OD IN INDIA: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Udai Pareek

Historically OD started in Education. In early 50's Stephen M. Corey (known as Max Corey to his friends), as Dean of Teachers College, Columbia University published his epoch-making book on Action Research.1 This was almost the beginning of the OD although the term OD had not been coined at that time. Action Research, as proposed by Corey, in association with Kurt Luwin, had all the elements of OD: starting with the top and using the entire school, use of process interventions, use of research involving the practiceoners, reinforcing change by developing internal people within the system. Matthew Miles in the same institution developed a series of interventions; published as a book.2 this book became very famous at that time. Max Corey also edited a special volume of the Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (NSSE) on group dynamics, in which leading author's contributed chapters on different aspects of group process. Later Schmuck and Miles published a book on OD in schools3. Schmuck and Miles contributed a great deal on OD in schools and education. While this strong movement of OD was developing in Education, Likert in the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, set up the Center for Survey Research. OD then developed very fast in the corporate sector.

Applied behavioural science is the basis of OD. Since 1947, by convention, applied behavioural science, as a singular noun has come to denote special application of the behavioural sciences, rooted in the psycho-dynamic tradition of studying and changing behaviour. The elements of action research are assumed to be within this meaning. After the establishment of National Training Laboratories (NTL) in USA in 1947, under the influence of Kurt Lewin, the term "applied behavioural science'' was adopted to indicate the study and modification of behaviour by involving people concerned to confront the psycho-dynamic issues in which they were involved, generally using sensitivity training or T-Groups (Training Groups) approach.

I have used the term applied behavioral sciences (ABS) in the wider meaning. Three characteristics, however, seem to be important to distinguish the scope of ABS from behavioral sciences or social sciences. In the first place, ABS must deal with group or social issues (individual issues as part of a group in which several individuals interact with one another on significant issues. Secondly, ABS must use human process interventions, as contrasted with administrative or purely structural changes. ABS interventions are concerned with human processes like socialization, communication, decision-making, problem solving, conflict, collaboration, change of norms and values, etc. Thirdly, ABS uses scientific problem solving approach in its interventions. Defined in this way, ABS also signifies a special approach to research which must lead to meaningful action in which persons for whom research is being done become partners in the research process.

Four developmental trends have contributed to the evolution of ABS in India. The first trend was the increase in the scope of applied aspects of some behavioural sciences. While education and social anthropology were always "applied" sciences, departments of applied psychology were established in Kolkata, and later in other universities. Applied psychology was, however, confined to clinical, industrial and educational psychologies. Some departments of sociology increased the study and teaching of social issues. Very little work was done in applied political science until the establishment of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies and the Centre of Policy Research. Public administration, management, and agricultural extension emerged as new areas of higher education and research.

The second trend was the relaxing of boundaries of the different behavioural sciences. Review of research of Psychology sponsored by ICSSR is a good example of this (as also of the first) trend. Compared with the first review4 which used traditional classification for the topics, the second5 used thermal classification, including social issues like poverty, inequality, population and family planning, ecology, and drew on relevant writings from other behavioural sciences for topics like communication, influence, political processes, etc. This trend was continued in the third survey6 in which topics like intergroup relations, rural development, and organisational effectiveness were used. Behavioural Sciences Centre was established in New Delhi under the Chairmanship of Dr. S.K. Mitra in 1962. The Centre published three directories, a guide to Indian Behavioural Science periodicals,7 and quarterly *Indian Behavioural Sciences (IBS) Abstracts.* When ICSSR started the publication of abstracts of periodicals, the IBS abstracts were discontinued.

The third trend, psychodynamic process as the integrating force for behavioural science research and action, had its beginnings in India with the coming of Professor Rolf Lynton to

Mysore where he founded an institution, Aloka, in 1957 for Youth Leaders from Asian countries.8This trend was strengthened with the institutionalisation of L-Group (Learning Group) or T-Groups (Training groups) as the core methodology used to help people confront interpersonal, and group issues at the Small Industry Extension Training Institute in early the 60s where Udai Pareek, after completing professional internship at NTL in USA, joined Rolf Lynton to redesign training and group development7. IIM, Calcutta, under the influence of professors McGregor, Bennis and Baumgartel, arranged to send some of its behaviour science faculty to the NTL. With some other behavioural scientists going to NTL from other parts of the country, a sizable group of NTL-trained persons established the Indian Society for Applied Behavioural Science (ISABS) in 1971,9 ISABS is a highly specialised professional group of applied behavioural scientists engaged in advancing the cause of ABS (in a special sense of the term) and is involved in developing ABS competence in the country. Dharni Sinha has chronicled the development of ABS, in India.10

The fourth trend contributing to the development of ABS with the three characteristics suggested above (dealing with social, group, or institutional issues, using process interventions; and involving the members of the concerned group in research) was that of action research. This had its beginnings in India in community development, but more strongly in education with the coming of Professor Stephen M. Corey to India in the late 1950s, at the invitation of the Ministry of Education. A large number of action research workshops were organised for teachers and headmasters throughout the country. The workshops had the three elements of ABS.11 A manual for facilitators of such workshops was also developed.12 Some workshops were also organised, using the then new psycho-dynamic approach to classrooms.13 Incidentally, T-Groups were held in New Delhi at the house of Max Corey in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Looking at the development of ABS in the last two decades, one striking lacuna has been the thin research base. Although individual applied behavioural scientists have contributed to research, development of new research tools, and formulation of new theories, organised bodies like ISABS have done very little in this regard.

Organisation Development (OD)

L-Groups (Learning-Groups) or T-Groups (Training groups), were used for team building in many organisation.14 Organisation development has been used much more in the industrial sector. The classical approach of OD was, starting at the top, to do team building at various levels in an organisation, using the L-Groups approach. Modifications were made using some other approaches also. However, the essential characteristics of OD remained: use of process consultants, team building, joint work on diagnosis and intervention designing by a team of external consultants and internal persons and interventions in human process in the organisation. Use of OD has been reported in a variety of organisations.15 Working democracy or work redesign has been used with great success in many organisations resulting in improvement in both productivity and involvement of employment.16 Role efficacy was used as an OD approach to increase motivational aspects of organisational roles. Role efficacy was found to be significantly related to several variables of individuals and organisational effectiveness.17 A related area of work has been institution building (IB), defined broadly as value-based impact making role of an organisation.18

A major concern has been the industrial sickness in the country.19 Bhattacharyya has researched criteria and characteristics of excellence, based on a study of Indian organisation.20 Organisational effectiveness, including turn around strategies,21 has been a concern of several.

It may be worthwhile to briefly review what has been done in the fields of applied behavioural sciences in India, before proposing an agenda for consideration of applied behavioural scientists. The basic contributions of ABS have been in the following fields.

Education

As already stated, action research was conducted extensively in the field of education. About a hundred action research workshops involving more than 2000 teachers, headmasters and some administrators were conducted all over the country, unfortunately, no systematic review of such workshops was undertaken. Along with action research workshops, "extension" facilitators were employed by the Ministry of Education (and later by NCERT) to study the problems of schools and school personnel, and to help them to develop new ways of solving problems. Based on the study of a large number of critical incidents from several parts of the country, some general propositions were suggested for managing change in education, extensively quoting experiences and critical incidents, and

illustrating dynamics of organisational change in the educational system.22 Another contribution in education was the development and application of the techniques of influencing motivation of students and teachers. A large number of workshops were organised in different parts of the country, using the approach suggested by McClelland (with some modifications). The most systematic and organised report on the design and impact of this intervention in schools has been published by Dr. Prayag Mehta.23

The third contribution in education was the study of classroom interaction patterns, and feedback of the interaction data for changing behaviour of teachers, and consequently improving classroom behaviour of pupils, reflected in indices like initiative, low dependence proneness, better adjustment and group cohesiveness. The theory and techniques developed by Flanders24 were used for this purpose. One comprehensive and well documented research on this intervention has been reported.25 Attention has been drawn to the sociological aspects of education,26,27 socialisation of the child,28 development of altruism in children,29 and learning.30

Agricultural and Rural Development

The establishment of agricultural Universities, and the starting of the discipline of agricultural extension made it possible for ABS to make some contributions to the study of change in the rural society in the early 1960s. Teaching and research in a large number of subjects were initiated at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) which represented the multidisciplinary approach of social psychology, rural sociology, and home science etc. in dealing with problems of adoptions and diffusion of innovations, communication, leadership and organisational climate. These have been reviewed, with action implications for various groups31 Y.P. Singh has done pioneering work in this area and has highlighted the issues in agricultural communication.32 D. Sinha33 and Moulik34 have reported change in farmers' conditions as a result of adoption of innovations. Muthayya and his associates have studied rural disadvantaged and rural deprived.35 Chaube studied motivational dimensions of rural development.36 Unfortunately not much work has been done on psycho-dynamic interventions with rural groups. Some members of ISABS have been working with rural youth, using process interventions.

Entrepreneurship Development

One powerful approach which was seen as being effective, and was therefore widely adopted in India, was based on the McClelland's theory of motivation development.37

An experiment was conducted for the first time in the world at the 'Small Industries Extension Training (SIET) Institute, to develop achievement motivation amongst a group of farm owners, to turn them into entrepreneurs, and thereby bring about economic change in a town. A detailed plan of the intervention was prepared by a team of behavioural scientists and was successfully used. The main focus of the intervention was to change the thinking process of persons involved in the experiment by saturating their imagery with concern for excellence and achievement of higher goals. The success of the experiment stimulated large-scale use of this approach by government bodies concerned with development of entrepreneurship and various banks which are also interested in promoting successful entrepreneurship. Currently three national institutions are working in this field with a large number of other institutes in various parts of the country. Some critiques have appeared.38 Some new developments have also been reported.39 Currently many modifications have been made in this approach and some institutions are developing facilitators to use this intervention more effectively.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES

A variety of approaches have been used in applied behavioural science work in India. In the beginning, L-Groups or T-Group were primarily used for ABS work. However, with more people joining ABS groups, several approaches have been used. Some approaches are briefly mentioned to indicate the increasing variety of such approaches in India.

Action research, in which researchers and practitioners work together on diagnosis, setting up and testing hypothesis through interventions, and replanning to improve the quality of action.

L-Groups or T-Groups approach, focusing on confronting individuals with intrapersonal, interpersonal issues in a group, and helping them to deal with such realities.

Tavistock approach, focusing purely on group dynamics (both small and large groups), with the facilitator distancing himself or herself from the participants in this process.40

Motivation development, by influencing imagery of the persons concerned so that they set new priorities of goals, develop action plans to achieve the goals, and implement them.

estalt approach, dealing with dynamic contexts of the issues by encouraging people concerned to explore various aspects.41

Jungian approach, in which exploration is done by probing collective unconscious, examining the personal orientation through the use of an instrument developed on the basis of Jung's Theory.42

Transactional analysis (TA), using both the Ego States and Life Positions to deal with various issues of one's effectiveness. Transactional Analysis Society of India (TASI) has been doing pioneering work. An instrument has been prepared as an aid for examining interpersonal styles based on TA.43

Creativity labs, helping people to get out of their usual frame of thinking to realise their creative potential.44

Value clarification, helping people to confront value choices, developed by Sampath using 100 stories from Indian sources to confront issues of value choices.45 Value clarification has been done with managers, teachers and students. Sampath is now working in this area through an Ashoka Fellowship.
Guna Dynamics (GD), using Indian ancient philosophy and approaches of meditation for mindsetting and development of values.46

Stress management, to help people identify their work related and general stress, and to cope with such stress. Job-related and other stresses have been studied.47 Some instruments to measure role stress and coping strategies and styles have been developed.48

Some other approaches have also been used and tried, like dream analysis and role efficacy

Human Resource Development

The use of ABS has been extensively made in the recent work on human resource development (HRD) in India. The concept of HRD was proposed as a comprehensive approach to the development and use of individuals, teams, and the total organisation through several systematic ways.49 A large number of organisations have started HRD departments. The work on HRD made new strides with the establishment of the National HRD Network founded and guided by Professor T.V. Rao. HRD practices in different organisations in India have an amazing variety and richness.50

Special Groups

Applied behavioural scientists have been increasingly taking interest in the study of special groups. Many members in ISABS are working with special groups like rural youth, students, women, facilitators of voluntary organisations, etc. Special issues concerning Indian women have drawn the attention of applied behavioural scientists.51 So also have the problems of the disadvantaged and handicapped, Scheduled Castes, and the rural disadvantaged.52

Notes and References

1 Corey, Stephen M. (1953). Action research to improve school practices. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University.

2 Miles, Matthew B. (1960) Learning to Work in Groups. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University.

3 Schmuck, R.A. and M.B. Miles. (Eds.). (1971). Organisation development in schools. Palo Alto, California: National Press Books

4 Mitra, 1972.

5 Pareek, 1980, 1982.

6 Pandey, 1988.

7 Pareek, 1966a, 1970, 1971.

8 Lynton, 1960.

9 Lynton and Pareek, 1967, 1990.

10 D. Sinha, l986, Chapters 2 and 3.

11   Anon, 1960.

12   Corey and Pareek, 1961.

13   Pareek, 1962.

14   Dharni Sinha has described the evolution of T-group or laboratory education in India (1986, Chapters 2 and 3), as also organisation development (1986, Chapters 14, 15, 16).

15   Industry (Ahmad, 1972; G. Chattopadhyaya, 1988): mining organisation (D. Sinha, 1986, Chapter 12), voluntary organisations (Chattopadhyaya and Pareek, 1982, Chapter 16); government, organisations (Mathur et al., 1979). Dharni Sinha (1977) has also brought together the points of view and experience of OD consultants.

16   Nitish De pioneered work in this regard (De 1984); work was done in different settings: Industry, Income Tax Office, Post Office (Sharma, Singh and Diesh, 1978), Bank, LIC, etc.

17   Pareek, 1987a.

18   Ganesh (1979) has defined the parameters of IB, and has studied some educational in stitutions (1980). De has suggested the use of search conference and conscientisation as useful processes of institution building. Different aspects of IB were explored in a seminar (Matthai et al., 1977). Some propositions about institution building and leadership for institution building have been suggested (Pareek, 1981b).

19   Bidani and Mitra, 1983.

20   Bhattacharya, 1989.

21   Dayal, 1981, Sayeed, 1980. Khandwalla (Pandey, 1988 Vol. 3, Chapter 2) did an excellent review of this topic and proposed a turnaround strategy (Khandwalla, 1984). A good critique of researches on public enterprises has been published (Sankar et al., 1983).

22   Griffin and Pareek, 1970.

23   Mehta, 1976.

24   Flanders, 1970.

25   Pareek and Rao, 1971.

26   Rath, 1974.

27   Pandey et al., 1979.

28   D. Sinha, 1981.

29   Naidu, 1980.

30   Kumar, 1988.

31   Singh, Rao and Sahay, 1970.

32   Y. Singh, 1986.

33   D. Sinha, 1974.

34   Moulik, 1975.

35   Muthayya et al., 1984.

36   Chaube, 1974.

37   McClelland and Winter, 1969.

38   Owens and Nandy, 1977; J.B.P. Sinha, 1968.

39   39. N.P. Singh, 1985.

40   Gaurango Chattopadhyay is the main exponent of the approach.

41   Oriol Pujol is the main exponent of this approach.

42   Somnath Chattopadhyaya has been extensively using this approach.

43   Pareek, 1986.

44   Khandwalla (1984) has developed various programmes, the details of which are available in his book.

45   Pareek, 1986a.

46   Chakraborty (1987) has developed various programmes, the details of which are available in his book.

47   Chaturvedi, 1983; Nagendra, 1987, Sharan, 1977; Pareek, 1983a, 1983b.

48   Pestonjee 1992 has discussed several aspects of the effects of work on stress in India, and ways of coping with stress.

49   Pareek and Rao, 1981a. 1992a.

50   Khandelwal, 1988; National HRD Network, 1989; Nair and Rai, 1990; Rao et al., 1988; Silvera, 1988. The implementation process of HRD has been studied (Gupta, 1990).

51   Rani, (1976) on role conflict of working women, and Parikh and Garg (1989) on issues of identity of the Indian woman.

52   Batra, 1981; Muthayya, 1980

53   Pareek, 1987b.

54   A recent collection of papers (Marriott, 1989) has addressed this problem from various angles.

55   Kuppuswamy, 1977; 1985; Satyanand, 1972.

56   Chakraborty, 1985, 1987.

57   Represented by Kosambi (1962), D.P. Chattopadhyay (1973, 1976, 1978), and some Marxist thinkers and sociologists like A.R. Desai.

58   Carstairs, 1961; Spratt, 1966.
     Kakar has pioneered work in this direction by combining the psychoanalytical approach with the methodology of Erikson (Kakar 1974, 1978, 1979). Kakar (1982) has also studied the Indian culture by looking at indigenous practices to deal with neuroses and psychoses. Paranjpe (1975) has also used the Eriksonian approach in studying Indian culture in understanding Indian identity. Nandy (1983) has discussed the problem of Indian identity in the context of colonial experience and relationship with authority.

59   J.B.P. Sinha, 1980.

60   P. Singh (1979) has studied the values of Indian managers as reflected in their responses and behaviour. Enough importance has been given to the study of values and their implications for development. D. Sinha and Rao (1988) and Khandwalla (1988) have recently edited some significant material in which different behavioural scientists have explored the relationship of values, behavioural sciences and development.

61   For details see Silvera, 1988: NHN, 1989.

62   Khandwalla (1984) has developed tools for the study of creativity and pioneering-innovative (PI) motivation, See Prayag Mehta (1989) for the study of social achievement, social power, and bureaucratic orientation. Pareek has developed tools for the study of managerial behaviour, organisational climate, role efficacy, role stress, coping styles, managerial styles, conflict management, internality etc. See Rao (1990) for HRD climate, HRD practices, leadership styles, etc.

63   Pareek and Rao, 1974, Pestonjee, 1980.

64   A.K. Singh (Pandey, 1988; Volume 2, Chapter 4) has done an excellent review of studies of prejudice in India.

65   Prasad, I979.

66   Hassan, 1974.

67   See reviews on deprivation by Moulik (Pareek, 1981b. Chapter 11b) and on inequality by Chattopadhyay (Pareek, 1981b, Chapter 11c). Two significant books have been published on deprivation (Misra and Tripathi, 1980; Sinha, Tripathi and Misra, 1982) and on poverty.

68   Sudarshan of the UNDP (formerly with the Ford Foundation) has been instrumental in promoting the exploration of the availability of fast justice to the concerned low-income groups, protection of human rights etc. A law school has been set up to deal with various questions of social aspects of law and justice. ABS should form an integral part of explorations for such interventions.

69   For some issues in this regard, see Pareek, 1989.