

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT - PHILOSOPHICAL PRELUDE

As educators and managers know development and growth, of both individuals and institutions, is usually bounded and hence constrained by the “present” and hence not likely to be as fast as one would like it to be. This also enables absorption of the “new” to integrate.

Organizational Development (OD) is the gradual process of strengthening an organization, in depth, and in all respects, to enable better realization of its intent through enhanced fulfillment of the vision, consequential goals and objectives. Continuous development enables us to provide better services to those who depend on us. In the context of a school, it is very crucial to do so because small, growing up children, with great aspirations are depending on us and their parents are looking up to us after entrusting their children.

All-round organizational development focused upon qualitative improvements enhances not only what an institution can offer and how it can offer, but also, when attempted on a sustained basis, it brings about an ever-enriching community with larger economic value addition. The process of education is perhaps an end in itself.

How do we determine what to improve in all that happens in a school? How does one approach this subject so that we attempt the same in a proper perspective?

One possible starting point could be to view the matter within the content and context of the particular school. We could understand what the present state of the school is and what potential is available or given by the context. The other could be to view the matters from outside. We outlined these two approaches below briefly.

1. *EMERGENT DEVELOPMENT (FROM THE INTRINSIC AND INHERENT)*: An appraisal of the state of an organization, with reference to certain key indicators and parameters, emerging out of the intent and purpose could be a starting point. In other words, we ascertain the collective sociological, professional, values, competencies etc., which would determine the direction we are moving in. We understand these collective strengths and nurture them so that certain unique features sprout and become distinguishable to the community outside. In “modern” parlance, these emergent features are termed as the USP (Unique Selling Proposition.) *It may be that the inadequate understanding of the acronym and its genesis, in present times, is the cause for USPs not to be developing with an intensity, which we can identify as uniqueness of individuals or institutions.*

In the recent past, the Staff and Human Development endeavor at Kanpur School had been to identify the potential of individuals and nurture them, from where they are, so that we enhance our competencies and contribute thoughtfully, with increasing energy. We have also been providing special opportunities for the more competent by providing better and richer scope for contribution.

The collective unique *nesses* are the base of an institution at any given point. With continuous staff and teacher development, this collective strength can, unquestionably gather momentum. When development stems from the collective capacities, we nourish the grains of the institution, and a stronger, and sustainable, intrinsic development is likely to happen. As it is rooted *in the*

within it may have no limits to growth. This would also call for much lesser supervision, monitoring and “management”.

2. *EXTRINSICALLY DRAWN*: Quite a different approach would be to determine the needs and expectations of the *served* based on which we plan the path and process of development. The approach so determined should be able to fulfill the aspirations and expectations of the served better. However, a question one could keep in mind is how “wise” the expectations of the served are for the short-term and long-term well-being of the students and of the school? To what extent would those expectations be applicable over the longer time spans that an institution exists and serves? How feasible is it for the institution to move on the path required, given its collective capacities? If there is a difference between the capacities called for extrinsically and that available, how will a school bridge the gap? If it cannot, and the gap persists, what kinds of consequences are likely to emerge? How will the organization sense the gaps? To what extent can and to what extent will an organization be able to respond to the demands, and to do that, to what extent can a school absorb the inputs one might decide to provide from the outside?

At times, due to the gap between the needs of the external, and the internal state, there could be certain kinds of blocked energies, in the form of *stresses and strains*. Often an externally originated blueprint requires much more intelligent and perceptive ways of managing than an intrinsically evolving process. We may see the unfavorable consequences much later, especially in forms, which one cannot distinguish, and at that time, one may not be able to trace them to the initial causes. The energy required for the external inputs to bear fruits will require more efforts than what internally generated developmental momentum would. The difference between the external requirement and internal supply could become the basis for emanation of vitality or it could lead to a loss of energy in an organization.

To us it appears that an intrinsically emergent developmental approach lends itself better for continuous improvement of the processes, resulting in better outcomes. On the contrary, processes, designed outside of an institution, may not be absorbed and assimilated naturally. Hence, they will require more monitoring and external thrust to “push” them in into the organization.

It helps if educational leaders and administrators of schools will be cognizant of the above aspects, as a backdrop, so that we know the implications of the paradigm we choose. Having an appropriate “mind,” one that is discerning, on such important determinants, is helpful to finalize both developmental goals and the approach.