

Organisational Development (OD)

As with other concepts and approaches in behavioural sciences discussed earlier also in this text, it is difficult to pin point the exact and precise beginning of the concept of OD. As per the organisational history, the emergence of the field of OD in behavioural sciences is traced back during the 1940s and 1950s when OD practitioners focussed their attention almost exclusively on interpersonal, dyadic, and small group dynamics¹³. At that time, the field of ED was equated with T-groups, also called 'Laboratory Training' which later became popular as 'Sensitivity Training'. In the 1960s, the field of OD was approached by developing a new and integrated approach that is now known as 'Organisational Development (OD)'¹⁴. Henceforth, OD is used for organisational development. Later French and Bell¹⁵, who are considered to have done the most seminal work on the historical development of OD, felt that "organisational development has emerged from applied behavioural science and social psychology and from subsequent efforts to apply laboratory training and survey feed-back insight into total systems".

Thus, it becomes clear that the two historical roots for OD are laboratory training and survey feedback. These will be discussed, in details, later in this chapter under 'OD Interventions'.

1 Meaning of OD

Essentially, OD tries to understand how to understand and how to manage planned change in organisations. The same has been defined differently by different thinkers.

According to Koontz et. al. ¹⁶:

"OD is a systematic, integrated and planned approach to improve the effectiveness of the enterprise. It is designed to solve problems that adversely affect the operational efficiency at all levels."

Burke¹⁷ had offered a more simple definition :

"Organisation development is a planned process of change in an organisation's culture through the utilization of behavioural science technology, research, and theory".

French and Bell¹⁸ had given this classic definition :

"Organisation development is a long-range effort to improve an organisation's problem-solving and renewal processes, particularly through a more effective and collaborative management of organisation culture—with special emphasis on the culture of formal work teams with the assistance of a change agent, or catalyst, and the use of the theory and technology of applied behaviour science, including action research."

Thus, OD can be defined as the process of planned change and improvement of organisations through the application of knowledge of the behavioural sciences, such as psychology, sociology, cultural anthropology, and other related fields of study.

22.3.2 Characteristics of OD

The salient characteristics of OD implied in its definitions are gleaned as follows:

First, OD is a systematic approach to planned change. It is a structured cycle of diagnosing organisational problems and opportunities and then applying expertise to them.

Second, OD is grounded in solid research and theory. It involves the application of our knowledge of behavioural science to the challenges that the organisations face.

Third, OD recognizes the reciprocal relationship between individuals and organisations. It acknowledges that for organisations to change, individuals must change.

Fourth, OD is goal-oriented. It is a process that seeks to improve both individual and organisational well-being and effectiveness.

Fifth, OD is designed to solve problems.

Objectives of OD

The main objectives of OD are to:

1. Improve organisational performance as measured by profitability, market share, innovativeness, etc.
2. Make organisation better adaptive to its environment.

3. Make the members willing face organisational problems and contribute creative solutions to the organisational problems.
4. Improve internal behaviour patterns such as interpersonal relations, intergroup relations, level of trust and support among the role players.
5. Understand one's own self and others, openness and meaningful communication and involvement in planning for organisational development.

4 OD Models

Four models of OD are quite popular in organisational behaviour. They are: Kurt Lewin's **Unfreezing, changing and refreezing model**; Greiner's **Equational model**; Leavitt's **System model and Action Research**. These are discussed one by one.

Lewin's Model: Lewin's model is based on the premises that before actually introducing a change, organisation needs to be prepared for change, motivated to change and stabilised and integrated the change into behaviours of organisation. Accordingly, Lewin's change model includes three-steps in its process: unfreezing changing and refreezing¹⁹. These have already been discussed under 22.3 **Planned Change**. Hence, the same has been avoided here for the sake of repetition.

Greiner's Model: According to this model, change occurs in terms of certain sequential stages²⁰. The external stimulus pressurises the management of organisation to initiate change process. The management in response to stimulus is motivated to take actions to introduce change in organisation. Following the actions the various change stages occur in a subsequential manner such as diagnosis of the problem, invention of a new solution, experimentation with new solution and reinforcement from positive results. Greiner's these OD sequential stages are shown in Fig. 22.2.

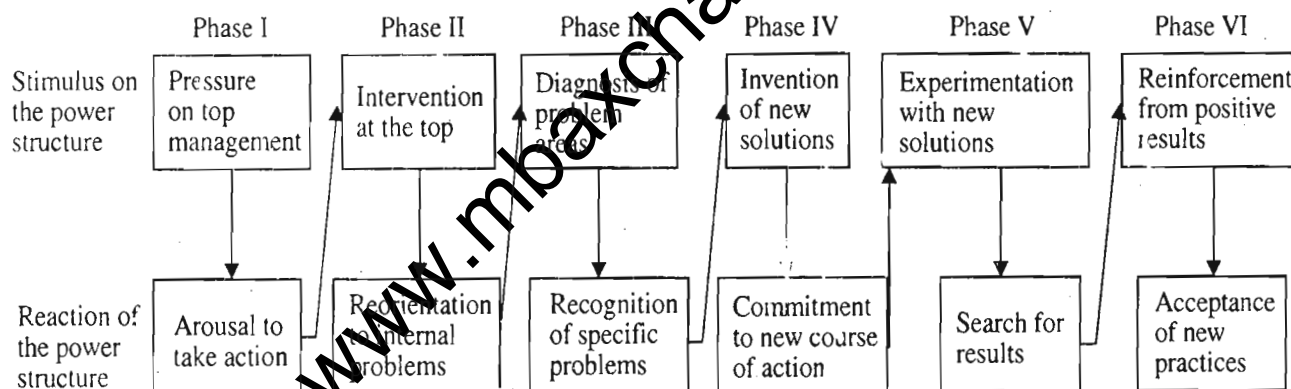


Fig. O.D. Sequential Stages

Leavitt's Model: Leavitt's²¹ OD model is founded on the interactive nature of the various sub-systems in a change process. In an organisational system, there are four interacting sub-systems-task, structure, people and technology. Due to their interacting nature, change in anyone of the sub-systems tends to have consequences for the other sub-systems also. Change in anyone of the sub-systems can be worked out depending upon the situation. How the various sub-systems interact with each other in a change process is shown in the following Fig. 22.3.

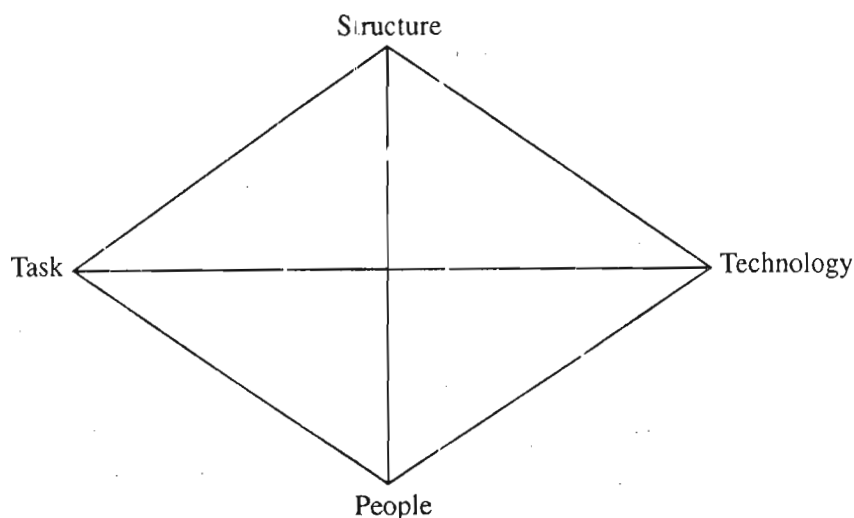


Fig. 22.3: Interacting of Sub-systems