

TO STUDY THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SENSITIVITY TRAINING IN ORGANISATION

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ABSTRACT

Organizations are basically comprised of individuals recruited to achieve goals of the organization. Ideal and most effective achievement of objectives is when all these individuals are focused and oriented in this direction. In other words the behavior of individuals influences the behavior of the organization or in-short Organizational Behavior towards achievement of preset objectives.

HRD is concerned with orientation of individual behavior to focus and direct towards achievement of corporate goals. In practice it is seen individuals have their own objectives to achieve which if not oriented or directed can cause conflicts resulting in weakening of Corporate goal.

An empirical study was conducted on sample size of 80 selected through random sampling process. The effectiveness is studied at two levels a) Personal & Professional and Intrapersonal i.e. 360° perspective b) Reaction Level- Learning & Application. 65% of population responded. The observation – Age has no barrier to change. Even though the training does not have any direct impact on the profits it has been observed that there is a sure positive change in the cordial working relation between the members of the organization leading to better productivity and fulfillment of organizational goals.

KEYWORDS: “Sensitivity Training”, “learning & Development”, OD, HRD

INTRODUCTION

WHY SENSITIVITY TRAINING?

The faculties of sensitivity training institute are engaged in applying their knowledge and skill to the well being of persons, organizations, communities and society at large. Its members are independent consultants, trainers & counselors and academicians and HRD experts and community change agents. Their programs focus on human processes and aim at helping people to understand themselves better and also discover more creative and satisfying ways of relating and working with others as a group. The main training method used by sensitivity training institutes is experience based learning which involves the trainees in experiencing reflecting, hypothesizing conceptualizing and experimenting rather than lectures. They also offer programs

to develop professionals capable of facilitating such experience based learning to be used in organizational and social contexts.

Expectation from the training programme who underwent the training was that the people are helped to increase their ability to :-

- a. Sense the reactions of others to their behavior
- b. Sum up the behavior of others and the group on themselves. Behave appropriately & effectively in various interpersonal situations such as different ways of communicating, making decisions, handling conflicts in groups and obtaining co-operation. It also expects to expose the trainees and modify certain values held by typical executives values which if not modified will impair interpersonal effectiveness.
- c. The training itself was characteristic in the sense it isolates the trainees from their work situation, gave equal participation in leadership by all group members as peers. The experiments start with a dilemma, no planned agenda nor any rule or procedures were imposed, old values were unfrozen, new values are developed and frozen.

INTRODUCTION TO SENSITIVITY TRAINING / LABORATORY / T GROUP PROCEDURES AND ADVANTAGES

Most of us are not aware of our behavior in our daily life and the way others perceive our behaviors. During this training the participants are left together in a room and are allowed to interact with each other just as the way we start interacting in our neighborhood, office.

The members are encouraged to experiment with their behaviors, offer feedbacks both on negative and positive so that they can change based on the feedback offered. The member can try out the new behavior and also can experience if he is more / less satisfied with the new behavior and its consequences.

This training emphasizes on the fact that each of us have the ability to offer solutions to any problems and there need not be a person with authority only to solve problems. It helps bring about confidence in the person to deal with day to day problems.

As the program is unstructured and highly informal setting, the participants learn how to tolerate ambiguity to see and examine their own behavior in this kind of a setting, and then finally to make some sense out of what has occurred are some of the ways in which T groups help people learn how to learn."

It encourages team spirit as each member learns from the others and vice-versa. This helps everyone to appreciate the potential contributions of the other team members.

SENSITIVITY TRAINING FROM ORGANIZATIONAL POINT OF VIEW:

Organizations comprise of people who interact and benefit from such training. The goals of an organization are related to increased production or higher profits margins. Sensitivity training heightens the awareness of hidden, but complex barriers that could have an influence on job performance, productivity, safety, employee retention, health, and quality customer service.

It is an orientation towards group dynamics as it is one of OD intervention process by which organizations educate themselves in order to achieve better problem-solving capabilities. Organizational development places more of its focus on becoming aware of one's role within work-place dynamics, leading to more effective group functioning as one of the traits of sensitivity training.

FOLLOWING ARE THE VARIOUS INSTITUTES IN INDIA WHICH PROVIDE SENSITIVITY TRAINING:

Year of Initiation	Individual / Institution	Focus Area
1971	Indian Society for Applied Behavioural Science (ISABS)	NTL approach: Intra personal, Interpersonal, and Group Processes-based Sensitivity Training
1979	Indian Society for Individual and Social Development (ISISD)	Departure: Role and Identity-based Sensitivity training Broader Perspective Including Mythology, Existential, Eastern, Phenomenological, and Relativist Philosophies
1996	Aastha	Role and Identity-based Sensitivity Training - Focus on Educational Sector.
1996	Sumedhas: The Academy of Human Context	Role and Identity-based Sensitivity Training – Invitation Rather Than Confrontation and Unfolding of Self in its Wholeness

THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

Many organizations irrespective of the industry have been sending their employees to Sensitivity Training programme for some years. In order to further strengthen the behavioral competencies or understand the applicability of their learning's in organizations or of the participants (irrespective of their role in their present job). A research is being carried out in Project based Organisation to study the impact of their participation in such programme.

3) EVALUATION OF THE STUDY

The Effectiveness of this Impact is studied at two Levels.

3.1) First Level - Learning:

- Personal & professional (in relation to his/her family, relative, friends, Superior, Colleagues, Subordinates & Clients) and
- Intrapersonal (Self)

3.2) Second Level - Behavior [reaction Level]

- The evaluation of improvement in behavior after the application of the learning to Personal & Professional (in relation to his/her family, relative, friends, Superior, Colleagues, Subordinates & Clients) and
- The evaluation of improvement in Intrapersonal & Interpersonal Behavior (Sensitivity towards self and others)

4) DESIGN OF RESEARCH:

4.1) Objective of the study:

- Self- Insight (from the perspective of participants)
- To determine from the accomplices the learning improvement in relation to Interpersonal and Intrapersonal behavior.
- To seek the applicability of the learning's in their personal / official life i.e.360° perspective.
- To elicit suggestions from participant the means to sustain their learning's for a long-term benefit from the program.

4.2) Methodology used:

- Sample of 80 respondents were selected through a random sampling process amongst the participants based on wide spectrum of hierarchy within the organization both vertical & horizontal out of mall the participants who attended the program. The participants for this program itself were based on specific recommendations by the Immediate Superior who felt that sensitivity training intervention would be necessary for the modification of behavior of these selectees.
- A questionnaire was designed to elicit the above information and was pre tested on a small sample of five staff that attended the program. Based on the feedback from the respondents in pre testing the questionnaire was modified a final version was frozen.

4.3) Data Collection:

- The questionnaire was mailed to 80 participants. To ensure reliable responses, names were not insisted.

5) FINDINGS

Findings & Analysis of responses received:

About 65 % responses were received against of 80 members who were mailed the questionnaire. The responses received were analyzed and the findings are presented below.

5.1) Personal Level with respect to their relationship with their family, relatives and friends.

• **Learning**

Based on the responses received to the questionnaire, it is noted that the respondents improved on the following dimensions:

- Intrapersonal –Sensitivity towards self
- Sensitivity towards people around / large system
- Emotional mellowness (coping feelings-expressing)
- Interpersonal relationships

• **Behavioral /Application**

Table-1: The following exhibit demonstrates the number of respondents who stated a significant learning from participation against each of the dimensions and application of those learning which had shown subsequent improvement in their behavior. The table also shows the number of persons who were able to apply the learning’s in their personal life.

Table: 1 – Personal Learning & Behavioral Implementation

Sl.No.	Dimensions	Learning’s	Implementation
1	Self – Insight	14	7
2	Understanding towards large Groups/system	36	17
3	Emotional maturity (feelings-expressing & coping)	25	14
4	Interpersonal relationships	40	29

It’s evident from the above table that the applicability of learning to their job except for the dimension “Self-Insight” i.e. “Sensitivity towards Self” where is marginal less when compared to other dimension – Understanding/Sensitivity towards large system / groups, Emotional maturity (feelings-expressing & coping), Interpersonal relationships.

The probable reason for this is listed in the conclusion part of the paper

5.2) Professional Level with respect to their superior, colleagues/peer, subordinates & clients

Table -2: Similarly in the following exhibit the number of respondents had significant learning's in their professional life as well. The details are presented in the following table .

Table-2: Professional Learning

Sl.No.	Dimensions	Learning's
1	Communication	13
2	Listening	6
3	Confrontation	10
4	Relationship	23
5	Team building	8
6	Sensitivity towards self	11
7	Sensitivity towards Large system	22
8	Coping/Emotional maturity	14
9	Decision making	7

It is noted that the impact of their learning is high in dimensions like - relationships, sensitive towards Large system; moderate learning has been seen in aspects like - coping/Emotional maturity, communication and confrontation and marginal less in the case of team building, decision Making abilities and listening.

Professional - Behavioral / Application Level with Superior:

67% of the population i.e. (35 respondents out of 52) stated that they are able to apply their learning's in their relationship with superiors and thus improvement in relationship in the following ways:

- Give breathing space to one another
- Listening to other person the point view
- Effective communication by able to confront in a positive manner.
- Empathizing the pressure of superiors
- Able to relate with superior by sharing & expressing their feelings
- Participating in decision-making.

Application of Learning in interactions with Colleagues/ Peer

71% of the respondents stated that (37 respondents out of 52) they are to apply their leanings during interaction with peers and thus improved relationship in the following ways:

- Empathizing with them and becoming more open to receive ideas from them.
- Listening & helping them to aerate their feelings.
- Team work which improved their working relationship.
- Sharing and connecting with one another
- Coping with issues and also providing space to the other person/person's.

Application of Learning in interactions with Subordinates and thus improved relationship

67% respondents stated that (35 out of 52) were applying their leanings during interaction with their team mates in the following ways:

- Encouraging the subordinates
- Understanding and listening to their problems has improved the relationship and also the productivity of work.
- Relating and sharing with subordinate
- Relationship improved by receiving and giving feedback
- Winning & willing to trust their team mates.

Application of Learning in interactions with Customer and thus improved relationship

60% respondents stated that (31 out of 52) they are to apply their leanings during interface with Clients in the following ways:

- Looking at issues from customer angle leading to significant improvement in relationship.
- Develop clarity and frankness in their dealings.
- Improved communication leading to healthy relationship with their clients.
- Welcoming customers outlook rather than making it a battle of egos
- Hearing customer issues & responding in time.

5.3) Inimitable Experience from the Human Laboratory Process: The training being an experiential learning lead to some of the unique experiences by the participants which is stated by the members is quoted in their own words as follows:

- As I get preoccupied by the past most of the time, it is a unique experience of focusing on "here & now".
- This is the unique experience that couldn't be narrated. To be experienced practically.
- There were so many plus points in me which I never knew, but during the course of interaction with group members I was told about my strengths and my weaknesses as the group observed Openly expressing feelings & being emotional in front of strangers

- Understanding issue with emotional maturity
- Environment of togetherness & friendship
- Able to form a cohesive team caring and trusting each other was amazing
- Enemies becoming friends is unbelievable
- Never thought about myself so intensely
- Become aware of my behavior has helped my interpersonal relationship with others
- The whole process gave a big boost to my self-confidence. It gave an occasion to understand my behavioral pattern, though some of the aspects came as a surprise to me
- Interpersonal issue got resolved after the program.
- Self Exploration
- We were put in different contrast. The group was called as T-group. There were diverse contributions from the members like aggression, arbitrate, asking opinion, giving opinion, poses the problems, proposing actions, autocrat etc.
- The just 10 members of the group had more than 10 visions, problems, methods and behavior.
- I had difficulty in establishing relationship with unknown persons and to get connected with them. After attending this human lab I'm able to connect with lot of people from different industries who attended this lab.
- I am a comfortable man today in handling such situation and my fear fiasco has vanished
- I could just quote here that the program helped some of the members including me come closer to their family members as it emphasized on the need to communicate/express our feelings more often to our dear ones. We generally take our relations for granted and do not believe in expressing our feelings/gratitude to our parents/spouse. In course of the program, 1-2 members were asked to talk to their parents and share how much they care for them. This really unwounded them. Most of the members shared about their lives in a very open manner and the lab helped them take an objective view of the situation

- Most of employee in my organization believed on this process and we all practice philosophy of here and now. We have drastic changes in organization after training in T group. All staff becomes more open with each other. Increased level of trust. Staff started taking responsibility with authority. We are initiated process of decentralization.
- CRY for your requirement and create a bonding relationship.

6. **SUGGESTION:** The following are the suggestions given by the respondents on sustaining their learning:

6.1) **Criterion for recommendation:** The participant's response on the beneficiary of this programme could be useful for all individuals above the age of 18 irrespective of their profession who need to know how they are being perceived by others & it also creates lot of self-awareness.

6.2) **Sustaining learning's:**

- The suggestion could only be the constant application of the learning's in day to day life. As I have not been consistently doing it, this is a suggestion to my own self to start with.
- Should train all people then only it can be more effective. The training Program is good but is not fully applied in reality since society, friends, seniors are not involved. To make it more effective all levels of middle Management and above to attend.
- Someone who has been trained in this type of lab needs to be available as "mentor" in our organization; it will help us in sorting out few things so that continual improvement will happen.
- To make the total process more effective the suggestion as follows:
 - Total change of cultures of the organization.
 - Judging the feeling and emotions of individual on the merit of expression rather the merit of the individual.
 - Everybody's feelings and emotions should be given importance.
- As I have undergone long back and because of work pressure the benefit what I got may be 20%. For still better result there should be a regular (say once in two months or so) regional meet. This will help in developing more confidence and understanding over own human beings
- We ought to work out to make the program more focused and effective.

- In the program that I attended the effort was more to exhibit the knowledge of the moderator and less to interact & help the participants. The participants have limited knowledge of behavior subject and the terms used by the coordinators.
- “It creates an impression in the minds of the participants that the program is for sitting & preaching in ivory towers & not for behavioral training in a stress full, fast moving world.”
- “Duration of the program can be reduced.”

7. LIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH:

- The limitation of this research is that statically analysis could not be carried out because emotions cannot be quantified.

8. CONCLUSION:

- However based on the responses it can be concluded that there is a positive impact on the behavior of participants. They were able to apply their learning in interactions both in their official work life and also in their personal life.
- The sensitivity training cannot find any direct impact on increasing the revenue for the organization. This program definitely will bring about positive change in the working relation between members of the organization which leads to better productivity, cordial working relationship and this will lead to fulfillment of organizational goals. The benefits the organization received from the trainees after they undergo the sensitivity training:
 - Self esteem of the individual officers was boosted and hence their confidence level to deliver and manage the work allocated to them is better and more professional then before.
 - Better value experience to the work allocated to the trained person.
 - Motivated others working with them for more professional and value based activities.
- The biggest challenge for the trainee is to change the behavior i.e. transfer the Learning’s to work place/ Personal life. The myth that old habit seldom change has been proved wrong. Change is possible at any Age provided the recipients are aware of their behavior and wish to change voluntarily.
- It has been observed from the report that some of the participants had attended the Lab some years ago. They are still applying the learning’s from the lab in their day to day activities.

- A longitudinal research can be carried out to study whether behavioral modification has occurred by seeking feedback from “significant others” of participants both at office and home.

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