed and as such it should be manufactured and dispatched at least two months ahead of the completed steam turbine and (3) the productivity in the shop was not of a high order.

The workers agreed to undertake the work redesign experiment after a series of talks with internal and external consultants. The total complement of 25 workers in Block V was made up of 9 fitters, 3 fettlers, 3 welders, 2 gas-cutters, 1 crane operator, 2 riggers, 2 helpers and 3 workmen involved in materials supplies.

The study of the social system of work imposed by the work organisation indicated that (a) each worker was concerned with his own trade and that none identified himself with the product itself, (b) there was invariably forced idle time because when a particular worker was working at a spot, another worker who was required to do his job in close proximity, had to wait till the first worker had finished his job and (c) there was uneven demand on the services of the materials supplies group, crane operators and riggers. When the study was undertaken in April-May 1975, productivity was certainly very low. Part of the low productivity was on account of

high rates of absenteeism during the summer months. The workers, after analyses of data generated from their own experiences, decided on two steps:

- 1) To set up a task force with representatives of each category of workers and the supervisor. The shop manager would also participate in the meeting if the group so wanted and an industrial engineer was also associated with the group as a resource person. The task group had a membership of 8. Two of the members would be on it permanently because of their leadership abilities and the other members would rotate (except for supervisor).
- 2) A new work system which would take care of the workers motivation as well as overcoming the persisting culture of low productivity was to be formulated. Consequently, work system was evolved in which the direct production group would consist of one welder, three fitters and 1 fettle. The functions of the group is to take charge of the complete task and gradually take up one another's skills by undergoing on-the-job training. The same is with the crane operator and the riggers. It was decided that the gas cutters and helpers on the one hand and materials supplies group on the other would be integrated into the new work system at a later stage.

With more experience and confidence, the workers brought about another redesign of their work organisation in the month of September 1975. Here the workforce was distributed in two shifts in the following manner:

| | Shift 1 | Shift 2 |
|------------|---------|---------|
| Fitters | 5 | 4 |
| Welders | 5 | 6 |
| Gas-cutter | 1 | 1 |
| Fettler | 1 | 1 |

In addition, crane operators were there in both the shifts. Each shift group became an integrated group with one group fabricating the right side of the upper part of the condenser unit and the other fabricating the left side. The same process was started in Block II concerned with the manufacture of the lower part of the condenser unit. A similar small-group module was designed with the task force consisting of eight members with the provision of monthly rotation.

The results of these experiments were encouraging. There were steady increases in productivity. Further, the old culture of one man-one function was replaced by the acquisition of multiple skills leading to the development of a group system of working with internal monitoring of group norms, internal control of work flow and work allocation, identification with the product and its quality and the gradual drop in personal idle time on account of loitering, etc. The old culture that higher status work like that of welder or a fitter would stand in the way of taking up a low status job could be overcome.

The minutes of the meetings of the task force indicate a high degree of orientation towards work-interest issues such as delay in the repair of cranes, etc. as against the usual union management type of meetings in which interest related issues assume importance, one could discern a distinct qualitative shift towards problem solving orientation with a view to looking at a problem as a collective one instead of making a scapegoat of the other group.

The work reorganisation experiences also led to a new supervisory role in the form of liaison with the input and output departments, service units and involvement with central planning. This became possible as a result of work groups taking substantial control over the production process including routine inspection and maintenance activities in addition to maintaining discipline.

The success of these experiments led to an introduction of the work redesign culture in several other blocks of the unit too.

Hindustan Machine Tools Ltd.

Hindustan Machine Tools (HMT), a major public enterprise, has several manufacturing establishments located in different parts of the country. One of the more complex, called HMT-V, is located at Hyderabad. Among other products, it specialises in the manufacture of special-purpose machine tools.

The general manager of the plant, had been seeking to improve its operation since he had become responsible for production activities, and had brought various innovations into effect in the early 1970s. When the production target for 1974-75

was drastically raised to give over-all financial viability to the plant, and it was found necessary to optimise the utilisation of certain scarce production equipment, he introduced a novel "component centre" approach. The "component centre" concept rests on the idea that components produced with a similar technology and a similar sequence of operations should be manufactured at one centre. The placing of the machines in a component centre corresponds to the sequence of operations. There is, thus, a simplification of the manufacturing process. In one case the advantages of the new system were:

- a) a saving in movement to the extent of 180 metres and eight occasions;
- b) inspection reduced from three times to one; and
- c) delays reduced from 16 times to zero.

After the component centre scheme had been introduced at 22 locations in the plant, a survey was undertaken in 1976 to determine the effectiveness of the new form of work organisation. The positive results obtained were as follows:

- 1) The new approach was felt (by 62 per cent of the supervisory and managerial staff and 67 per cent of the operatives) to have simplified and improved operational layout.
- 2) Machine utilisation under the new scheme reached between 75 and 80 per cent.
- 3) Manufacturing cycle time showed an appreciable improvement.
- 4) There was also a substantial improvement in performance. While improved performance cannot be due to a single factor, particularly when additional elements such as an incentive bonus scheme were introduced simultaneously with the component centre system, 60 per cent of the supervisory and managerial personnel and 74 per cent of the operatives felt that improved performance was due to the introduction of the component centre scheme itself.
- 5) It was also felt by 80 per cent of the operatives that the supervisors had become more versatile because of the varied responses their tasks entailed.
- 6) Another major positive gain was found to lie in a sense of meaningfulness: the workers in a component centre could see the end product of their efforts even though an identification with the product could not be established directly.

Certain negative findings were also brought to light by the survey:

- 1) The workers felt that the pressure for target achievement was so high in each component centre that the centre put a high priority on its own task and would not respond to urgent demands from other groups. Selfishness was seen as a major factor causing delay in responding to the requirements of other component centres.
- 2) Absenteeism continued to be a problem, and there was no improvement on the previous rate.
- 3) Work monotony was seen as having increased: 30 per cent of the supervisory and managerial staff and 40 per cent of the operatives felt that their work was more routinised than it had been before.
- 4) Records indicate that there was no appreciable quality improvement under the new system.
- 5) Non-availability of tools was also regarded as a serious problem for each component centre.

The main conclusions drawn from the evaluation study in respect of the operation of the component centre system were as follows:

- 1) Competitiveness among the component centres caused delays, and would have to be overcome. It would be desirable to foster co-operation.
- 2) It was felt by 60 per cent of the supervisory and managerial personnel and 40 per cent of the operatives that the problem of monotony and absenteeism could be overcome by introducing a group system of working in the component centres instead of having each individual operating a single machine with a single specialised skill. Multi-skilling with rotational opportunities and work allocation by the group itself on internally evolved norms would make the work more attractive for operatives and supervisors.
- 3) A substantial number of operatives felt that the job instructions issued tended to be excessively detailed and that they themselves could draw up operational instructions that would not lead to a reduction in product quality.

The management of the plant was seeking to take steps to rectify the negative aspects revealed in the research findings by introducing group working in the component centres.

The Dalmine Tube Mill at Apuania, Italy

Under a quality improvement and product diversification programme, the Dalmine company decided in 1972 to instal new tempering, sizing, straightening and finishing equipment in its tube mill at Apuania. The new equipment comprised technologically advanced machinery, which was never used in Italy, and took the place of an old heat treatment shop of a very rudimentary character. The management decided that this innovation should be accompanied by a new form of work organisation directed at achieving a high level of efficiency by optimising the combination of technological and human or social variables.

6.6 INTRODUCTION OF A NEW FORM OF WORK ORGANISATION

For the new form of work organisation to be introduced at the Apuania mill, a working party was set up consisting of experts from the personnel, time and methods study, quality control and production divisions of the general and works management. The working party carried out a preliminary analysis of the situation and agreed on a methodology. It was then enlarged by the addition of workers' representatives nominated by the works council.

The working party held its first meetings when the new equipment was undergoing its trial run. The shop as a whole was divided into a number of areas each physically distinct and devoted to operations having an ascertainable result and including inspection functions. The analysis covered heat treatment; sizing; straightening; Magna test I inspection; ultrasonic inspection; magnetisation, surface inspection and grinding; cutting to length; and functional relations with the programming, quality control and maintenance departments. About 30 work posts and 150 workers (on shifts) were involved.

Once the analysis was completed various possible forms of organisation were worked out. The working party's final proposals embodied alternative forms of semi-autonomous group working, one based on stages in the production process and the other on homogeneity of functions. Under both alternatives quality control and day-to-day maintenance would be assigned to the groups while production planning would be left to the planning department and the shop foreman.

Under the arrangement ultimately adopted, there are four groups, each corresponding to a stage of the production process, as follows: heat treatment, sizing and straightening, quality control and grinding, cutting to length. Each group is multi-skilled, every member being available to perform any of the functions assigned to the group. The arrangement had been negotiated with the trade unions, and a works agreement of April 1975 provided that after the initial phase each group would be qualified for inclusion in class V. A new entrant would be given 21 months to become fully multi-skilled; theoretical and practical training would be available after working hours.

Group A (seven workers at any one time, out of a total of 37 for 16 shift periods a week) carries out all the tasks involved in the efficient operation of the heat treatment equipment. It has sole responsibility for taking delivery of the raw material, stock control in that respect, the feeding and operation of the machinery (in accordance with standard operating procedure) maintenance of the electrical and electronic systems, keeping the records required for production control purposes, and arranging job rotation within the group and all scheduled rest periods (including holidays). Group B (four workers at any one time, out of a total of 18) sets, adjusts and maintains the sizing and straightening machines, and arranges job rotation and scheduled rest periods. Group C (11 workers at any one time, out of 51) is in charge of non-destructive testing by electromagnetic and ultrasonic means. It sets and adjusts the necessary equipment, makes the sampling arrangements and carries out the grinding operations required; it maintains a detailed record of flaws, and arranges job rotation within the group and scheduled rest periods. Group D (also 11 workers at any one time out of a total of 51) is in charge of cutting, trimming and blunting, size control, and the stocking and despatch of the tubes. Like the other groups, this one also adjusts and maintains the necessary machinery and arranges job rotation and scheduled rest periods.

On each shift the work of the groups is co-ordinated by a foreman, who is also

responsible for liaison with the functional departments (e.g. production planning, metallurgical standards), suggests improvements to the equipment and checking attainment of quantity and quality targets. He also takes any necessary steps to facilitate the work of the groups.

Results

An initial assessment of results after the first 18 months is as follows. From the technical and economic points of view it is noted that the equipment, which was expensive and of an entirely novel kind for the Dalmine company, reached the required level of performance very quickly and without any major difficulty.

As regards the effects on the workforce it should be borne in mind that 70 per cent of the workers concerned came from another shop mostly production workers within the Apuania works; their age, length of service and skill were about average. Skills were very evenly developed and it can be said that each group rapidly became multi-skilled. Multi-skilling, led to group consciousness, with favourable results in terms of productivity.

On the other hand this behavioural change also had negative results. Extreme mobility within the groups is a remarkable advantage in view of the growing lack of flexibility in other shops, but the mobility is offset by some reserve in dealings with outsiders: each group is now somewhat reserved in its relations with other groups, the foremen and the functional departments. The immediate negative repercussions on the foreman's role can be remedied only by giving the groups collective co-ordination duties in relation to the shop as a whole. At the moment such a change is ruled out for technological and vocational training reasons, but there is no other way of enabling the new form of work organisation to develop.

Volvo Car Manufacturing Factory at Kalmar, Sweden

The most publicised efforts on job design and work restructuring have occurred in Volvo in Sweden. Volvo is considered, in some senses, as the ultimate example of work restructuring. At its Kalmar plant this involved the complete redesign of a factory and the abandoning of traditional assembly lines for group methods of production.

At Kalmar there is no conventional assembly line system. Instead, work is carried out in 30 different workshops each with 15-20 workers who form themselves into work groups depending upon the tasks to be performed. Car bodies are transported from one shop to another on flat trolleys which allow the body to be lifted to 90° and raised to ease working on the underside. Workers are able to control their rate of work through the introduction of buffer bays where the trolleys can wait while workers take rest breaks in their own time. Every workshop has its own separate entrance from outside, changing and rest rooms and a view of the surrounding countryside.

Significant benefits have been achieved on the behavioural side. Group working has encouraged a collective feeling of more mutual tolerance and greater independence for work people. Employees are more involved in the planning and organisation of their work and with the aid of job rotation within the group, experience more variety of tasks. They are also involved and feel more responsibility for solving the work problems. Many feel that job variation and involvement in problem solving gives them better insight into the overall production process in the factory. Some aspects created problems for workers, especially where absenteeism meant having to work in another workshop or section. There was also some social pressure to work on cars in the buffer zones in order to gain longer rest periods.

The economic results of the experiment were, however, less encouraging. For example, the anticipated improvements in quality control had not fully materialised. This may, however, be partly due to failure to use the quality feedback system properly and also social pressure to work on buffer stock cars. Absenteeism and turnover were both marginally better than other Volvo Plants.

6.7 THE IMPACT OF WORK STRUCTURING

The examples quoted in the previous section indicate that changes at the level of the individual jobs do have considerable impact on other levels and aspects of the organisation. The most obvious impact of the delegation of responsibility for

decisions is in the role of the immediate supervisor. The increasing trend towards forms of group working also affects the top management, the trade union, the reward structure, etc.

Role of the Supervisor

The roles that are emerging for the supervisory personnel specially at the Indian experimental sites, have a number of common features:

- 1) The intensity of quality of interaction between the supervisory personnel of the experimental groups and their counterparts in other departments have invariably increased. In practically all the cases the interaction has been positive.
- 2) The supervisory personnel have been involved in somewhat longer-term planning, which has given a stamp of distinction to their position. In units, like the Hardwar plant of Bharat Heavy Electricals supervisory personnel have found themselves more and more involved in production planning and in scheduling programmes for a period of two to four weeks.
- 3) The control function of the supervisors had undergone a change, although not in equal measure in all cases. The extent of the change is conditioned partly by the supervisor's leadership qualities and partly by the ability of the experimental group to develop internal norms of work, including handling of the problem of discipline.
- 4) The supervisors' interest in their own development had increased perceptibly in most of the cases. They now saw their own training and developmental needs in a better perspective than they had been able to see them before.

Role of Top Management

The character of the existing organisation, as reflected in the over-all leadership of management and labour on the one hand, and their inter-relationships on the other, is an important factor in generating interest in work redesign. It is also relevant to the diffusion process. In the Hardwar factory the leaders of the unit were playing a supportive role without direct involvement. The General Manager (Production) and his counterpart in the administration, two key men next to the Executive Director, were also involved in an indirect way, through contact with the external consultants rather than in the day-to-day working out of the project. The shop managers and supervisors were thus given an opportunity to operate autonomously on the demonstration sites as members of the task forces.

Role of Trade Unions

On the whole, the Indian data so far indicate that grass-roots trade union leaders who have been involved in demonstration projects have not only responded positively, but are also playing a role in diffusion efforts, as at the Hardwar unit. At the national level, however, the trade union leadership is still not involved in the process of overcoming work alienation, and continues to be chiefly concerned with bargainable issues.

Reward Structure

In India it is definitely more complicated to create new forms of work organisation if the existing organisation is plagued by a high degree of frustration among employees and if they have a strong negative image of the organisation. The immediate establishment of better reward structures would be an important requirement in such cases. However, the designing of appropriate reward structures continues to be an unresolved problem in India. It remains unresolved because there are too many variables that make the picture overly complex.

An example of the difficulties involved in changing reward structures is provided by the Hardwar unit. It has a group reward scheme, which, by itself, would have been satisfactory to the group working on work redesign demonstration sites. Unfortunately, however, in the other shops the continuing practice of overtime payments for extra work done is obviously so advantageous for the workers concerned that at times the workers who have volunteered for the participative system are puzzled about the inequities of the reward structure. Production shortfalls, partly if not mainly caused by the traditional work system, encourage overtime working, and vicious circle is established. There is no such problem at the Tiruchirapalli unit of Bharat Heavy Electricals, where various forms of tangible and intangible rewards directly related to efforts and performance were introduced; from the very beginning due acknowledgement was made for all the elements contributing to team work in the plant, with the result that the whole reward structure was seen to be fair and equitable.

6.8 SUMMARY

In this unit we have shown that the extent of work design is now quite significant. It has gone beyond mere experimentation into application by many organisations as a means of overcoming identified problems. We have also shown how thinking and experience on the forms and types of work structuring have progressed from simple approach of job rotation, through job enlargement and job enrichment, to the more complex and holistic approaches of group working and socio-technical systems design. It was also evident from the many examples quoted that changes at the level of individual jobs do have considerable impact on other levels and aspects of the organisation.

It is better to review the results of these experiments. As it appears, productivity and efficiency increased in all the experimental sites. In BHEL, Hardwar, the experimental work groups also took up additional routine maintenance work. De reports, "At the same time, the groups were unhappy that their earnings under the rewards system often fell short of earnings of some of the workers working under the traditional system as they could not get overtime earnings... (since) the experimental groups... practically did away with the need for overtime work". Other reports indicated that the workers also wanted a share in the productivity gain but management did not concede this demand which was one important reason for which the experiment ultimately failed. It can be concluded from this that the redesigned jobs increased the commitment of the workers, this commitment was essentially calculative rather than moral in nature. This means that the workers would produce more provided if there was a rise in their earnings.

From these experiments De suggests that "Management should perceive such experiments as not something in the nature of management techniques to improve upon operation management but as an effort at bringing about a new culture and style of management basically to humanise the work system and to de-bureaucratise the organisation culture. Unless this basic value is subscribed to by the management in the form of an explicit policy statement hopefully from the top management, the work redesign experiments could become one more management 'gimmick' and in the process the basic 'message' would be lost".

In addition to the productivity gains, De also claims specially on the basis of BHEL experiment, that the experience of a participative culture in the concreteness of work situation had also some impact on worker's family life and community life.

6.9 SELF ASSESSMENT TEST

- 1) In what ways are the new forms of work organisation different from traditional ones?
- 2) In what ways are the Maslow's and Herzberg's theories of motivation related to the design of work?
- 3) What characteristic of jobs do you value most highly? Explain and list them in order of importance to you.
- 4) How can the motivational contents of jobs be improved?
- 5) Briefly describe the socio-technical approach to work design. In what ways is it an improvement over the traditional and psychological approaches to work design?
- 6) What problems can group working overcome? Give examples from cases cited.
- 7) In your opinion, was the BHEL experience with work redesign a success or a failure? Explain.
- 8) What is the impact of work redesign on the supervisory role? Explain with the help of examples from cases reported.

6.10 KEY WORDS

Work Design/Redesign or Work Structuring/Restructuring: Designing or making alterations in the organisation and content of work.

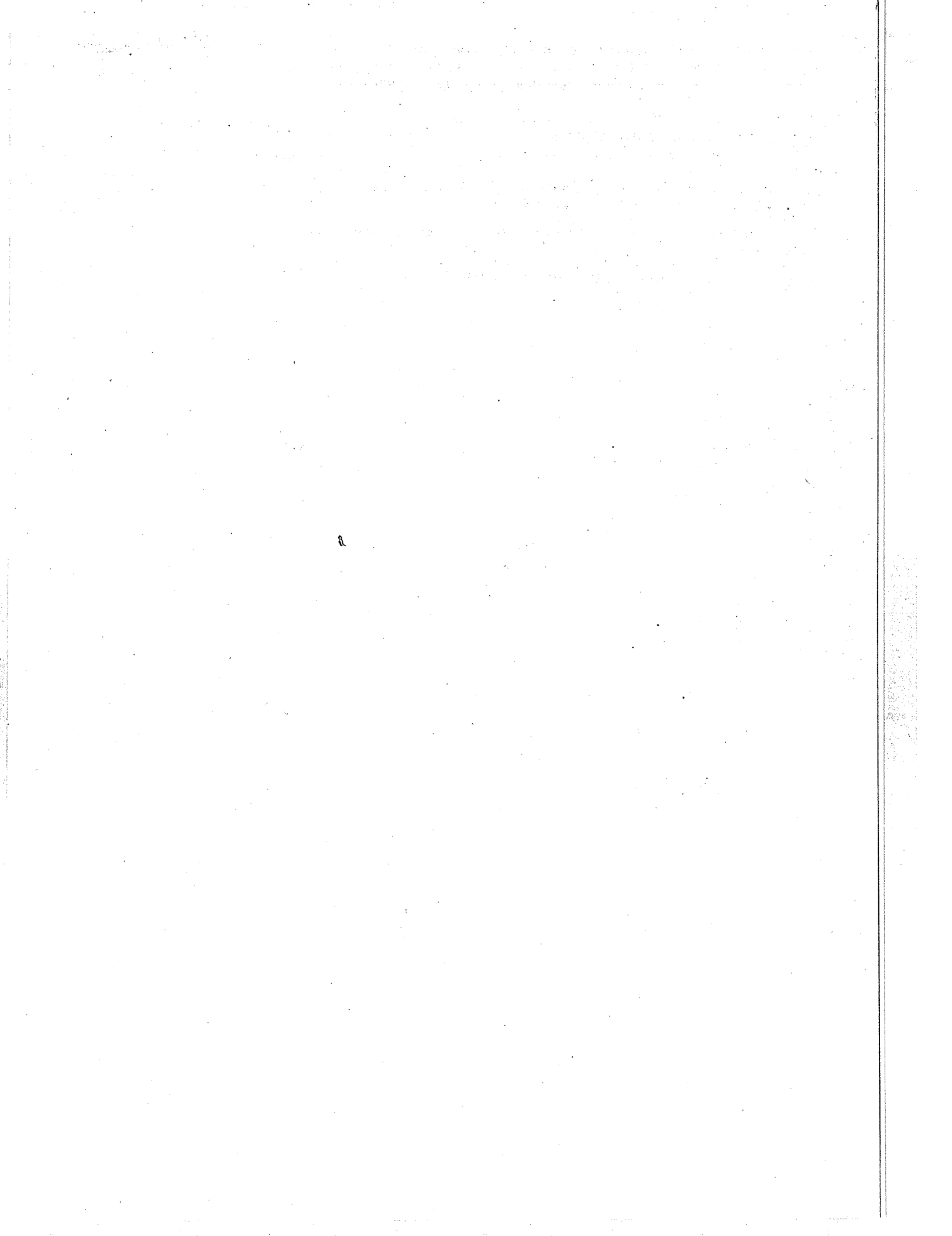
Socio-Technical System: Integrating the social and technical aspects of the system.
Autonomous Groups: Developing groups and teams of employees who can be given the discretion and autonomy regarding various aspects of their work.

6.11 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 7 QUALITY OF WORKING LIFE

Objectives

When you have completed this unit, you should be able to :

- understand the concept of Quality of Working Life in broader societal perspective.
- appreciate the centrality of the institution of work and its effects on the quality of life of employees.
- identify organisational and environmental forces necessitating change in the way work has been traditionally designed.
- develop awareness of various approaches in improving quality of working life.
- appreciate implications of quality of working life movement in Indian context.

Structure

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 The Institution of Work
- 7.3 Need for change : Socio-cultural Conditions
- 7.4 Quality of Working Life : Approaches
- 7.5 Quality of Working Life in the Indian Context
- 7.6 Summary
- 7.7 Self-assessment Test
- 7.8 Further Readings

7.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the major problems facing the developing and the developed world is the quality of working life of a vast majority of employees engaged in productive pursuits. This issue is not just one of achieving greater human satisfaction but it also aims at improving productivity, adaptability and overall effectiveness of organisations. The equality of working life movement in a broader sense seeks to achieve integration among the technological, human, organisational and societal demands which are often contradictory and conflicting.

Quality of Working Life is not based on a particular theory. It does not advocate a particular technique for application. Instead, Quality of Working Life is more concerned with the overall climate of work and the impact that the work has on people as well as on organisation effectiveness. Direct participation of employees in problem solving and decision making particularly in areas related to their work is considered to be a necessary condition for providing greater autonomy and opportunity for self direction and self control to workers with the ultimate objective of upgrading the quality of life at work. The recognised purpose is to change the climate at work so that the human-technological-organisational interface leads to a better quality of work life and eventually to an improved quality of life in community and society.

7.2 THE INSTITUTION OF WORK

The workplace for most people in organised sector of human activities is confluence of the organisation's objectives, values and practices; the individual's attitudes, potentials and aspirations; and the larger objectives of the society and the demands that the society places on him. There are multiple interlinkages among the work system, the organisation, the individual and the society at large. It is necessary to look into the institution of work and examine the nature of inter linkages between work and some aspects of socio-cultural and psychological milieu.

In recent years a growing interest among concerned professionals in bringing about improvement in quality of working life in organised sectors is indicative of their efforts to exercise the choice in a deliberate and planned manner in designing new work systems which alone can meet the aspirations of the people in a given socio-cultural context. Work system changes have wider implications for society as a whole because improvement of quality of life in any society presupposes enhancement of

quality of working life.

Although physical and technical conditions of work and their effects on individuals and on productivity have been a subject matter of study for the past few decades, it is only recently that socio-psychological dimensions of work and their relationship with socio-cultural environment of people have received systematic attention. A growing body of knowledge has made it possible to draw certain broad conclusions with regard to the meaning of work to an individual and the relationship between work life and other aspects of life.

Work plays a central role in the life of most people engaged in productive activities. Jerome M Rosow (1974 : 2-3) with long experience in government and business has summed up the centrality of work in following statements:

"Work is at the core of life. Consider the deeper meaning of work to the individual and the life values; work means a good provider, it means autonomy, it pays off in success, and it establishes self-respect or self-worth. Within this framework, the person who openly confesses active job dissatisfaction is virtually admitting failure as a man, a failure in fulfilling his moral role in society. Since work resides at the very core of life values, self-esteem colours the response to job satisfaction attitude surveys. A negative answer may negate the life style and the very ego of the individual. It may well involve a painful, if not impossible, denial of basic goods in life. It is tantamount to an admission of an inability to achieve and perform an economic, useful, and productive role in society, in the family, in the church, and in the community."

Commenting on the impact of routine work on individuals and its subsequent dysfunctional manifestations, George Strauss (1972 : 75) sums up the research finding as follows :

"There is overwhelming evidence that many (but not all) workers react negatively to work that is routine and without challenge. A whole series of studies from mass production industry shows, for example, that dissatisfaction appears directly related to short job cycles, lack of autonomy and control over work place, and jobs which require attention but not challenge. Such factors also relate to absenteeism, turnover, strikes and even poor mental health."

With regard to the adjustment of individuals to non-challenging jobs, the same author (1974) based on the reviews of numerous literature comes to the conclusion:

"Challengeless bureaucratic jobs inhibit the normal development of human personality, thus leading to poor mental health, apathy, and even the delusion that one prefers highly structured work. Workers suffering from such conditions attempt to redirect their limited energies to activities off the job, to social life on the job, or to sheer fantasy-but never with great success and always with considerable emotional cost."

What is of great significance in Strauss' observation is that "whole cultures may adjust to job opportunities which call for little challenge and so change "personality". Although such adjustment may be unhealthy, it can be stable and not leading to revolt unless the underlying conditions change." Responses of such culture with changed personality to challenges in other aspects of life are likely to be one of inaction, apathy and withdrawal rather than of positive action, commitment and involvement.

An in-depth study of the automobile workers by Kornhauser clearly shows the psychological salience of the job within the factory population studied. Job remains very much in the forefront of workers at least on par with family interests and decidedly more prominent than other segments of their lives. Kornhauser's (1965) conclusions which are highly relevant for appreciating the effect of jobs on mental health of workers are summarised below:

- 1) Large numbers of automobile workers manifest feelings, attitudes and behaviour that signify none too satisfactory life adjustments or mental health. Their responses reveal feelings of adequacy, low self-esteem, anxiety, hostility, dissatisfaction with life, and low personal morale.
- 2) Mental health varies consistently with the level of jobs the workers perform. That is, higher the occupation (in respect of skill and associated attributes of variety, responsibility and pay), better the average mental health.
- 3) By far the most influential attribute in determining job satisfaction and

dissatisfaction is the opportunity the work offers-or fails to offer-for use of the worker's abilities and for associated feelings of interest, sense of accomplishment, personal growth, and self-respect.

There is enough evidence to indicate a high degree of inter-connectedness between work life and community life. Thus according to Harold Wilensky (1961), "where the technical and social organisation of work offer freedom — e.g. discretion in methods, or schedule, and opportunity for frequent interaction with fellow workers ... then work attachments will be strong, work integrated with the rest of life, and ties to the community and society solid. Conversely, if the task offers little workplace freedom ... then work attachments will be weak, work sharply split from leisure and ties to community and society uncertain."

If a person is to be considered whole and not segmented or a set of fragmented parts then the natural corollary is that work life and community life cannot be seen as disjoined either. They form a continuum. In the context of traditional societies moving towards modernisation it is all the more important to take into account the interplay of forces in work and non-work lives of the individual and to examine the structural and dynamic action properties of the multiple interlinkages between them.

7.3 NEED FOR CHANGE : SOCIO-CULTURAL CONDITIONS

It is not a question of affluence or reaching certain stage in the development of technology as in the western countries, it is more a question of seeking to build such systems which are adaptable and therefore sensitive to their environmental realities. In transitional societies with an elaborate system of social stratification, innumerable number of interest groups interdependencies among which will increase as the society modernises, and sets of differential values, attitudes and practices which are deeply rooted in the past, it is all the more necessary to devise such systems of organisation as are capable of generating appropriate responses to meet the uncertainties of the environment.

Some of the characteristics of socio-cultural conditions which may necessitate change in work system can be stated as follows :

- 1) Work organisations are open systems and thus do not operate in isolation. On the contrary, they operate on a high level of interaction through multiple linkages with other systems. This gives rise to multiple organisational connectedness and individuals who enjoy membership in multiple organisations tend to bring in properties and values of those organisations as well. A work organisation superimposed on a socio-cultural system with different structural and dynamic action properties, therefore, is likely to have negative consequences on the system as a whole unless a planned effort is made to deal with these consequences. In India as in other developing countries it is not only technology that has been borrowed but also the associated organisation of work which do not necessarily fit within the prevailing socio-cultural framework.
- 2) A number of studies relating to introduction of an alien form of organisation and technology have shown the shattering effect it can have on the social structure and system of values of a people. Sharp's analysis of introduction of steel axes among the stone age tribe of Australia and its consequences in terms of the total disintegration of the social system is a well known example. Linton's analysis of introduction of wet rice cultivation system in a Madagascan tribe is yet another case where the tribe accepted it and then went back to the old dry rice cultivation as the former was not in consonance with their value system and ways of life. Our experiences in India are too well known to be mentioned here. Consequences of this kind can be discerned in one form or another in complex societies as well.
- 3) Rural societies in India place high premium on group cohesiveness and solidarity and the role of competition within a group — be it a joint family, caste or village — is minimised through such institutional arrangements as "jajmani system" reinforced by social, moral and religious sanctions. Competition in occupational spheres is minimised by emphasis on ascription. Collaborative orientation, therefore, seems to be a predominant value.
- 4) Concepts of time and space and their structuring in rural societies differ

- considerably from the prevailing concepts in urban-industrial areas. In so far as space is concerned, sense of territoriality — desire to own and identify with definable space — is very high in rural areas. The village for example has been an important source of identity for the rural masses. In some castes, particularly in the southern parts of India, name of the village to which one belongs is added to one's name. Concept and structuring of time is yet another important variance. The tribal/rural workers, particularly in the coal mines, construction industries etc., tend to be absent from their work immediately following the pay day, their own festivals or during sowing, plantation and harvesting season. In a sugar factory located in a tribal area in Maharashtra, the organisers of tribal workers entered into agreement with the management to regulate working hours to eight hours a day. The tribal workers, however, continued to work longer hours as in the past unmindful of the superimposed time structure.
- 5) In the last one decade or so there has been a qualitative change in the nature of work force particularly in those industries where skill requirements are high. Most workers in these industries are young, educated and have relatively high level of aspiration than their counterparts of older generation. The young workers look for opportunities to utilise and develop their potentialities. They look for intrinsic factors in their work. Our finding among a cross-section of young workers from a large public sector undertaking confirms this.
 - 6) The presence of two cultures side by side — one having its roots in the traditional modes of living with emphasis on "ascribed statuses" where the primary sources of one's identity are social groups, and the other associated with advanced technology with emphasis on "achieved statuses" where the primary source of one's identity are the formal work groups and organisation, creates problems of its own. People who live in these cultures tend to adjust to the new demands of production processes not by accepting their imperatives but by creating informal groups based on caste, language, religion and region which in most cases are detrimental to the realisation of organisational and social objectives. The needs for status and for seeking identity if not satisfied by the given organisation of work in a production system, it is only logical for the workforce to seek the satisfaction of these needs by extra organisational means.
 - 7) Social and economic relations that are prevalent in most rural and semi urban areas particularly in eastern and central India provide useful insight in the dynamics of adjustment and adaptation of a population to the demands of changing technology. Most dramatic example comes from the coal mining belt in eastern India. An excerpt from the editorial in a leading weekly throws light on this problem: "More dramatically, than anything else, the happy co-existence of the advanced technology of deep-shaft coal-mining with the most ferocious forms of accumulation involving bribery, extortion and terror, only proves how we too are able, in our own way, to resolve contradictions."
 - 8) The near absence of work culture among practically all levels of employed workforce has been yet another important characteristic of the prevailing socio-cultural reality. Loss of interest in one's work and consequent apathetic responses to diverse situations is not confined to blue collar workforce only; manifestations of these can be seen among all sections and in all sectors including the educational institutions. Even among the white collar workers in relatively affluent sectors such as banking, insurance etc., one can discern a growing apathetic response to work situations provided one looks into the pattern of work behaviour over a period of time.

Some of the obvious characteristics of the existing socio-cultural realities in India highlight the need to have a fresh look at the way in which we have organised our work in industrial and government sectors. To the extent organisational processes are geared to deal with and channelising the contradictions and conflicts prevalent in the socio-cultural system in the direction of innovative and constructive pursuits, these will obviously contribute to the enhancement of quality of life of millions of people at work place and in the community. And it is here that exercise of choice on our part in designing work organisations geared to these needs is profound significance.

It is all the more important in our context to design alternative forms of work organisation because the western industrial model based on bureaucratic principles has already begun to disintegrate. In case of developing countries observations of the Eric Trist (1975) based on his experiences in Peru are quite relevant:

"It (bureaucratic model) would retard development of their productivity,

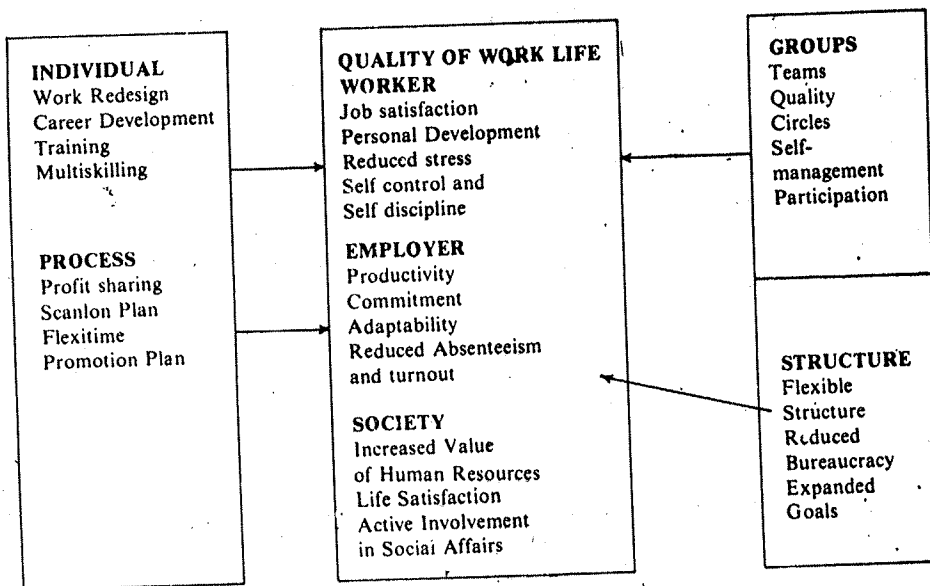
increase their comparative economic disadvantage, and all too rapidly create alienated workers likely to cause severe political problems. Their best strategy would be to 'century skip'—to ignore nineteenth century models of industrial organisation and the dehumanising values embodied in them—and experiment in ways suitable to the conditions of the Third World, with new forms of organisation that give first importance to the quality of life in the work place."

In a developing country where increased productivity and quality of life of the people are legitimate and desirable goals, one cannot sacrifice one for the sake of the other. If one, however, does sacrifice then in the process, experience has shown, one gains neither.

7.4 QUALITY OF WORKING LIFE : APPROACHES

The quality of working life movement traditionally has been closely identified with the job redesign efforts based on socio-technical systems approach. However, during the 80s the concept of Quality of Working Life has been broadened to include a number of approaches aimed at joint decision making, collaboration and mutual respect between management and employees, increased autonomy at work place, and self management. Thus the Quality circles adopted by Japanese and Indian industries as well as democratisation of work process through self regulating autonomous groups in the scandinavian countries and the U.S.A. are all considered part of the Quality of Working Life movement. The following table outlines the elements of quality of working life efforts:

Quality of Work Life Elements



Adapted from SZILAGYI, A.D Jr + M J Wallace Jr.
Organisational Behaviour and Performance. 4th edition.

7.5 QUALITY OF WORKING LIFE IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

In conclusion, then, there are several pertinent aspects of quality of working life movement particularly in the context of India and other developing countries that merit consideration.

1. The quality of working life of people depends on the extent to which men-work-environment relationship forms and integral whole and where the level of interaction among the three is very high resulting in a state of dynamic equilibrium. It is only in a state of dynamic equilibrium and an awareness of it

that the status quo orientation of people in organisations can be replaced by adaptive action orientation.

2. The design of work systems in developing countries, therefore, will have to be such as to take into account the mutuality of relationship between work organisation and the socio-cultural realities. There will, inevitably, be the need to initiate action research in variety of settings and on a large scale which alone can provide insight into the nature and dynamics of interlinkages between the work system and the socio-cultural system.
3. In most developing countries, work redesign can become a powerful instrument of cultural and attitudinal change. Certain values, attitudes and cultural attributes acquired in the new work system can manifest themselves in the socio-cultural and political system as well. Thus, while in the case of India, the bureaucratic form of work organisation reinforces the authoritarianism of traditional society, the redesigned work system based on participative principles will tend to foster democratic values in the society at large.
4. While it will be necessary to inculcate new values and attitudes in the work place, it will also be equally desirable to design such systems which will sustain and strengthen the predominant patterns of behaviour that already exist in a given culture. Thus, in case of India, proposed alternative form of work organisation with semi-autonomous groups as unit is more geared towards incorporating the main orientations of people as also some of the characteristics of socio-cultural conditions obtaining today.
5. In our context, the quality of working life movement, if confined to the organised sectors of industry and government, which constitute or significant but very small percentage of the total working population, will not be able to contribute towards its ultimate goal of enhancing the quality of life of people in general. It will be necessary, therefore, to broaden its framework so as to encompass the vast majority of men and women who either work in unorganised sectors or as agricultural labour in rural areas and to whom even some of the basic rights have been denied. Maccoby's (1975) enunciation of four principles: security, equity, democracy and individuation in the context of democratisation of work process is highly relevant here. For most people working in unorganised sector and as agricultural labour, principles of security and equity are not applicable as in the organised sectors. Obviously then ensuring fulfilment of these basic need becomes a pre-condition for improvement in the quality of working life in the rural areas. Organisations of rural labour which can ensure security and equity for its members is the first step towards moving in the direction of improvement in the quality of working life. And also it is here that exercise of choice in form of appropriate technology becomes inevitable.

It is our hope that as we gather experiences in redesigning work systems in India, we shall be able to develop models for socio-technical assessment of developing countries and for planning for the future. The philosophy of work redesign does have long term implications for the evolution of social policies of a nation. Our biggest challenge in the coming years will be to design such systems as will be able to resolve for the individual and for the society 'cultural contradictions' which Daniel Bell has described as the 'double bind of modernity' that is, effect on personality of receiving simultaneous, contradictory injunctions, if contradictory injunctions pervade through the fabric of the entire society, the result might be what Bell calls social schizophrenia.

7.6 SUMMARY

The Quality of Working Life movement aims at integrating the socio-psychological needs of human beings, the unique requirement and constraints of a particular technology, the structure and processes of the organisation and the existing socio-culture milieu. The purpose of the movement is to create a culture of work commitment in organisations and society at large so as to ensure higher productivity, greater job satisfaction and active involvement in community and social life.

Work plays a central role in the life of people engaged in productive pursuits. The nature of work one is involved with, has therefore, profound impact on not only

shaping his personality or determining his performance level in the organisation but also on his commitment to his fellow men in the society. Thus it is imperative to bring about improvement in the quality of life at work which can and even does lead to qualitative improvement in other facts of one's life. The prevailing socio-cultural conditions in India leave no option but to bring about such a change.

Various approaches have been adopted in different socio-cultural contexts to improve the quality of work life such as quality circles, team work, autonomous group working, flexitime, self-management and the like. Central to all these approaches has been the direct participation of employees in affairs relating to their work leading to increased autonomy, self control and self direction.

In developing countries such as India only lip service has been paid to such a vital area of concern. The quality of Working life movement provides a value framework and a philosophy which has a long term implication for the evolution of social policies relating to technological choice and human resources development in countries like India.

7.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT TEST

- 1) How does Social cultural conditions affect the Quality of working life?
- 2) Explain Quality of working life from Indian context?
- 3) Take an example of your organisation and describe how do you improve the Quality of working life?

7.8 FURTHER READINGS

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