

## CHAPTER - I

### INTRODUCTION

The modern industrial life is becoming tense and stressful day by day. The fear of insecurity and the urge for survival prevail all around. The conflict between management and employees is becoming sharp, both blaming each other for exploitative attitude. Strikes, Lockouts, demonstrations, deliberate damage of machinery and violence are becoming the order of the day.

At the same time, the technological developments and changes are beyond the comprehension of an average individual. Ever increasing size of organisations, severe competitions, Government rules, regulations and controls have made the industrial life complex.

Such a complex industrial life compels the common man to come to the conclusion that there is something wrong some where. On the other hand, industrial psychologists and behavioural scientists are busy understanding the various components of industrial organisation. The more and more attention is being paid to understand the interrelationship among these factors and likely implication of these interactions in the industrial set up. The focus of all these attempts is to bring peaceful and harmonious relations in the system.

This indicates that there is a need for better understanding of the multifarious forces that are responsible for such a disturbed industrial environment. In view of this, the present study has been undertaken. It attempts to understand the inter-relationship between individual employee and technology in the industrial organisation.

This chapter brings out the perspective of development of "job characteristics model" over the period of time. It focuses on important approaches, theories and researches which have provided direction and framework in the development of integrated job characteristics approach.

Within the past few years, increased attention has been given to the quality of life at the work place. Attempts are made to know the variables which make the quality of life rich at work place and which disturb the quality of relations in any industrial organisation.

In any industrial system, many variables interact with each other such as individual employee, groups, technology, organisation and so on. There is more and more realisation that interaction between individual and technology is the most important variable which governs the quality of life at work place. In fact the right type of interaction between individual and technology would lead to the success and growth

of the industrial organisation. In other words, an individual employee is no longer regarded insignificant in the organisation. Thus, attempts are called for in understanding not only the needs of an individual employee but also the needs of an organisation and ultimately, integrating the two.

As the industrial system is becoming more and more complex these days, it has become increasingly important to know and understand the individual in the organisation. In view of this, some of the issues that have arisen are: What are the needs, expectations, perceptions of an individual employee? What motivates him and what type of satisfaction <sup>he</sup> is ~~he~~ looking for in the organisation? How he relates himself with the job he performs? Does he get involved and adjusted with his job? What is the nature of his job and how does it influence his behaviour in an organisation? Earlier, the focus was to a large extent on high performance and production in the organisation. It ignored the individual employee and his role in the organisation as he was regarded as a cog in the machine.

#### Evolution of Job Characteristics Approach:

"The Role of Various Management Thinkers and Theories".

Elton Mayo<sup>1</sup> did pioneer work in changing the focus of earlier job design approach. He is one of the thinkers who brought out the importance of employee in the industrial organisation.

He talked about industrial organisation as a Social System rather than economic entity. The psychological factors came in to prominence especially after the contribution of Elton Mayo. The work of Fredrick, Herberg, Guest and Walker improved the earlier approach and focused on job contents which provide intrinsic job satisfaction. The Maslow's heirarchy of needs and Vroom's expectancy theory provided the new direction to job characteristics approach. The researches by Turner and Lawrence, Hackman and Lawler integrated various factors involved in job-person relations and influenced the subsequent researches. The present study heavily draws on the writing of the above mentioned thinkers. The contribution of these thinkers, concepts, theories, researches are highlighted in subsequent chapters.

#### Traditional Job Design Approach:

It may be mentioned that before the emergence of all these new developments in the area of job characteristics approach, this area was the domain of industrial engineers. The industrial approach to job design became popular with F.W.Taylors<sup>2</sup> scientific management. Taylor laid down various principles of management which ~~the~~ thought would rationalise the work and would increase the productivity. His main principles<sup>3</sup> with reference to nature of work were:

1. Worker must be studied as a machine whose efficiency could be scientifically estimated.

2. There are most efficient, the most economical movements which are to be employed for higher production. One of the factors which influence the efficiency negatively is the wasteful movements in doing job.
3. Fatigue is physio-chemical state of body.

Taylor's scientific management emphasised specialisation and division of work. Work is broken down into smallest segments and it becomes machine paced. Simplification and standardisation have been the main focal points in the scientific management.

The popularity of this approach has been on account of several economic and engineering advantages. The break down of jobs into simple repetitive tasks require<sup>s</sup> little training which in fact brings heavy burden of cost on management. Moreover, low skill workers can be employed who do the job at meagre wages because of their easy availability. The replacement of workers ceases to be a problem as jobs become interchangeable on account of its too much simplification. From the engineering point of view, the main advantages are: accurate quality, easy production planning and control, easy supervision, low maintenance alongwith high production.

However, machine is given prime importance and not the employee in this approach. The human needs and job satisfaction have limited place in scientific management. The job on the assembly line is the best example to explain the above point.

Here the worker is required to carry out highly repetitive operation, with little variety, freedom of movement and social interaction. There is little opportunity for him to apply his knowledge and skill, to use his creative ideas, to learn a job, to see concrete results of his own work. The ~~control~~ control is very centralised with little authority to the worker.

The job on the assembly line does not contain any challenge nor any responsibility. The job is totally meaningless to worker as he merely fulfils a mechanical link in a mechanical system. He does not know, why, where and when of his activity. There is nothing in the job which satisfies higher order needs of the worker. He is socially isolated in the organisation. This gives rise to pathological consequences for worker in an industrial organisation. This results into fatigue, boredom, monotony, frustration, low morale, maladjustment apart from dissatisfaction, alienation, hostility, apathy which ultimately lead to absenteeism, high turnover, grievances, etc. All these ultimately adversely effect the organisational efficiency.

In support of whatever has been mentioned above, Sless Smith, P.I.<sup>4</sup> writes, "Taylorism did little to make work more acceptable to the worker, indeed, it had the reverse effect by dehumanising a great many of the manufacturing processes and by encouraging management to study the task rather than the worker, to ignore the vitally important psychological factors which influenced his behaviour and attitude towards work."

Blauner<sup>5</sup> writes "they are enduring activity, which is essentially a source of intrinsic deprivation for purely extrinsic rewards. They are self estranged".

Argyris<sup>6</sup> notes, "management is in effect paying the worker to live in the tension producing life of the plant.

Elton Mayo<sup>7</sup> pointed out "the consequences of this mass disregard for the individual's need to belong and appreciation was apathy and carelessness".

In fact, the contribution of Elton Mayo is briefly discussed here. He brought out through his "Howthorn's Experiement"<sup>8</sup> the importance of people in the organisation and psychological factors like attitude, feelings, recognition, belongingness, responsibility, status, self esteem in the work organisation. He considered the work organisation mainly as the social system rather than economic entity and included within the framework of objectives of the organisation, an important objective of providing satisfaction to employees who are the integral part of the industrial organisation.

The experiement by Walker and Guest(1952)<sup>9</sup> can be considered one of the pioneer study in the area of job-person relations which drew the attention of industrial psychologists and behavioural scientists. The experiement concluded that job satisfaction enhances by increasing the number of operations.

It brought out the concept of job enlargement which focueses attention on improving job design to provide satisfaction along with increased production.

However, job design became the issue of research for industrial psychologists and behavioural scientists especially after the contribution of Fredrick Herzberg<sup>10</sup>. He while propounding the "Two factor theory of motivation" advocated the need for job redesign and recommended the technique of job enrichment for improving intrinsic satisfaction to employees. He concluded that job content factors are important than job context factors for satisfaction of higher order needs.\*

Thus, job enlargement and job enrichment techniques emerged to make the job meaningful to the worker. Job enlargement concept in job design tries to improve the work performance by focussing on the needs of the worker rather than exclusively the needs of technology. Job enlargement means giving the operatives, the more of similar operations to do which amounts to increasing the number of operations and variety in operations of the job. On the other hand, job enrichment makes the job meaningful by providing a sense of achievement and recognition. Here, attempts are made to provide an opportunity to use skill, knowledge and abilities and control of planning and execution of the job to an operator. He is given more responsibility and decision making in order to achieve the results assigned to him.\*\*

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\* For details see Chapter II

\*\* For details See Chapter II



However, uptill then focus is on the nature of job which is meaningful to the worker. A number of assumptions have been involved here in determining the needs and expectations of operatives. Little has been done to factually determine what operatives actually need. However, the credit should legitimately go to industrial psychologists and behavioural scientists who realised that it is necessary to know what individual expects and also to provide the same rather than imposing something (which is assumed to be meaningful) on him.

The two theories namely Maslow's<sup>11</sup> heirarchy of needs and Vroom's<sup>12</sup> Expectancy theory proved very useful in subsequent researches in the area of job-person relations and played the vital role in determining the future job design model.

Maslow's contribution lies in terms of developing a heirarchy of needs. He identified and classified the human needs into five categories - physiological, security, social, self esteem and self actualisation. He concluded that higher need operates and motivates only when lower need is reasonably satisfied. He further classified the needs into higher order needs and lower order needs.\*

The Vroom's expectancy theory is built around the concept of valence, expectancy and outcomes. The basic assumption is that "the choices made by a person among alternative courses

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\*For details see Chapter III

of action are lawfully related to psychological events occurring contemporaneously with the behaviour".\*

#### New Job Characteristics Approach:

In course of time, the integrated job characteristics approach emerged which brought out numerous relations among important variables such as objective job dimensions, perceptions, satisfaction, human needs, turnover, performance, absenteeism and so on.

Some of the important researches undertaken were Turner and Lawrence(1965)<sup>13</sup>, Blood and Hulin(1967)<sup>14</sup>, Hulin and Blood (1968)<sup>15</sup>, Hackman and Lawler(1971)<sup>16</sup>, Hackman and Oldham (1975)<sup>17</sup> (1976)<sup>18</sup>. In fact, the research studies by Turner and Lawrence(1965), Hackman and Lawler(1971) become prominent and influenced the subsequent researches.

The job characteristics model heavily draws from the Maslowian heirarchy of needs and Vroom's expectancy theory is based on the idea" the identification of core job dimensions and behavioural responses moderated by the strength of higher order needs."

Here the behavioural responses have been measured in terms of satisfaction, performance, absenteeism and turnover.

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\* For details see Chapter III.

Instead of using these conventional variables, this study uses the new variables such as job involvement, job morale and job adjustment.\* The job involvement has been the most complex concept used in the study. The plenty of literature is available on the job involvement.

It has adopted the meaning of job involvement defined by Lodhal and Kejner(1965)<sup>19</sup> "the degree to which a person is identified psychologically with his work or the importance of his work in his total self image.

Similarly various definitions are available for job morale. The most acceptable definition has been, the one, defined by Guion. R. M.<sup>20</sup> "Morale is the extent to which an individual's needs are satisfied and the extent to which the individual perceives that satisfaction as stemming from his total job situation.<sup>21</sup> The third variable used in the present study is the job adjustment which has been defined by Lofguist, L.H and Dawis. R.V.(1969)<sup>21</sup> "job adjustment exists when individual needs correspond with the occupational reinforcement pattern of the job(satisfaction) and when individual abilities correspond with ability requirement (satisfactioness).

The review of literature reveals that on a large number of occasions, job satisfaction has been interchangeably used with job involvement, job morale and job adjustment. However, in

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\* For details - See Chapter IV

the present study the job involvement, job morale and job adjustment have been considered distinct from job satisfaction.

Presently, literature in the area of Job characteristics model can be classified into three kinds of relations: (1) Within person relations (2) Person-situation relation (3) Situational relations\*.

So far as the present study is concerned, it falls in the second category. In this study, the various factors like nature of job, perceived personality needs, job involvement, job morale and job adjustment have been integrated in order to know their interrelationships with each other. Moreover, attempt is made to know the impact of job-need congruence on the behaviour of operatives.

#### Importance of the Study:

The present study aims at understanding the individual in the organisation particularly his needs, expectations, behavioural responses in general and with reference to his job in particular. It brings out how an individual relates himself with the job he performs and what is the outcome of this relationship in terms of job involvement, job morale and job adjustment.

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\* For details - See Chapter III

Within the past few years, increased attention has been given to the quality of life at the work place. Since the worker spends substantial time of his life with the organisation, it is expected that job must be satisfying experience to him. The job must not only lead to economic welfare but must provide the opportunity for mental growth and outlet for expression of his talent and creativity. He must be able to utilise his full potential and actualise what he is capable of actualising. The job involvement, job morale and job adjustment have been considered as the central measures by which the quality of working life can be assessed. When the jobs lead to high involvement, morale and adjustment it can be said that employees have rich and meaningful experience at work.

The present study would be very useful to personnel department as the study has practical implications in terms of policy decisions regarding selection, placement, training and transfers.

The study brings out the role played by the technology (nature of job) in the organisation. Once it is known what personality needs go along with what type of jobs, the future changes in the jobs (job redesign) can be with reference to employee's personality requirement. Of course, the management has to know and determine the personality needs of existing employees.

However, changes in the job are sometimes not possible on account of various technological hindrances or sometimes these

changes are too costly to introduce. The care can be taken at the time of selection of new employees. Once it is known, what personality needs match with what type of jobs, the interviewers can look for these personality needs in the candidates at the time of selection procedure. Of Course, the management has to carefully determine and know the nature of job when the selection procedure is undertaken.

The factors such as job involvement, job morale and job adjustment are considered means of aiding productivity and help in creating work situations in which there would be better integration of individual needs and organisational goals. Job adjustment results into healthy and cohesive social atmosphere. There is relatively more understanding and maturity in communication and social interaction within the organisation. It is also reported that high morale groups are likely to perform more effectively when confronted with several obstacles and adverse conditions.

The organisation's ability to attract, maintain and develop a reservoir of competent and talented manpower is necessary for its survival as well as growth. This would be possible when employees have organisational belongingness, identification and commitment. Certainly an important aspect of this commitment is the degree to which the organisation satisfies individuals various economic, social and psychological needs and provides them jobs which lead to job involvement, job morale and job adjustment. The findings of present study, if

implimented would likely to help increasing job involvement, job morale and job adjustment and will help organisations in attracting, maintaining and developing reservior of talented manpower.

In order to have well integrated and synchronised work climate, it is essential that there should be harmony in the system. An appropriate Job-Need congruence plays an important role in creating such positive, healthy, work climate where work becomes enjoyable experience for the worker. A right matching between Job and needs makes the work central to the life of a worker. Moreover, studies of this kind have already proved that positive job-need relationship indirectly enhances satisfaction, performance and minimises absenteeism and turnover, Several industrial psychologists and behavioural scientists have suggested in their studies that appropriate job-need congruence eliminates negative impacts such as frustration, alienation, maladjustment, fatigue, boredom, monotony, hostility, apathy and so on. Moreover, the knowledge of personality needs would be useful to managemement not at the time of Job redesign changes but any change which management intends to introduce in the organisation. The findings of the present study would be relevant in the area of change management.

While many studies have focussed on higher level middle level and other occupational groups this study focuses on the worker.

Finally, the present study is likely to provide basis and direction for future researches in the area of job-person relations in our country.



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