



Volume 27/Number 4  
October-December 2002

# Vikalpa The Journal for Decision Makers

---

*Perspectives*

**New Trends in Sensitivity Training in Organizations**

*Indira J Parikh and S Jeyavelu*

---

Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, India

# vikalpa

The Journal for Decision Makers

<b>Contents</b>		
<i>Thanks to Reviewers</i>		2
<i>Editorial</i>		4
<i>Perspectives</i>		5
New Trends in Sensitivity Training in Organizations	<i>Indira J Parikh S Jeyavelu</i>	
<b>Research Articles</b>		
Management of Claims and Reimbursements: The Case of Mediclaim Insurance Policy	<i>Ramesh Bhat Elan Benjamin Reuben</i>	15
Corporate Finance Practices in India: A Survey	<i>Manoj Anand</i>	29
Efficiency of Thermal Power Plants in India	<i>K R Shanmugam Praveen Kulshreshtha</i>	57
<b>Notes</b>		69
Role of Information Systems in Banks: An Empirical Study in the Indian Context	<i>A M Rawani M P Gupta</i>	
<b>Management Case</b>		75
Victor Brand	<i>Simon George</i>	
<b>Diagnoses</b>		85
BHP Limited: Risk Management Strategy	<i>Sidharth Sinha</i>	
BHP Limited and Integrated Risk Management Framework	<i>Ajay Pandey</i>	
Issues in Risk Mangement Strategies in BHP Limited	<i>Sankarshan Basu</i>	
<b>Book Reviews</b>		91
Global Business Management in an International Economic Environment	<i>Atmanand</i>	
By Adhikary, Manab		
Strategic Management: Concepts and Cases	<i>T Ravichandran</i>	
By Thompson, Jr. and Strickland, A J		
Driven: How Human Nature Shapes Our Choices	<i>Sanjyot Pethe</i>	
By Lawrence, Paul R and Nohria, Nitin		
Ecology and Economics	<i>Hitesh A Solanki</i>	
By Sengupta, Ramprasad		
<b>Abstracts</b>	<i>Mitali Sarkar</i>	103
<b>Index to Volume 27</b>		123
Guidelines for Authors		127

## New Trends in Sensitivity Training in Organizations

Indira J Parikh and S Jeyavelu

Sensitivity Training (ST) is a process through which an individual explores the journey of human existence to ask some basic questions about life, relationships, interface across many roles, and purpose of one's own life. ST has many forms; each form has its own philosophies. This paper traces the historical roots of ST in the West and the developments and innovations in its applications in India. The Indian and Western forms of ST differ in the content, process, and the underlying philosophies. This paper compares the two perspectives of ST with the differences in application in organizations. The Role and Identity Approach (RIA) can be applied in organizations through unstructured sensitivity training labs, semi-structured labs, and structured workshops. Unstructured labs are those that are called as personal growth labs, explorations in roles and identity, interpersonal labs and so on. Semi-structured labs include interface labs, leadership labs, self-renewal labs, and visioning and co-creating labs. Structured workshops address managerial and leadership roles, team building and building a cross-functional team, integrating emotional intelligence across multiple roles and systems, managing cross-cultural diversity, interpersonal and group dynamics, and dynamic equilibrium between personal and professional lives.

*Indira J Parikh is a member of the faculty in the Organizational Behaviour Area of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.*

*e-mail: indira@iimahd.ernet.in*

*S Jeyavelu is a Doctoral Student in the Organizational Behaviour Area of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.*

*e-mail: jeyavelu@iimabd.ernet.in*

This paper is a revised version of the paper presented at the India HRD Congress held in Mumbai between 31st January and 1st February, 2002.

### Introduction

Sensitivity Training (ST) is a process through which an individual explores the journey of existence to ask some basic questions about life, life space, role space, relationships, nature of relationships, nature of interface across many roles, relationships, and spaces and above all questions about the purpose of one's own life. Human beings are the only species who ask questions about themselves, who look into the mirror and like or dislike themselves, the person, the role, and the identity of the image that looks back at them. They are also the only species who reflect upon the nature of the world they encounter and their relationship with the world. This process of search for answers to questions about the inner world and the outer world and the relationship between them is the core around which ST builds its anchors. It has many forms; each form has its own philosophies and underlying assumptions about the individual, collectivity, the relationship between the individual and the collectivity, and the world. Similarly, each form has its own meanings of the individual, collectivity, the world, and the dynamic interplay between these. Each era, each decade, each century, and each millennium provides a context in which the human beings in many ways explore and redefine the meaning of their lives and redesign the nature of relationships amongst themselves and collectivities.

In the last century, technology changed the way we lived and industrialization changed the way we worked. Two world wars, the creation and the use of atom bombs, partition, and the proxy cold war and the resultant destruction and human trauma created the context for the emergence of many forms of group work to respond to the human tragedies and sorrows and the accompanying meaninglessness and emptiness.

In the beginning of this decade, century, and millennium, the earthquake in Gujarat on January 26th, the unleashing of terror against the US on September 11th, and the bombing of Indian Parliament on December 13th have left their

irremovable scars in the collective psyche of human beings in general and specifically of Indians and Americans.

Besides the scars of the collective psyche from natural and man-made disasters, the scars of an individual from the past of the family, growing up experiences, and the encounter with the first experiences at work have an impact on the individual psyche. Human beings carry both the baggage and the heritage from the collective, society, family, organization, and relationships that are part of the process of growth.

Presently, each individual, community, collectivity, and the nation is encountering dramatic shifts in roles, relationships, and expectations from individuals, families, organizations, and society. In the family, the family structure, the role of women and men, and parenting are dramatically changing. Education and diversity of education is creating immense opportunities for both women and men. The workforce demography is changing. Gender ratio, age distribution, cultural diversity, and increasing number of women in workforce are creating new dynamics of relationships and unique dilemmas of human existence. In the workplace, there is a change due to increasing number of superannuated workforce in the West, increasing number of young professionals in India, and the necessity of working as teams across the globe. All these factors contribute to the changing nature of organization.

It is in this context that we look at the history of ST and its development and growth in India. The evolution of industrialization in the West brought its own people-related responses. To respond to the emergent people-related issues, the social and behavioural scientists came up with the concepts and theories of laboratory training. The first such attempt in the West began with training groups or T-Groups, as they were popularly known. ST and many of its forms are ways to address and redefine social community, primary family and the relationship dynamics, collectivity of community and strangers, and the functional roles and relationships at work.

### **History of Sensitivity Training**

T-group's evolution had its roots in the conferences organized by the Research Centre for Group Dynamics (RCGD), which was founded by Kurt Lewin in MIT in 1945. In 1946, the American Jewish Congress Committee on Community Interrelations

and the Connecticut Interracial Commission contacted Lewin to assist in the training of leaders who would deal with inter-group tensions in their home communities. This conference saw the germination of ST.

Lewin and his students Leland Bradford, Kenneth Benne, and Ronald Lippitt believed that the methodology of group learning by experience rather than lecture and conceptual learning provided high potential for adult learning and change of behaviour. The four formed a planning group named National Training Laboratory for Group Development and organized a second conference to experiment with this new methodology of experiential learning in 1947. The success of the conference led to the formation of National Training Laboratory (NTL) and eventually NTL Institute for Applied Behavioural Science. NTL and its trainers were a major force in the development of Organizational Development (OD) as a unique professional community drawing its philosophy, theory, and concepts from fields as far as psychology, psychotherapy, sociology in its various forms, anthropology, and so on. Some of the major contributions to OD are from participants and facilitators in ST labs (refer any OD text for an overview of ST's contribution to OD and significant contributors).

In the 1920s, the Tavistock Clinic used groups for psychotherapy. The clinic was started as an outpatient facility to provide psychotherapy to soldiers suffering from battle neurosis during World War I. Based on psychoanalytic theories, it also developed group focus to provide family therapy to children and the parents simultaneously. During World War II, Wilfred R Bion and John Rickman were involved in a programme called 'Northfield Experiment,' which was the first instance of ST in the world. Soldiers performed a simple task and discussed feelings, interpersonal issues as well as administrative hassles they faced. The learnings from this experiment led to the development of Bion's theory of group behaviour. The Tavistock Institute was formed in 1949 to further the work based on groups. Also, Eric Trist's work in a coal mine led to the development of the socio-technical approach based on Bion's work on leaderless groups and Lewin's group dynamics. Interactions between the Tavistock and NTL trainers initiated cross-pollination of the two philosophies of groups and ST.

ST has grown considerably in the last 50 years integrating the developments in Group Therapy, Transactional Analysis, Gestalt Therapy, Jungian

Psychoanalysis, Psychodrama, and Drama Therapy. The theories of Ericksson, Fromm, Rogers, and Berne influence the practice and philosophy of ST even today.

### Sensitivity Training in India

Rolf Lynton conducted the first T-Group in India in 1957 for youth leaders under the aegis of Aloka foundation (Sinha, 1985). T-Groups gained prominence and Indians trained in NTL along with facilitators from NTL conducted T-Groups for youth leaders, practising managers, priests, and community leaders in different settings like colleges, churches, hospitals, and development institutes (Sinha, 1985). In 1965, Rolf Lynton and Warren Bennis conducted the first faculty development programme aimed at developing trainers. The programmes were sporadic and continued as individual efforts till 1971, when a group of facilitators came together and formed the Indian Society for Applied Behavioural Science (ISABS). Sinha (1985) provides a detailed documentation of the historical development of ST in India till 1980s. Table 1 presents a list of some of the training institutions in India.

#### Departure from ISABS: ISISD

Around 1979, due to differences in the approach, the underlying philosophy and values, the purpose and meaning of group work, T-groups, and ST, there were departures and a new school of thought emerged. Pulin Garg along with a few others\* founded the Indian Society for Individual and Social Development (ISISD). The following passage by Pulin Garg provides the rationale behind the departure:

\*Arvind Agrawal, Sushanto Banerjee, Rajen Brijnath, Zahid Gangjee, KK Mehta, Indira J Parikh, Jitendra C Parikh, Rukhsana Pathan, Nalini Garg, Gopal Khandelwal, Josey Kunnukal, and Gordon Lawrence.

..... behaviour is directly related to the assumptions of the nature of man, nature of collectivity, and their relatedness. As such, behaviour, which appears universal and identical, is not necessarily related to the same inputs and their dynamics as the universal categorization of behaviour leads one to believe. Western theory which has been the only theory available for universalization is definitely culture-specific and grounded in the Judeo-Christian and Greko-Roman assumptions about man, collectivity, and their relationship (Garg, 1989, p57).

The founders of ISISD believed that ST in its Western form applied directly in India would reduce its efficacy, efficiency, and the potential considering that the Indian socio-cultural context has been shaped by:

- Thousands of years of civilization;
- Predominantly agrarian economy and rural population;
- Diverse cultures, faiths, rituals, and values;
- Continuous recreation of myths and folklore in individual, family, and societal sagas through the influence of the Indian epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharat*;
- Rule of Mughals and later colonization under English and other European powers;
- Industrialization and the resultant urbanization.

In this culture of transience (Garg, 1989) any effort to create a space and time for exploration of the self without accepting the socio-cultural context of India would be a partially blind journey. A new form of ST evolved in ISISD, which integrated Indian mythology and philosophy with the Western ST and philosophies of existentialism, relativism, and

Table 1: Sensitivity Training Institutions in India

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

phenomenology. The integration of the East and the West as practised by ISISD is the foundation for many institutes and departures in not only ST but also in other works such as community development, psychotherapy, education, and counselling. Aastha founded in 1996 is one such institute with an objective of bringing ST to educators to enhance the potential of education through a holistic educational paradigm.

### **Sumedhas : The Academy of Human Context**

In 1996, there was another departure and Sumedhas: The Academy of Human Context was founded by a group of people\* which focused on the unfolding of the individual and the group, creative experimentation of new models of growth, and dynamic interplay of multiple contexts in which the individual is located. In this new path, the pull is more towards freedom of action and movement rather than on redoing and understanding the past (Sumedhas, 2000).

The following six process statements explain the nature and processes in the lab space and the underlying assumptions.

#### ***Invitation versus Compulsion to Explore***

Labs are offered in many ways to students and practising managers who attend them either out of their own curiosity or out of compulsion. In the lab setting, it is the pull of the space wherein participants enter or do not enter the space to participate. The role of the facilitator is to open the space and invite the participants without any compulsion. The only pressure is internal and the individual is either ready or not ready. The facilitator only invites and reflects on the stances taken by the individual and does not create compulsions so as to experience success or failure for the facilitator (Parikh, 1997).

#### ***The Lab Space in Time and Movement versus the Concept of Ownership***

There is a clear distinction between the lab space and the facilitator. The facilitator invites the participants to enter the lab space and explore the self in its infiniteness and finiteness of the roles, the being and the non-being, the processes of being and becoming, and any other growing up experiences. If the facilitator becomes the owner of the space, then the dynamics of the lab revolves around the facilitator as an individual with his/her issues and the interplay between the participants and the

facilitator acquires far greater significance than the exploration of the self by the participants. The lab space, therefore, is a shared space amongst the participants and the facilitator in order to bring the self for sharing and reflection. The space has no ownership but only the coordinates of time and structure linked to the external interface of the system, institution where the lab is held, and an invitation (Parikh, 1997).

#### ***Role of Participants and the Role of the Facilitator***

In a lab setting, the role of participants and facilitator is different but both are in the shared space. Despite stating and sharing this view, the participants are not clear about the lab space and their roles in the lab. The deeply embedded social and psychological role codings of relationships in the primary system (family) and the experiences of early educational institutions operate both in the participants and the facilitator. In Sumedhas' value system, the clarity of the facilitator's role in a lab setting primarily rests with him/her. When he/she confuses the role of the facilitator of the space with his/her role as that of a leader or owner of the space, the consequences are disastrous. For example, the primary evocation of the lab space is that of exploration of the universe of the person in the context of the world the person lives in. The lab space is a sacred and shared space. Each one offers what he/she wishes to offer. The facilitator reflects like a mirror what he/she sees, hears, touches, and feels and locates it in the larger universe of myths, epics, folktales, folklore, history, literature, family, and personal sagas and the meanings and implications of the statements and sharings. In other words, the facilitator's role is to locate the themes, dilemmas, and issues in a context and paint the universe of the socio-psychological world the participant lives in. He/she goes behind the events, encounters, experiences, feelings, and meanings of transactions and their residues and articulates the processes of the identity and the being of the person (Parikh, 1997).

#### ***Directionality versus Specificity***

As mentioned earlier, in a lab setting, the facilitator does not provide specific solutions to specific problems of the participants. Instead, through explorations, he/she states the directions from which the participant can make his/her own choices. Often, a statement, a reflection, and an observation from the facilitator is taken as the final word and the only choice available to the participant. This process takes away the freedom of choice (Parikh, 1997).

\*TVR Ananthanarayanan, Sushanta Banerjee, Shyamal Gupta, Ashok Malhotra, and Indira J Parikh.

### ***Unfolding of the Person versus Boundaries of Growth***

The lab space is that space where the human beings and their universe unfold. This space is sacred and the sharing and reflections of the life of the person are also sacrosanct. The individual protagonist who begins his/her journey of exploration may find barriers and distortions when he/she sees and hears the echoes and shadows of his/her life. However, the lab space is an invitation to the participant to review and reflect upon life and to walk the path of self-discovery and it needs to differentiate between the exploration of unfolding and the fears, anxieties, and terror of unfolding and as such define boundaries of exploration (Parikh, 1997).

### ***Humanness of Touch versus Touch of Sensuality***

Physical touch is the most basic of all sensations and is unique to human beings in its ability to provide a basis of expression and acceptance of humanness between individuals. Since our cultural values restrict the expression of physical touch, except in socially accepted relationships, it creates a vacuum within the individual. Residues of past relationships and experiences, social taboos, and the anxieties and fears about acceptance in the lab space also make the individual assign sexual meanings to physical touch. Lab space accepts this struggle, provides a common space for further exploration, and enables the participants to give new value-free meanings to physical touch, and in fact, discover the human touch.

### **Indian Innovations in Sensitivity Training**

ST in India has evolved from the initial influences of Western developments and has, in fact, built on them. Some of the significant new forms of labs are as follows:

- Facilitative leadership lab and explorations in personal and role effectiveness using 360 degree feedback by ISABS.
- Explorations in the dynamics of vitalizing life spaces and explorations in fostering growth by ISISD.
- Bindu lab and Learning Theatre (LT) by Sumedhas.

#### **Facilitative Leadership Lab**

Based on Dr Roger Schwrz's conceptualization and conducted with the aim of developing facilitative

\* Conducted by Kakoli Saha.

leadership potential among the participants, facilitative leadership lab\* focuses on providing direction and helping people take responsibility and ownership for their actions. The lab provides space to the participants to reflect on the values and beliefs that guide their behaviour and also learn to act consistently with the core values of facilitative leadership — valid information, free and informed choice, and internal commitment (ISABS, 2001).

#### **Personal and Role Effectiveness through 360 Degree Feedback**

This lab combines the strength of 360 degree feedback with that of T-groups.\* Feedback from superiors, peers, subordinates, external and internal customers in organization settings, and friends is processed in the group. This lab provides a unique opportunity to the participant to verify and integrate the feedback generated in the lab with that of the work place. Effective integration of the feedback and experimentation and explorations in new behaviours enables the individual to increase his/her personal and role effectiveness (ISABS, 2001).

#### **Explorations in the Dynamics of Vitalizing Life Spaces**

This lab aims to enlarge the life space and make life more meaningful and fulfilling to the participants through explorations on the nature of postponement of self to achieve and change meanings, relationships, values, and personal worth with the advancement of age. This lab provides space for exploring the middle age crisis as well as the feeling of meaninglessness in a group setting and for identifying hidden potential and resources (ISISD, 2001).

#### **Explorations in Fostering Growth**

The fostering of individuals and institutions is usually associated with 'helping' and hence is caught in a giant cobweb of expectations as well as assumptions held by the helper and the helped. Preoccupation to help may lead to reduced attention to one's own well being, the meanings given to the relationship, and values. This lab enables the participants to look beyond the normative evaluations of the fostering relationship, question their basic assumptions about themselves, and the relationship and the choices available to them (ISISD, 2001).

#### **Bindu Lab**

Bindu lab is an outcome of Banerjee's research on individual identity — emotional and body, and

\* Conducted by T V Rao and Udai Pareek.

collective identity (Banerjee, 1989). It is an extension of the human processes approach to the interactive processes between the context, the self, and the body. It is founded on the principle that identity of the self is inclusive of the identity of the body as held by the self.

Experiences of the self, the body and the context, the choices that a child makes, and the intuitive inclusion of the unrecognized choices in the growing up process give rise to an integrative force that holds together these building blocks of the identity. The integrative force is in the nature of the internal ambience that each one of us carries (Sumedhas, 2001a).

The internal ambience gives rise to qualities such as resilience and strength of resolve as well as recurrent patterns of pathos, enlivenment, and relatedness. This internal ambience gives the individual his/her unique combination of dynamism as well as pathos. It modifies and patterns the very nature of an individual and also limits the scope of experiencing. It is located in the mind as well as the body. In the mind, it is held by the emotional maps and cognitive maps and in the body in such aspects as self-concepts, scope of abilities, and the physical self-concept. Recognition of these limits liberates the vision and creates the way to making unforeseen new choices (Sumedhas, 2001a).

The Bindu lab is designed to help explore this internal ambience. It creates an opportunity to explore the *nature* of experience (as opposed to the *content*) in terms of the *body identity* within the identity of the self; the psychic pulls we create; access emotive and cognitive maps and their body level manifestations; identify core themes of one's life; and fashion new responses.

### Learning Theatre

Learning Theatre (LT) has evolved based on Ananthanarayanan's research on value formation (Ananthanarayanan, 1989) and integration of ancient Indian philosophical texts with processes of expression in traditional Indian art forms. LT extends the exploration of human processes to the processes of expression and its context and is based on the philosophy that our expressions are reflections of our inner energies.

An individual is simultaneously a member of multiple collectives — organization, society, family, and others. Each of these collectives is a complex network of interdependent roles and processes with distinct values and norms. The diverse pulls and

pressures of the collectives and lack of integration and synergy in oneself result in diffused inner energies and consequently incoherent expressions which hamper collective performance. Collective performance also gets hampered when some members are unable to take complementary and supplementary roles. Patterns of domination and submission take over. Even if performance is achieved, individuals pay a heavy price and many residues are carried. Learning a whole range of expressions and experimenting with roles that are unfamiliar and uncomfortable releases the individual from his/her limited repertoire and facilitates wholesome participation in collectives. LT is designed to focus on inner energies and enable coherent expressions (Sumedhas, 2001b).

The methodology of work is a flowing rhythm between the two aspects — explorations into one's inner processes and working with theatre exercises. Through the use of mime and simulation, life contexts are recreated with a very high degree of reality. Thus, the individual experiences a simultaneous challenge to his cognitive and emotive processes. The discussions following various exercises help anchor the experience and draw parallels to one's work, family, and other spaces. LT aims at holistic learning that integrates thinking and feeling with expression (Sumedhas, 2001b).

### Comparative Analysis

Let us look at the two perspectives of ST — the Western approach and the Indian approach. The Western approach is based on the premise that intra-personal and interpersonal effectiveness is desirable and achievable (Golembiewski and Blumberg, 1970). The Indian perspective is based on the premise that the socio-cultural context shapes the identity and roles of an individual (Garg, 1989) and multiplicity and simultaneity of intra-personal, inter-personal, and collective processes (Parikh, 1997). Table 2 gives a summary of the similarities and differences between these two perspectives. Even though, initially, the Indian perspective was based on the NTL philosophy, the evolution of a unique Indian perspective started as early as the seventies. The Role and Identity Approach's (RIA) evolution in the late seventies and interaction and collaboration among facilitators has led to a vast variety in the methodologies of conducting an ST lab and facilitators' assumptions on the nature, content, and processes on identity development, role taking and meaning making processes, and simultaneity and multiplicity



**Table 2: Perspectives in Sensitivity Training**

<i>Western Perspective Intra-personal and Interpersonal Effectiveness</i>	<i>Indian Perspective Role and Identity Approach</i>
<i>Focus on</i>	<i>Focus on</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Individual</li> <li>❖ Psychological Processes</li> <li>❖ Individual and Interpersonal Processes</li> <li>❖ Individual as a Psychological and Social Being</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Individual and Collectivity</li> <li>❖ Cognitive and Emotive processes</li> <li>❖ Role and Identity</li> <li>❖ Individual as Member of Collectivity, Co-creator of Identity and Role taker</li> <li>❖ Repeating Patterns in Roles</li> <li>❖ Cognition of the Given and the Co-created Identity, and Action Choices</li> </ul>
Socio-cultural Context is Considered to be of Lower Importance to Intra-personal and Interpersonal Processes	Socio-cultural Context as Shaper of Meaning given to
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Roles and Relationships</li> <li>❖ Self, Identity, and Growth</li> <li>❖ Meaning of Existence</li> <li>❖ Purpose of Life</li> <li>❖ Individual</li> <li>❖ Collectivities</li> </ul>
Orientation is to Achieve	Orientation is to Achieve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Immediate Action Choices</li> <li>❖ Change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Increased Self-reflectivity</li> <li>❖ Acceptance of Emotive and Cognitive Simultaneity</li> <li>❖ Acceptance of Self's Role in Co-creating Identity and Roles</li> </ul>
Objective is Awareness of Self, Repeating Intra and Interpersonal Patterns, and Change for Increased Effectiveness	Objective is <i>Well-being</i> and Acceptance of <i>Humanness</i> of Self, Others, and the System

Source: Garg (1989); Golembiewski and Blumberg (1970); ISABS (2001); ISISD (2001); Parikh (1989); Parikh (1997); Sinha(1985); Sumedhas (2000); and Sumedhas (2001c).

of these processes. The present status is such that a facilitator can be working in any point across a continuum from a Western perspective to that of socio-cultural context-based RIA. The comparative analysis is an attempt to distinguish the two approaches even though, in practice, the two perspectives are combined by different professional bodies and practising facilitators. The relevance of the cultural context can be understood by the latest developments in the academic and business world. Cultural psychology is gaining prominence and acceptance among the mainstream psychology theories and is no longer considered as an anti-establishment reaction. Cross-cultural management is a major concern in every business school of international repute and every organization that operates across national cultures.

The philosophical bases for both the perspectives are the theories and concepts of psychology,

psychoanalysis, psychodrama, and group processes/dynamics. A typical sensitivity training programme is three days to two weeks long and is held in a residential remote location. Usually, the group consists of not more than 14 participants and is facilitated by a trained professional and a trainee.

RIA differs in bringing in the role of mythology, folktales, and folklore in shaping the individual and collective identity and role expectations. Further, the processes in the lab space are shaped by the values and beliefs of the facilitators based on eastern, existentialist, relativist, and phenomenological philosophies (Sumedhas, 2000). The objectives of an ST lab in RIA are to:

- articulate the unarticulated
- make visible the invisible
- own the disowned, and
- act the withheld (Parikh, 1989, p 27).

In the Western perspective, the focus is on the individual and psychological and social processes at intra-personal and interpersonal levels (Golembiewski and Blumberg, 1970). The individual is considered a psychological and social being. The role of socio-cultural context in shaping a person is neglected and is assumed to be of lesser importance than the intra-personal and interpersonal processes.

### Sensitivity Training in Organizations

Table 3 compares the Western and the Indian perspectives on ST in the organizational context. While the Western perspective is developed in the socio-cultural context of the developed Western nations, it becomes limited, restrictive, repressive, and constrains the individual and collectivity growth if applied directly in India. The Western perspective emphasizes on the purposive nature of the organization, rationality in goals and choices, and objective use of emotions at the individual and collective levels, which, grounded in their context, may be appropriate but, in India, emotionality is an inherent part of the roles and relationships in Indian organizations. The Indian ST traditions provide a philosophical foundation to integrate those aspects of Indian socio-cultural context which have been found to influence and impact individuals and organizations, the relationships, and the interfaces held together by the spirit of ST rather than the modality.

In the new millennium, there is an increasing questioning of the roles of the individual, collectivity,

and the society and their interface. The existential questions basic to the human nature are more important today than before due to the uncertainties, anxieties, fears, and the resultant helplessness and anger arising out of globalization, internet revolution, and the increased socio-political and economical difference between the developed and the developing world. The role of the manager in the present organization context is also undergoing tremendous change. He/she needs to be a leader and a mentor to develop knowledge-based human capital, be an ambassador of the organization, be emotionally in tune with the contribution of the role and the organization, and above all ensure that the responsibilities to the self, collectivity, and the society are catered to.

The role of the HR professionals within the organization is undergoing a transformation from a mere functional role to becoming a strategic partner in co-creating the organizational reality and vision. They are partners in visioning the future, implementing the strategy, and aligning individual and organizational goals without compromising the individual unfolding and growth. They also have the additional responsibility of coaching the management and acting as internal consultants to ensure that in pursuing futuristic visions, the organization does not lose touch with the human beings and the collectivities that are part of the organization. RIA attempts to provide answers to these changing roles of the members of the organization and HR professionals in particular (Table 3).

**Table 3: Sensitivity Training in Organizations**

<i>Western Perspective</i>	<i>Indian Perspective (Role and Identity Approach)</i>
➤ Conceptual Understanding and Experiential Learning	➤ Experiential Learning, Self-reflectivity, and Awareness
➤ Emphasis on Gaining Skills and Competencies	➤ Emphasis on Unfolding of Inherent Potential
➤ Focus on	➤ Focus on
❖ Individual Growth and Development	❖ Individual Growth and Development
❖ Team Working and Role Taking	❖ Role Creation and Enactment
❖ Leadership	❖ Collective Leadership
❖ Work Climate/Culture	❖ Co-creation of Organizational Reality
❖ Resistance to Change and Mindset Change	❖ Self and Professional Renewal — Individuals, Teams, and Organization
❖ Balancing Individual and Organizational Goals	❖ Aligning Simultaneous and Multiple Individual and Organization Goals
➤ Interventions to Solve Problems	➤ Interventions to Change the Working Paradigm/Perspective
➤ To Achieve Organizational Objectives	➤ To Co-create Organizational Reality and Future

Source: Golembiewski and Blumberg (1970); Sinha (1985); Garg and Parikh (1989); Sumedhas (2000); and Sumedhas (2001c).

## **New Trends of Sensitivity Training Applications in Organizations**

In the organizational context, interventions based on the human processes approach such as unstructured labs, semi-structured labs, and structured workshops would enable the organization and its members to face the challenges in the changing times.

### **Unstructured Sensitivity Training Labs**

Unstructured labs provide a space to voice the unvoiced, articulate the unarticulated, express the unexpressed, own up the disowned, and enact the withheld (Parikh, 1989). They are called by many names — Personal Growth Lab, Exploration in Roles and Identity, Interpersonal Relations Lab, and so on — and provide the foundation for individual, group, and organizational transformation.

### **Semi-Structured Labs**

Semi-structured labs have specific objectives and are designed to address the critical issues faced by the organizational members. Some examples are Interface Labs, Leadership Labs, Self-renewal Labs, and Visioning and Co-creating Labs.

### **Interface Labs**

Interface labs address the interface issues between the individual and the collectivity (department, cadre, etc.) and between the collectivities. Some examples are:

- ❖ Systems interface issues — between the family, organization, and other collectivities.
- ❖ Union-Management interface issues — between the union and the management.
- ❖ Inter-department interface issues — between different departments like marketing-production, finance-HR, etc.
- ❖ Hierarchical interface issues between different levels of management and workforce.

### **Leadership and Institution Building Labs**

Leadership labs aim at energizing the leadership potential of organizational members across the hierarchical levels and departments; redefining the meaning of leadership from individual-centered leadership to collective-centered leadership, and exploring and enacting leadership roles. Some types of leadership labs are:

- ❖ Collective Leadership Lab.
- ❖ Leadership Values and Vision Lab.
- ❖ Institution Building Lab.

### **Self-Renewal Labs**

Repeating tasks and working continuously under uncertainty and stress lead to reduced efficacy at all levels in an organization. Self-renewal labs are designed to help the participants question their existing paradigm of work and make action choices for unfolding in the emerging role requirements in the organization. Some types of self-renewal labs are:

- ❖ Professional Self-Renewal Lab.
- ❖ Top Management Self-Renewal Lab.
- ❖ Management Self-Renewal Lab.
- ❖ Organizational Self-Renewal Lab.

### **Visioning and Co-creation Labs**

Visioning and co-creation labs essentially create a collective awareness of the organizational reality, collective identity, and the role of the participants in co-creating these.

- ❖ Futuristic Vision Labs — Formulate collective vision (strategies) using existing organizational resources.
- ❖ Collective Identity Labs — Create cohesiveness across departments and levels and unleash the withheld creativity.
- ❖ Individual and Organizational Transformation— Assess the current reality, create a collective identity and vision, and change the working paradigm.

### **Structured Workshops**

Structured workshops are experiential-based conceptual training programmes. These aim at conceptual understanding along with experience of exploration of new beginnings and enhanced competencies. Some typical structured workshops are:

- ❖ Managerial and Leadership Roles.
- ❖ Team Building /Building a Team across Functions, Divisions, and Organizations.
- ❖ Integrating Emotional Intelligence with Multiple Roles in Multiple Systems.
- ❖ Organizational Transformation.
- ❖ Managing Multi-cultural and Cross-cultural Workforce Diversity.
- ❖ Interpersonal and Group Dynamics.
- ❖ Managing Personal and Professional Lives — Finding the Dynamic Equilibrium.

- ❖ Women in Managerial and Leadership Roles— Finding the Dynamic Equilibrium in Personal and Professional Life.

These are some of the trends developed and experimented in Indian organizations. Some of them work while some others have short-term resolutions. As the human existence unfolds, new dilemmas emerge. Therefore, there is a need for constant discovery of what would bring a sense of fulfillment, meaning and purpose of life, relationships, and well-being.

### Conclusion

For years, humanity has been struggling with change, disasters — man-made and natural, and development.

### References

- Ananthanarayanan, T V R (1989). "Value Formation in Organizations," in Garg, P K and Parikh, I J (eds.), *Transience and Transitions in Organizations: Organization Identity, Change and Adaptation*, Vol III, Ahmedabad: ISISD.
- Banerjee, S (1989). "Towards a Definition of Organizational Identity," in Garg, P K and Parikh, I J (eds.), *Transience and Transitions in Organizations: Organization Identity, Change and Adaptation*, Vol III, Ahmedabad: ISISD.
- Garg, P K (1989). "Keynote Address," in Parikh, I J; Garg, V K and Garg, P K, *Transience and Transitions in Organizations: Corporate Culture of India*, Vol I, Ahmedabad: ISISD.
- Garg, P K and Parikh, I J (eds.) (1989). *Transience and Transitions in Organizations: Organization Design and Definitions*, Vol II, Ahmedabad: ISISD.
- Golembiewski, R T and Blumberg, A (1970). "Sensitivity Training and the Laboratory Approach," Itasca, Illinois: E E Peacock.
- ISABS (2001). *Winter Event 2001 Brochure*, Delhi: ISABS.
- ISISD (2001). *13<sup>th</sup> Winter Programme Brochure*, Ahmedabad: ISISD.
- National Training Laboratory (2000). *Our History*, Website: <http://www.ntl.org/about-history.html>.
- Parikh, I J (1989). "Welcome Address," in Parikh, I J; Garg, V K and Garg, P K, *Transience and Transitions in Organizations: Corporate Culture of India*, Vol I, Ahmedabad: ISISD.
- Parikh, I J (1997). "Personal Growth Laboratory: A Personal Philosophy," Working Paper No 1410, Ahmedabad: Indian Institute of Management.
- Sinha, D P (1985). "T-Group, Team Building and Organizational Development," New Delhi: ISABS.
- Sumedhas (2000). "Minutes of Discussions Among Participants, Fellows and Faculty of Sumedhas," Agra: Sumedhas Summer Institute.
- Sumedhas (2001a). *Bindu Lab Brochure*, New Delhi: Sumedhas.
- Sumedhas (2001b). *Learning Theatre Brochure*, New Delhi: Sumedhas.
- Sumedhas (2001c). "Minutes of Discussions among Participants, Fellows and Faculty of Sumedhas," Agra: Sumedhas Summer Institute.

### Vikalpa Advertisement Form

We wish to advertise in *Vikalpa: The Journal for Decision Makers* for 1 year (4 issues) in \_\_\_\_\_ location in Black & White/Colour.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ Pin \_\_\_\_\_  
 Country \_\_\_\_\_  
 email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Advertisement Rates		
Location	BW	Colour
Indian (in Rs)		
Inside page	22,000	-
Inside Back Cover	-	35,000
Back Cover	-	37,000
Single Insertion	8,000	15,000
Foreign (in US\$)		
Inside page	1,250	1,750

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Two copies of the journal along with the bill will be sent soon after publication. *Vikalpa* accepts corporate and product advertisements.

Please send a camera-ready copy of your advertisement material (size approximately 22 cm x 18 cm) along with demand draft in favour of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

### Vikalpa Subscription Form

I wish to subscribe/renew my subscription to *Vikalpa: The Journal for Decision Makers* for 1/2/3 year(s). A draft bearing no. \_\_\_\_\_ dated \_\_\_\_\_ for Rs./US\$ \_\_\_\_\_ drawn in favour of "Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad" is enclosed.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ Pin \_\_\_\_\_  
 Country \_\_\_\_\_  
 email Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Subscriber Number (if renewal) \_\_\_\_\_

Subscription Rates			
	1 yr	2 yrs	3 yrs
Indian (in Rs)			
Regular	400	750	1,100
Student	200	350	500
Alumni	350	650	950
Foreign (in US\$)			
Air-Mail	45	75	100
Surface-Mail	30	50	70

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please send the amount by cheque or demand draft in favour of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. For outstation cheques, please add Rs. 40/US\$ 5 towards bank charges.

### Vikalpa Reprints

Reprints are available at Rs. 10 per copy and a minimum of ten reprints per order should be placed.

---

**Correspondence**

*Vikalpa*

Indian Institute of Management  
Ahmedabad 380 015

©Copyright, 2001, Indian Institute of Management  
Ahmedabad  
All rights reserved

---