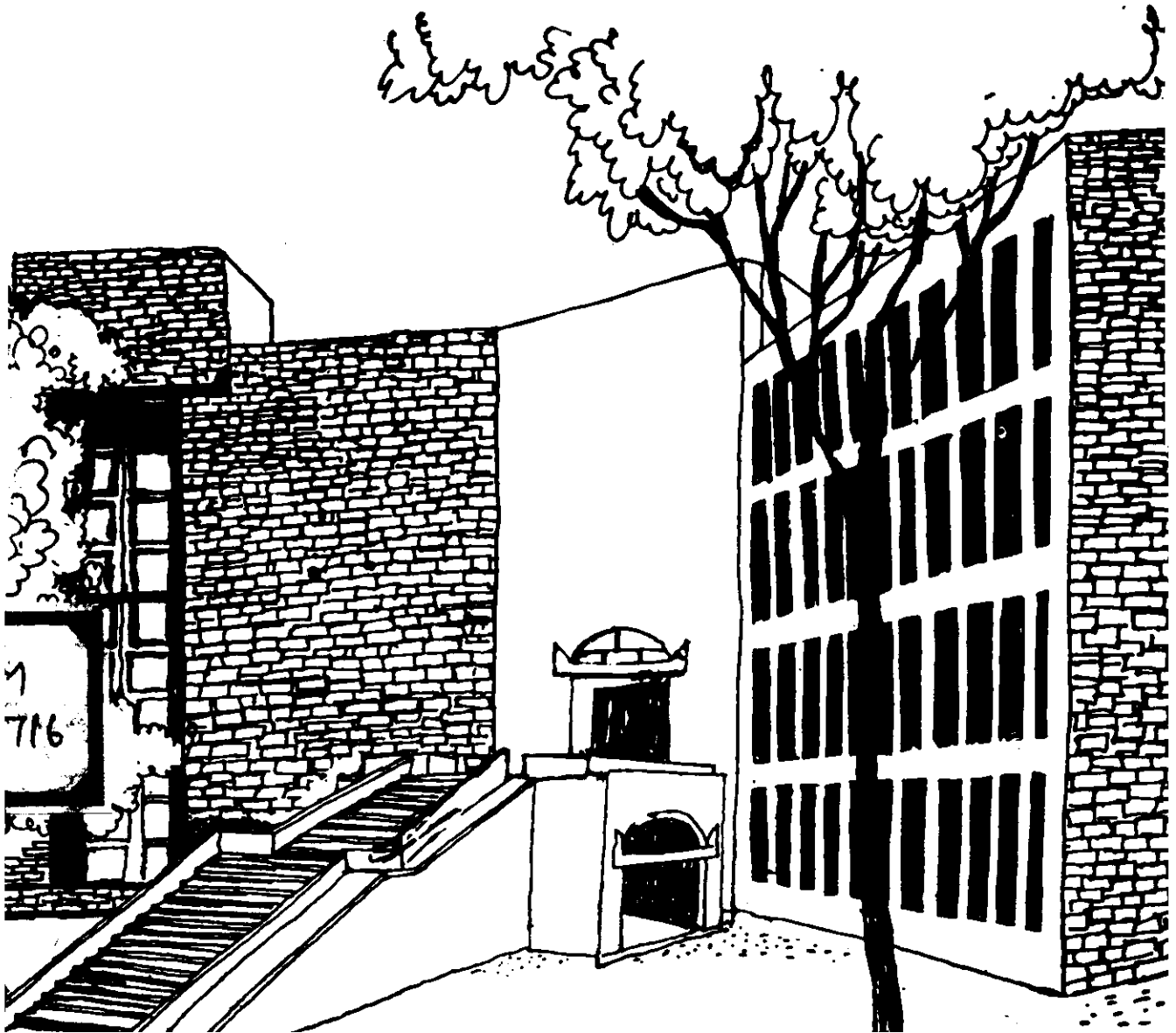


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MANAGEMENT TRAINING:

MIXED GROUPS
OR
SINGLE SEX GROUPS

By

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M A N A G E M E N T T R A I N I N G

MIXED GROUPS
OR
SINGLE SEX GROUPS

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AHMEDABAD

1987

PAPER PREPARED FOR THE WORKSHOP ON WOMEN MANAGEMENT,
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZED BY ECOLE DES HAUTES
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I wish to acknowledge my personal appreciation to
Professor Pulin K. Garg, Indian Institute of Management,
Ahmedabad who not only read my paper but gave valuable
suggestions and insights.

Scope of the Paper

This paper is based on my work experience of being a management educator and a consultant with a variety of organizations and institutions. Besides teaching post-graduate courses and management development programmes at Indian Institute of Management, the focus of my work as a consultant has been to design in-company inputs to help managers and organizations to enhance effectiveness in role and organization processes. Furthermore, in the last 17 years my experience has included a whole range of organizations from public sector, joint sector, family sector and multinationals on the one hand and trading organizations to organizations of high technology on the other hand. Besides conceptual inputs underlying my approach is the philosophy of working with live data of the individual in the organization and group settings. This experience has led me to look at training, especially that of women managers, in a different way from the traditional mode. This paper is an attempt to elucidate the approach for training. It also reviews the history, and perspective of development of management training in India.

INTRODUCTION

Formal management training as distinguished from technical training began in India and possibly other developing countries only in the last 25 years. It is in the post-independence era (1947) that India and many other third world countries developed their own plans for development. These plans laid heavy emphasis on industrial and technological development. Initially India set up institutes of higher learning of technology in the year 1952. It is only around 1962 the country realized the need of professionalisation of management. This realization led to establishment of institutes of management around 1962. With this formal management training as distinct from technical training became accepted and got institutionalised. The institutions of management along with the many other training facilities started a two-pronged movement. One was to train young graduates in management and the other was to provide training to existing managers who carried lot of experience.

While the need for formal management training was recognised by most management there was still lingering doubts about its practicability. True search was for tested tools for techniques and training. Furthermore,

the entry of newly trained professional managers in organizations which were largely populated by experienced managers with proven, track record precipitated many concerns in management. These professionally educated and oriented managers from management institutions spoke a language different than the superiors (experienced managers). The young professional managers brought to the organization concepts, techniques and skills of management which the employers sound but found it difficult to accept and or respond to. The two streams of managers found it difficult to converge and collaborate. Frequently this created barriers and conflicts in communication and performance.

In spite of all these barriers and difficulties management training in India today and also many developing countries has come to be identified as a critical and significant need for organizations to survive and sustain their efficiency and effectiveness. It is also now recognized that traditional management styles and leadership qualities are not viable enough for managing the organization interfaces within the organization and outside. Organizations need constructs, perspectives and orientations which are distinctly

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different from the traditional ones. It is more so in the current situation where opportunities of growth are immense and organizations beginning with small size can in 10 years time grow into mammoth and highly diversified ones. Another aspect of Indian organizations which makes managerial training essential is that often the same organization in its growth comes to manage diverse technologies, some as ancient as 1920 and some as current as 1980.

The question then is then what kind of training in India? In order to understand the changing pattern of training approach and departure to a different mode of training it is important to look back to see what kind of managerial training got promoted in India and developing countries.

Broadly speaking the training programmes can be categorized under three heads:

1. Conceptual Inputs
2. Functional Training
3. Behavioural Training

CONCEPTUAL TRAINING

Conceptual training was largely provided through general management programmes. These programmes developed specialized methodology and pedagogy. They used lecture discussion and heavy use of case method. This training and inputs exposed both the new trainees as well as experienced managers to a more consistent perspective of analysing management constitution and arriving at relevant decisions. Their attempt was to make management a more rational approach rather than leave it purely to intuitive insights of charismatic leadership.

FUNCTIONAL TRAINING

Functional training focused on special aspects of technology and techniques for each function of business. These programmes largely exposed managers to understand functions of finance, production, marketing and management systems and their application.

BEHAVIOURAL TRAINING

Behavioural training appeared to be a very diffused field. Initially it revolved around issues of motivation, communication, supervisory skills and inter personal behaviour. It was largely restricted to lower echelons

of management. It was felt that management basically means training in supervisory skills. Round about 1969 following the tradition of the West and emergence of new issues in management organizations started seeking training in resolving inter-departmental conflicts, restructuring organizations for better coordination and management of inter-independent multiple functions. Eventually, the organizations shifted to a whole series of Organization Development Programmes. This covered as wide a variety of approaches as MBO on one side to T groups on the other. The purpose of these programmes was to promote cooperation and collaboration, build teams and enhance managerial role effectiveness. Essentially, the scope of behavioural training in India has even today remained the same. However, there is also a feeling that most of these programmes come as a dose to stagnant set of people or stagnant situations. Training is either they are rewards or punishment. Training programmes with focus on behavioural inputs wake people up a little bit, make them sensitive to the complexity of the organization and environment, changing structures and formalization and need for changes in their behaviour. Some changes do take place as their cognitive maps acquire concepts of

formal systems. However, underlying the changes in the manifest behaviour the real issues of the organization remain latently active. One of the reasons that behavioural training has not been able to produce effective and enduring results is that these programmes are largely addressed to middle management. They are problem centered and are concerned with modifying individuals behaviour related to task interfaces in the organization.

Of late the scene of behaviour training in India has changed somewhat. There is a resurgence of going back to structural approach and an institutionalising of corporate planning procedures. Some organizations are now also exposing senior managers to training programmes. The programmes to which the senior managers are sent may deal with issues of leadership, authority and management of hierarchy, management of innovation and change, policy formulation and designing of organizations and finally issues of role taking. On the whole these training programmes are in the classical tradition. Most of the contents and technologies have been borrowed from western scene and this is natural as most of the developing countries have adopted organization structures, designs, management systems and technologies from the West.

Currently, there is an increasing awareness that behavioural training inputs to the senior managers also do not bring about desired and lasting changes. Like the middle managers both individuals and organizations very soon return to familiar and old modes of role-task transactions and performance. The question is why is training not bringing about enduring changes. The reason does not seem to lie either with individuals, organizations or training but elsewhere.

The behavioural training programmes are designed to manage the postulated interactions between the variables of the structures, task and technology adopted from the west. They do not cathect with the real transactions determined by the socio-cultural structure of the group or the individual identity. They remain active behind the manifest interaction determined by management systems and structures. Thus, the role making processes influenced by socio-cultural structure and role taking processes demanded by organization structure and systems are incongruent. This incongruence in my experience is further enhanced by the behavioural training programmes.

Very often these behavioural training programmes become good 'games'. They provide ready made stock knowledge as to what should be, given the universal

inherent and inevitable recurrent problems of individuals and organizations. However, internalization to bring about effective and enduring changes in role taking processes does not occur on the whole. The experiences of organizations, institutions and individual men and women managers of developing countries suggests that frontier tasks are designed, pioneering organizations and institutions are set up, and professionally trained personnel are identified. Over a period of time with initial enthusiasm the processes of many such organizations regress back to traditional modes of doing things, and the nature of relating to people and tasks get anchored in social structures and processes and the emergent structures and processes do not necessarily add to the dynamism and mobilisation of potentials of the individual and the organization. As such, behavioural training programmes need to be designed to cathect with the socio-cultural and psycho-cultural structure that the individuals in India and the developing countries carry with themselves. (Later in the paper I have dealt with this issue in the concept of emotive and cognitive maps of people and systems).

Women in Management

While management training programmes for women in terms of conceptual inputs and functional inputs can be identical with the programmes for men managers, the behavioural training programmes for women need to be specifically designed. The identity of conceptual and functional training lies in the fact that both men and women enter formal work organizations, perform task and functional roles, and occupy managerial status and positions. Both require inputs and updating of knowledge, attitudes and skills. As such, training is not only relevant but essential for both. A differentiated training for men and women at this level is not necessary.

However, my recommendation for women to be provided with specially designed behavioural training are manifold. Here I am only stating some of the salient and cogent aspects. (Before I present a note of caution. Just as women need to be provided with specially designed behavioural training so is there a need for specially designed behavioural training for men. Both require exploration of issues of role taking and identity crystallization anchored in socio-cultural and psycho-cultural structures and systems. However, the difference lies here that these explorations initially require space for single sex groups).

1. In practical terms women are late entrants in Indian organizations. Being a manager in a formal work setting is not a part of women's traditional role making processes. It is also not a location in the socio-cultural and psycho-cultural structure. In essence, women's entry in managerial world, is like the entry of any individual from a marginal group in the mainstream of a society. The dynamism of entry of culturally marginal people involves a lot of struggle about equating in authority and status, competence and credibility, performance and evaluation and finally success and rewards (promotion). The dominant group implicitly assumes or prescribes boundaries and limitations about marginal people. This is a universal phenomenon. The struggle of women after entry into the management world across cultures and countries is full of poignancy of this dynamics of marginality. The struggle of women's entry and growth in developing countries in many ways is similar and analogous with the women of the west they also have differences and special issues.

2. Women as bio-social entities and psycho-cultural identities have a very distinct and different world view as well as relatedness with their universe, people, structures and events of their life space. In their world view and relatedness sentient and task interdependences are intermeshed and get activated together in their transactions. Women find it difficult to fragment sentient and task interdependence into two distinct modalities. One must recognize that intermeshing of these two modalities of relatedness is not only a cultural heritage which women carry but is a psychological anchor of their identity.

Modern management and formal work organizations as institutionalized in the developing countries clearly underplays and devalues the sentient interdependence. It over focuses on task-interdependence. Women can perhaps be trained to locate themselves in and differentiate between the two modalities. However, currently they are anchored to hold the two modalities together. As such, training in role taking for women needs to take cognizance of this quality of relatedness.

3. In developing countries and specially in India socio-political ideology has pushed women in management and other formal work roles at a very fast pace. (A rough estimate suggests that thirty per cent of all managers which includes bureaucracy may be women in next five to ten years time). Economic requirements, educational accessibility and achievements, aspirations to create a meaning for themselves and an enhanced quality of life and finally occupational opportunities have pushed women to enter forbidden territories. These educated and professionally trained women have entered formal organizations ranging from private, government and multinationals. Women have become an integral part of banking and financial institutions, communication media, travel and Life Insurance Corporations. Increasingly a new generation of post-independence women are beginning to assert themselves to enter and climb the ladder of corporate sector of organizations.

However, like all other planning and strategies by planners which are done on matters of principle in developing countries no serious thinking or planning has been done for induction and integration of 'marginal'

people in management. Similarly, like many other ad hoc adoptions the training model across situations has been the attitude that 'pouring inputs there would be outputs'. This has left many a women grappling to define their roles in new settings and situations without enduring integration. It has created a live history in formal work settings of continued processes from social settings. Issues of discrimination have surfaced again and again.

When the organizations and management institutions designed and offered training programmes a whole set of men managers ranging from supervisory staff, middle managers, senior managers, and later corporate managers and chief executives participated. These programmes brought into the fore issues of men working with women subordinates, colleagues and superiors. In the training programmes either women were not present at all and if they were, in the minority of one or two or at best a few more.

In the management training programmes outside the organizations women were not sponsored at all. Women themselves were caught in their stereotypes and so were the organizations. To the women taking a job away from home into formal work setting was a major step in itself.

They were hesitant to leave their homes to go away for any duration of time for a training programme. Issue of home and children were the reasons. To organization it did not occur that women ought to be sent to training programmes. And if it did occur then it became an issue of investment. Training women would not bring adequate returns more so if the husband of the woman employee had a transferable job. It was inevitable that the woman would follow her husband.

As such women in initial phase of their entry took up marginal and infrastructural roles. They remained at the junior level of management and rarely reached middle management. They became stable employees and were predictable and reliable. With time larger and larger number of women entered the world of work. These women were educated intelligent, capable and competent. They could perform tasks and could take the roles of superiors, colleagues and subordinates. These were the women who crossed the level of junior management and in large numbers entered middle management. The transactions between men/women superior, colleague and subordinates not only increased but dysfunctionalities in transactions at work started to appear. It became necessary that the organization and managers ask some serious questions about men and women managers and their transactions.

A review of management training programmes where men and women managers have been simultaneously sponsored suggests that underlying all explorations and discussions there are four issues which recur frequently.

1. Distribution of power and authority. This may be in terms of socio-political power in the organization or authority at task level.
2. Role definitions. This involves issue of clarity, effectiveness, time allocation and priority setting for competing demands between different roles in the organization as well as society.
3. Quality of membership. This area brings up issues of discrimination, deprivation, differential treatment of people in terms of different levels of management, sex, class or caste.
4. Issues of location in the system. This involves concerns about distribution of tasks. Tasks may be mainstream tasks or support services, mobility, promotion and finally acceptance by colleagues and subordinates.

Training programmes designed organizationally or by management institutions focusing on conceptual inputs, functional or attitudinal training end up revolving

around the four core issues. Men and women tend to focus on historical residues of unplanned entry of women in management as well as on the manifest interactions determined by structures and systems. The real issues of role taking processes anchored in identity of men and women are rarely dealt with.

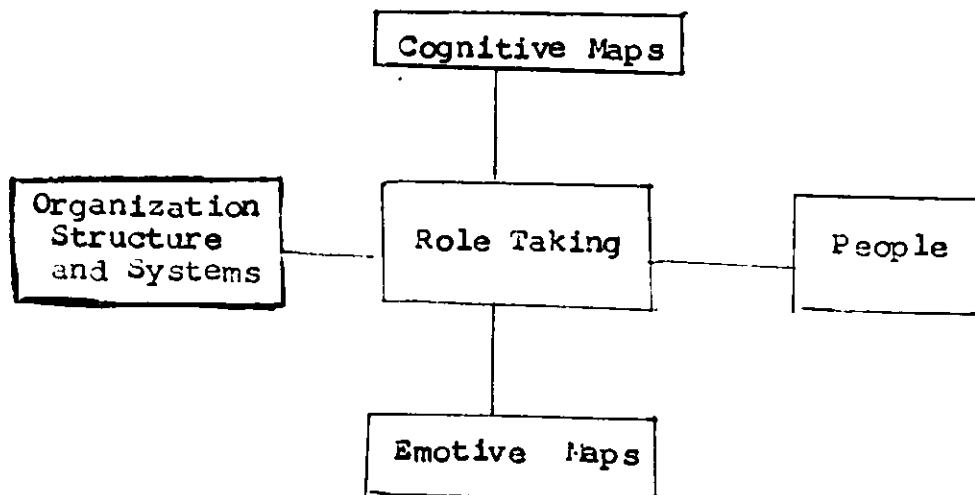
Organizations usually expect that employees would perform their role/tasks with functional attitudes. However, people at the top are as much subject to deeply embedded cultural attitudes as other managers are. Their own relatedness with women is often grounded in prevalent attitudes of the social system. In training programmes most of these deeply embedded cultural attitudes both of men and women managers surface frequently. Women participants often document how the expectations of behaviour and reality of interactions create contradictory situations. The process tends to reinforce their social stereotypes. Deeply held evaluations and judgements of men and women's role are often articulated in these training programmes.

My experiences of working with both men and women managers in mixed groups as well as single sex groups suggest that behind all the rational and functional ethos promoted by organizations, the actual behaviour at work is dominantly determined by the cultural and social factors.

The role taking processes grounded in the relationship of individuals and their collectivity are also influenced by the cultural and social factors. This can be represented schematically as follows.

Figure 1

Relatedness of Cognitive and Emotive
Maps in Role Taking



As such, role taking processes in organizations get finally determined by the interplay of forces of cognitive and emotive maps.

Societies in socializing people for membership in the primary system emphasize emotive maps. In fact through late adolescence most individual in developing societies are reinforced by socialization processes in operating with their emotive maps. Their entry in work situation confronts them with altogether a different set of cognitive maps. They have been made aware of them through knowledge but have not been called upon consistently to act from them. This context of their growing up becomes source of many problems of which behavioural training is sought for. As I said before in case of women managers this operational condition is more intense and critical.

My experience then of behavioural training for women managers need to handle three levels of data and social assumptions of role taking.

1. Cultural and social assumptions of role taking,
2. Organizational assumptions of role taking, and
3. Identity patterns available among people.

All these three factors need to be explored for determining the design and inputs of behavioural training programmes. A further consideration of these factors would also suggest that at women and men some point of time women need a separate and exclusive to explore issues of role taking in organizations.

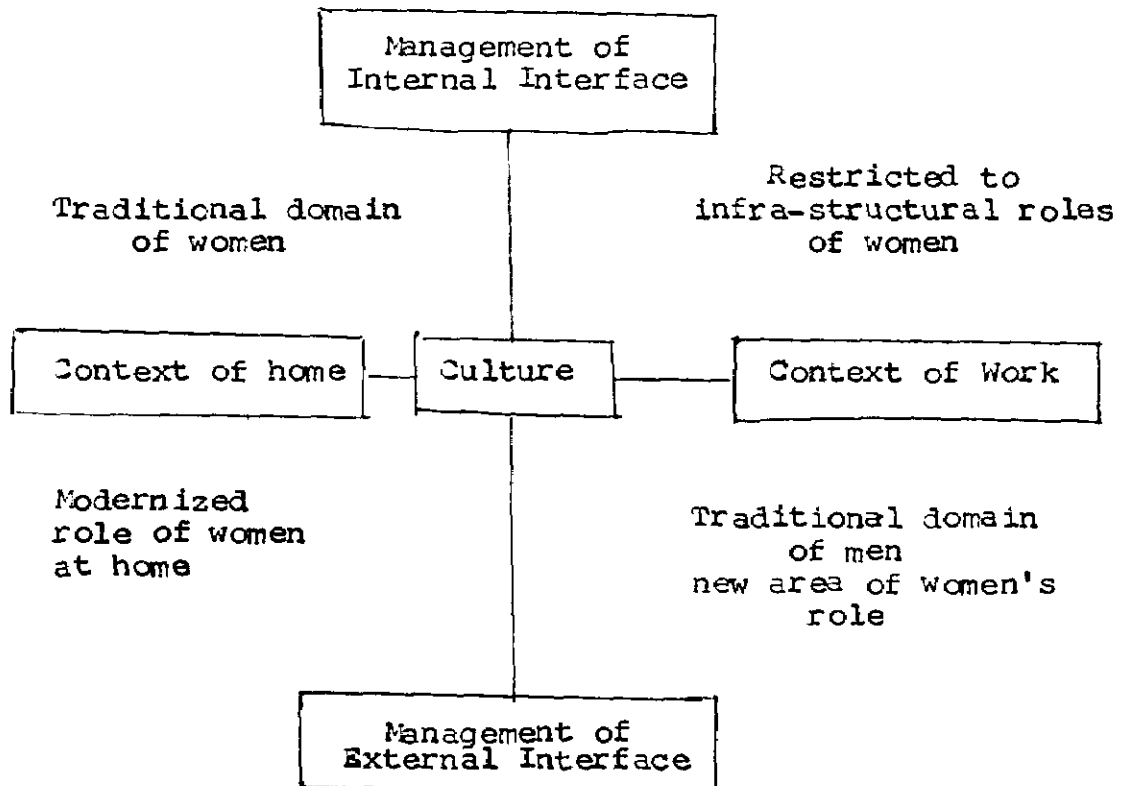
1. Cultural and Social Assumptions of Role Taking

Traditionally in the Indian social context men and women's role have been differentiated. Men have been allocated engagements with the interface of external environment, while women have engaged with the internal interface of home and family. This scenario has been part of Indian socio-cultural context for centuries. However, in the rural sector women have been an integral part of family work in the fields. As such, women's entry into rural and agricultural work settings has not generated many issues.

Women's entry into formal work settings of industry and trade is a distinct departure from tradition. Here the woman enters as a professional and as an individual on her own to manage the external interface of work without being a member of a family team. The life space of women managers and professionals unlike their rural counterpart gets fragmented into two distinct locations.

One location is that of home and family while the other is of organization with its formal and functional role taking. The boundaries of each location places its unique demands on the woman.

In many training programmes women managers have stated that the interface of home and work in the life of women is often a point of contention. Men managers and organizations both see the duality of this interface as a handicap in the woman's commitment to work. In many organizations promotion and advancement of women, their deployment into mainstream of work and investment of training in them is discouraged because of the belief that the home interface is more important for women than work. Having entered the work situation the interplay of these two interfaces and loci of role creates pulls and pushes of expectations in relationships. It generates stress. It forces women to make choices define priorities and set goals. Figure two schematically represents the transition in role taking for women.

Figure 2Cultural Differentiation in Role Taking

What the industrialization and education has done is to create a flux where women enter that external interface which was earlier the exclusive domain of men. Women's entry and the inevitable role taking in the formal organization setting has brought in social, political and legal actions for inclusion of women as equal partners without discrimination either for jobs, wages and other aspects. It is assumed and hoped this would bind the cultural processes. But it does not.

Cultural and social assumptions of social life had men working alone and in isolation for a large

part of the day. They came together in groups for social togetherness for occasional community tasks. Whereas women lived and worked in groups at home/neighbourhoods. Industrialization/urban living has reversed this traditional setting. Organizations require men to work in groups and women have to live isolated in urban communities. This setting does not permit formation of social ambience of togetherness. As such, infrastructures of community life have collapsed. This in itself has created issues of wholesomeness and meaning for both men and women.

Organizational Assumptions of Role Taking

As women enter work settings they are confronted with issues of task allocation, responsibility and accountability, authority vis-a-vis male superiors/subordinates/colleagues, and finally with issues of professionalism in their role taking.

My experience suggests that training programmes for women besides content and techno-informative knowledge and skill building must lay a heavy emphasis on creating settings where women could explore in depth the interplay the push and pull, the conflict and compulsions of this unique context of entry into business. Training programmes must provide legitimate opportunity which is

denied by society and very often blocked by organizations. In these training settings women could examine and explore social stereotypes they have internalized, review their own identity configuration, own up legitimacy and affirmation of their own locus in life, and make a realistic appraisal of their self worth, value and contribution. It is only then that women can join men and jointly take up challenging tasks to create effective and efficient organization.

Women who are entering new roles need the above opportunity. They need to generate security and conviction. And this has been denied by the interplay of cultural assumptions and the introjections that men and women bring to organizations. Women more so than men have to depend on their own resources to value and assess their strength and positives, their offerings and investments on the one side and their negatives, evaluations, fears and anxieties of ravagement and exploration. Without a candid exploration of these within the setting of their own kind it becomes difficult for women to free their psychic energy to back up their legitimate roles in organizations and systems. They have to be partners in creating new ethos and not recipients only of the ethos created by forces of circumstances.

Without having had this opportunity women who go into other settings get driven into rebellion, defiance and into the current sloganism of equality, freedom and justice. This process only makes them repeat the history of living by comparative frames with men and as such remaining victims of traditional ethos.

Carried over from the social and cultural assumptions most organizations and men find it difficult to act in their role with a certain degree of freedom. They are not accepted in the same spirit as a male colleague even when some women take up transferable jobs, travel, alone and with colleagues, be part of policy and strategy formulation and carry extensive responsibilities, there is hesitation.

However, a large number of women themselves find difficult to break through the cultural assumptions of role taking. They accept legitimacy of their jobs but find it difficult to take link and corporate responsibility. They find it difficult to hold a comprehensive perspective of the organization and end up being only performers. They also find it difficult to exercise legitimate authority functionally over male subordinates. Similarly male superiors or colleagues find it equally

difficult to accept women as superiors and colleagues. In this process women experience doubts about their self-worth and their lack of value. They seem to have a dubious location both at home and at work. This creates insecurity as well as doubts of legitimacy of having space.

There is hardly any space within the home setting or within the context of organization where women can explore and deal with issues of self-worth, valuing themselves and experience within and among themselves about partnership of space, ownership and belonging.

Identity Patterns

The social cultural processes provide women age old symbolic role models for their identity. These role models anchor women in discovering their meanings through relationships. They idealize women who sacrifice themselves for relationships and glorify women who live for the family, home and husband. Women holding these identity models hold the cultural continuity, family stability, value consistency as and live by being the context for the family. Entering into new roles in organizations to operate in distinct settings of work away from home, confronts women with

issues of managing, coping and struggling with cross-currents and pulls and pushes between familial and cherished roles and their own aspirations, each woman struggles alone and in isolation.

The cultural and social assumptions, the organizational modalities and identity models hold women in ambivalence, immobility and frozenness at one level and make them defiant, assertive and rebelling at another level. There are no settings or processes which could facilitate women to define appropriate role taking for the times. Caught with the above turmoil within, women struggle with guilt of self choice and aspirations. They struggle for autonomy and fear the social stigma, isolation and loneliness. Infrastructural support from both the family and work setting is often not available. Society provides very little space, time and opportunity to reflect on history and cultural processes, dimensions of work, explore and understand, and what is happening to women and their role taking in the changing context of both social and work realities. This process is often inhibited or blocked.

It is therefore essential that training programmes where women can come to terms with issues of social roles, emotive and cognitive maps of people and systems in order to discover new role dimensions of work and organizational settings are designed. Women need to positively experience their legitimacy in settings of work, experience the partnership in growth and development, actively make choices for shaping their lives and simultaneously respond to multiple roles.

Such training programmes can only serve the fundamental need of women today i.e. the need to define and acquire a consistent perspective, a new world view and a vision which is anchored in essential dignity of their being and the legitimacy of their being persons of value, and having the privilege of claiming space for taking initiative. The formation of this perspective, world view and a vision is a pre-requisite for significant and meaningful internalization of techniques, tools and skills for effective and efficient management. Without such perspective world view and a vision tools, techniques and skills would merely be manipulative in the long run undermine organizations. Without such a perspective women will remain open to the narrowing doubts about their location and continue to suspect their legitimacy.

Like a worm these doubts and lack of convictions will eat the substantiveness of management processes and roles itself.

Personally, I believe that any training programme which emphasizes only tools, techniques and skills only overloads the woman with burden because she cannot bring convictions into their implementation. These tools, techniques and skills then would be used by women for manipulating their own survival and not for the benefit of the system. In my experience even the men managers have done the same. This is more so in settings of developing countries. It raises the question-training for whom and for what. I am convinced that training should be for building a new ethos of management also rather than only form, teaching management practices which may be highly irrelevant to socio-cultural context of role taking.

It is only with this component of training that frees the individual from captivity of stereotypes. It begins a new process of socialization and institutionalization of roles and role processes. Once the awakening is begun that choices can be made without guilt, priorities can be made without fear, objectives

can be set without neglect and that roles can be played without sacrifice and constant compromise chances are organization health will be fostered, and role taking will enhance the dignity of both men and women.
