UNIT 2 DIAGNOSING THE SYSTEM, SUBUNITS AND PROCESS

Structure

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit we discussed about the organisational development process. In this unit we are going to specifically highlight one of the most important aspects in organisational development, that is, diagnosis. Diagnosis is the first step in the organisational development process and also one of the most crucial steps as the whole process depends on how this step is carried out and on outcome of this step. In this unit we will focus on diagnosing the system, sub units and processes in an organisation. Such a diagnosis will help identify any loopholes and develop suitable intervention strategies.

Diagnosis in organisational development is a structured work for the growth of the organisation. Since the development of organisational development, diagnosis has moved from behavioural to strategic and holistic approach. Organisational development and diagnostic phase of activities in particular is spreading from the occupational psychologists toward mainstream business. The analysis of an organisation's structure, subsystem and process in order to identify the strengths and weakness of its structural components and process is basic to development of plans to improve the organisation.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Define and discuss the concept of diagnosis;
- Explain the phases of diagnosis;
- Discuss the organisational processes that need to be diagnosed; and
- Describe the Marvin Weisbord's 'Six Box Model'.

2.2 DEFINITION AND CONCEPT OF DIAGNOSIS

Development in any organisation will depend to a great extend on diagnosis. It is a planned change by the organisational development practitioners and plays an active role in gathering data from employees and management for diagnostic purpose.

Diagnosis in an organisation is a way of determining gaps between current and desired performance and also to understand ways in which the goals of the organisation can be achieved. Today diagnosis is one of the major aspects of organisational development rather than a mere technique. The main reason being, that the whole process of intervention depends on the results obtained after the process of diagnosis. Diagnosis in an organisation should be carried in a systematic fashion, with focus on the organisation and its structures. It should then focus on the changes that are required to be brought in in the organisation.

Diagnosis gives the state of the organisation or one or more of its subsystems and points out the scope for improvements that made for achieving organisational effectiveness. Effective diagnosis is require for the rapidly changing environment, new organisation forms must be developed more for more effective goal setting and planning process must be learned.

The importance of conducting diagnostic activities prior to change implementation is recognised in a variety of prescriptive theories of change implementation. The careful direction of change efforts through the use of diagnostic information is important because many change efforts fail to produce expected results.

According to Cummins and Worley diagnosis involves the systematic collection of data to determine the current state of an organisation allowing managers and consultants to enhance organisational effectiveness. This definition helps clarify that the diagnostic approach in organisational development is the understanding the organisation and enhancing its effectiveness.

According to Howard diagnosis involves developing road maps to guide and direct organisational change. That is, when any diagnosis is carried out in the organisation it leads towards changes on the overall aspect.

Beckhard states that in rapidly changing environment, forms must be developed, more effective goal setting and planning processes must be learned and practiced. Teams of independent people must spend real time improving their methods of working, decision making and communicating. Competing or conflicting groups must move towards a collaborative way of work. In order for these changes to occur and be maintained, a planned and managed change effort is necessary. This definition clarifies the importance of diagnosis for any good organisation change to work for one cause in a collaborative manner is necessary for the organisation development. The diagnosis phase in organisation is often regarded as an overall organisational development process, but commonly known as consulting process. The purpose of a diagnosis is to identify problems facing the organisation and to determine their causes so that management can plan solutions. This is a powerful conscious raising activity its main usefulness lies in the action that it induces.

In any organisation, effectiveness comes with its performance in the social field by their employees. It show the strength of the organisation ,the organisation should be diagnosed in a way of attempting ,gaps between current and desired performance and goals can be achieved. Diagnosis basically based on behavioural science theory for introducing in the human system, collecting valid data about

human experiences with the said system and feeding that information back to the system for promoting increased understanding of the system by its members. This diagnostic approach provokes human nature inevitably for change.

Robbins stated that organisational development should increase performance at organisational and individual level. This statement clarifies that, planned change through humanistic values aims to improve organisational effectiveness and wellbeing of the employee. The work in organisational diagnosis require professional to work within the organisation as a whole, including organisation environment relations, group inside and outside the organisation and individuals who are being shaped by the organisation and they are only in turn determine the nature of organisation. The development is an action programme based on valid information about current problems and opportunities which effects the goal achievement. The requirement for diagnostic activities designed to provide an accurate account of things which are really stems from too needs, first to know the state of things and second is to know the effects or consequences.

The diagnostic activities emphasised by Beckhard is a diagnosis of the various subsystem that makeup the total organisation and second are the process like decision making process, communication patterns and styles, relationship between interfacing groups, the management of conflict, setting of goals and planning methods. The major targets or subsystems in an organisation desire common methods of obtaining the information. Organisational consultant works from both the way targets to process the organisational development. They provide a means for protecting themselves from excessive and unproductive demands by clients. Continual diagnosis is a necessary ingredient of any planned change effort. Action plans are developed to close the gap, are continuously monitored to measure progress or movement toward the goal.

Further it can be said that organisational development programme are not only the results of diagnostic activities but how the information is collected and what is done with the information are significant aspects of the process. It is collaboration between organisation practitioner and the organisation members about issues what target groups are to be diagnosed. How the diagnosis is best accomplished, what process and dynamics should be analysed, what is to be done with the information, how the data will be worked with and how the information will be used to aid action planning. Therefore the diagnostic component and the action component are intimately related in organisation development.

Diagnosis can be carried out in an organisation for various purposes. Some of the purposes are discussed as follows:

1) **To develop an understanding of functions and processes in the organisation:** This is one of the purposes of diagnosis in an organisation. Diagnosis can help in developing better understanding about the various process and functions that are carried out in an organisation. For example the process of communication may be diagnosed in order to understand it in a better manner and also to find out any problems with regard to the process. In case if any problems are identified then suitable measure can be carried out in order to rectify them.

2) **To promote growth and development of the organisation:** Diagnosis may also be carried out with a purpose of promoting growth and development in the organisation. In this case diagnosis will be required to be carried out of

the structure, system and sub systems in the organisation to identify if any modifications or changes are required in them before the organisation plans its development strategy.

3) **To improve organisational effectiveness and increase productivity:** Diagnosis may further be carried out in order to improve organisational effectiveness and to increase productivity. This is one of the main goals of any organisation and in order to achieve it the employees have to perform at their best at the same time the structure, systems and process in the organisation should be conducive to promote growth and effectiveness in the organisation. Thus a diagnosis can be carried out to understand the situation and identify any possible problems with the organisational structure, process and systems in order to carry out necessary steps to promote organisational effectiveness and increase productivity.

4) **Enhance problem solving and decision making in organisational set up:** A systematic diagnosis will provide the organisation with relevant information about various aspects of the organisation, persistent problems and relevant situation. This information then can be used in order to solve problems effectively and also to make effective decisions.

5) **Develop suitable intervention strategy:** As we have discussed that diagnosis will help understand a particular problem in a better manner and then suitable intervention strategies may be developed and applied. Some of the intervention strategies that can be used are discussed in the previous units.

6) **Understand the organisational culture:** The diagnosis can also be carried out to understand the culture prevalent in the organisation. We have an idea that organisational culture is one of the most important aspects of an organisation as it has an influence on the employee performance, satisfaction and is thus related to the overall growth and development of the organisation. It is thus important to understand the organisational culture of an organisation so as to identify any deviations and take measures to modify or change it.

Further diagnosis in an organisational setup can be carried out from various perspectives. For example, the diagnosis can be carried out from perspective of economics that deals with distribution of resources human, monitory and non monitory. An organisation can be diagnosed from a political perspective that focuses on the power and politics prevalent in the organisation. Another perspective would be that of social, that mainly highlights the interaction between the groups and various members in the organisation that can be important for the overall functioning of the organisation. Management is another perspective that includes not only the roles played by the managers in an organisation but also focuses on the strengths and weakness of an organisation threats faced by it and opportunities available, goals to achieved, existing policies and so on. The last is the behavioural perspective which focuses on human process and behaviours through out the organisation. It is also concerned with values, attitudes and beliefs of the members or employees in the organisation.

Diagnosis can thus be carried from one or more of the above perspectives. The decision about which perspective to take will depend on the decision taken by the management depending on the problem arising in the organisation or depending on the goals of organisational development.

Self Assessment Questions

1) What is diagnosis in organisational development?

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2) Explain diagnosis according to Howard.

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3) What are the diagnostic activities emphasised by Beckhard?

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4) Highlight any two purposes of diagnosis in an organisation.

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5) Discuss various perspectives from which diagnosis in an organisation can be carried out.

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2.3 PHASES OF DIAGNOSIS

There are three main phases in diagnosis; they are entry, data collection and feedback. These three are discussed in detail as follows:

2.3.1 Entry

Entry is major primary objectives and is also the time to quickly grasp the nature of the organisation identifying the appropriate decision and build a trusting relationship. Entry phase determines which unit of the organisation will participate

in the diagnosis and whether researcher and respondent can reach agreement about their respective roles during data collection and feedback. In the entry the first encounter starts between concerned members of the organisation and consultant and conclude with the decision that whether they can jointly continue to complete the diagnosis.

This stage is also a time to collect data as consultant starts learning about the organisational system through observation and by studying documents. Consultants can be the members of the organisation who have their own vested interest in their organisations. Consultants establish some type of liaison system to manage the relationship between the consultant and those elements of the system where diagnosis takes place. Depending on the nature of the system the liaison system may be an individual, a series of individual or a group.

Entry is thus the initial phase of the diagnosis when the preparation to start the process takes place. The relationship need to developed during this phase and a conducive environment has to be created in order to facilitate the process of diagnosis. Also during this phase the consultant or the persons in charge of carrying out diagnosis need to foresee possible problems and obstacles that they may come across while carrying out the process. They also have to observe and study documents in order to develop better understanding of the organisation. The success of this phase will lead to effective implementation of other phases during the process of diagnosis.

2.3.2 Data Collection

The next step that follows after the phase of entry is that of data collection. The entry phase helps the consultant develop better idea about the organisation and he/ she thus has some idea about the impending problems and situation in the organisation. Data collection can now be carried out in a particular direction depending on the information collected during the entry phase. Also the entry phase has paved a way and created a conducive environment for collection of data.

Data collection can be termed as a systematical way of gathering valid information. It is the information regarding the nature of the system in the organisation. Data collection begins with the aim when consultant prepares a methodology for eliciting information and contacts members of the system to implement the methodology and it ends when the consultant has analysed the data and is prepared to provide feedback.

In this process of eliciting the information through data collection from employees, consultant becomes more specific about kinds of data that will be useful. In the process of data collection the liaison system assists the consultant in determining what data to be collected and how to collect it. Effective liaison system helps the consultant with access to part of the system where data must be collected and aids the consultant in establishing credibility so that the data obtained will maintain its validity. Various methods can be used to collect data depending on the nature of the problem or the situation. Methods data collection like questionnaires, Interviews, Observation, focused group discussions can be used in order to collect data. Further records, circulars, appraisal reports and other organisational literature, hard data of organisations and various units can also be analysed to get an idea about the organisation and its aspects. Problem identification/problem solving workshops, seminars, symposia and training programme and recording and

examining critical incidents, events can also be carried out in order to collect data or to understand the problems and situations in an organisation in a better manner.

After the data is collected using suitable methods of data collection, the data is compiled and analysed. The data can be analysed with the help of various tools of statistics. It is then used to carry out the last phase, that is, feedback.

2.3.3 Feedback

Feedback consists of series of meetings between the consultant and members of the organisation during which the consultant presents the data analysis and the parties discuss and interpret the data. Effective feedback design relates the content of the feedback to the process by which the analysis is delivered. Content of feedback is the data analysis prepared at the close of the data collection phase. The process of feedback is the composition of feedback meetings, behaviour of the organisational system during feedback and the behaviour of the consultant within and between feedback meetings. The best known feedback design is built around the "family group" that consists of the supervisors and immediate subordinates. Conventionally structured organisation can be viewed as a series of interlinking family groups from top to bottom. The alternative design is called as "peer group-intergroup model". In this people first meet in group of peers, which have no formal hierarchical differences among members, then the next step begins.

This peer group-intergroup depends upon how it has been managed effectively and the tendencies toward ethnocentrism that exist in all groups.

Thus during the feedback phase, the members of the organisation are given an idea about the information collected through the process of data collection. This information can then be used in order to develop suitable intervention strategies or to carry out various other steps in the process of organisational development. Charts, graphs and various other modes of presentation can be used in order to present the feedback to the members of the organisation. It is important that the feedback is given in a systematic and clear manner in order to facilitate the understanding of the persistent problem or situation in the organisation. A well compiled feedback will help the organisation to take suitable measures in order to implement the intervention strategies.

Thus care needs to be taken at each phase of the diagnosis so that the whole process is carried out in a systematic manner in order to provide the organisation with reliable and valid information.

1) What are the phases of diagnosis in organisational development?

2) Discuss the first phase in diagnosis of an organisation.

3) Discuss the phase of feedback.

2.4 ORGANISATIONAL PROCESSES TO BE DIAGNOSED

1) **Communication pattern, styles and flows:** This mainly focuses on the most important aspect in an organisation that is the communication process. This will mainly highlight issues like who talks to whom how long about what, who initiates. Is communication directed upward or downward or both are they filtered why in what way?

The methods used for data collection may be observations, questionnaire, interviews and discussions with groups

2) **Goal setting:** Goal setting is yet another important function in an organisation. Setting task objectives and determining criteria to measure accomplishments of objectives is the main focus with regard to diagnosis here. The questions that arise in this context are Do they set goals how is done? Who participates in goal setting? Do they posses the necessary skills.

   Questionnaires, interviews and observation can be used for data collection with regard to collecting information about goal setting.

3) **Decision making, problem solving and action planning:** It is important to diagnose the decision making, problem solving and action planning in an organisation as these functions will directly lead to achievement of goals in an organisation. Also **e**valuating alternatives and choosing a plan of action are integral function for most organisation members. Questions asked in this regard are who makes decisions? Are they effective? Are all available sources utilised?

   With regard to methods of data collection, observation of problem solving meetings at various organisational levels can be used.

4) **Conflict resolution and management:** In this regard Conflict interpersonal, intrapersonal and intergroup frequently exists in organisations are taken in to consideration. Questions that arise are where does conflict exist? Who are the involved parties? How is it being managed?

   Interviews, third party observations and observation meetings are some of the methods that can be used in this context.

5) **Managing interface relations:** Interfaces represent the situations wherein two or more groups face common overlapping problems. The questions highlighted here are what is the nature of the relations between two groups? Are goals clear is responsibility clear?

6) **Superior subordinate relations:** This mainly focuses on the formal hierarchical relations in organisations dictate that some people lead and other follow. This relationship is again important for goal achievement and smooth functioning of an organisation. The questions that arise here are what are the extant leadership styles? What problems arise between superiors and subordinates?

   Questionnaires can be used to collect data here.

7) **Technological and engineering systems:** All organisations rely on multiple technologies for production and operations for information processing and thus diagnosing technological and engineering systems is of utmost importance. Some important questions here are, are the technologies adequate for satisfactory performance?

   Interviews and group discussions focusing on technology are among the best ways to determine the adequacy.

8) **Strategic management and long range planning:** Monitoring the environment, adding and deleting products, predicting future events and making decisions are some of the functions that fall under this process. Who is

responsible for looking range decisions? Do they have adequate tools and support? are some of the questions highlighted in this context.

Interviews of key policy makers' group discussion and examination of historical records may be used to collect relevant data.

9) **Organisational learning:** This diagnosis is mainly concerned with the learning climate in an organisation. The questions that arise are what are our strengths problem areas? What observation ideas suggestions are available from all organisational members?

Interviews, questionnaires, group methods of diagnosis examination of assumptions and culture can be used to collect information in this regard.

2.5 MARVIN WEISBORD'S 'SIX BOX MODEL'

Marvin Weisbord's "Six Box Model" is a diagnostic tool in order to understand the effectiveness of an organisation. This model also helps understand management of change in an organisational set up. Weisbord identified six areas in which things should go right and be internally consistent for an organisation to be successful. The six box in this model are described as follows:

1) **Purpose:** When we speak about purpose as one of the boxes we mainly focus on the objective of the organisation and reason why the said objective was developed. What is the purpose behind the overall functioning of the organisation and understanding it is of utmost value under this. Diagnosis of the purpose or goal will definitely help develop suitable intervention strategy in order to achieve the goals of the organisation. Further if the purpose is not suitably derived, the process of goal setting can be repeated.

2) **Structure:** The work activity in order to achieve the organisational goal needs to be divided or structured for its smooth achievement. Under this box the work activity may be categorized in a systematic manner. The structure is diagnosed for any changes that are required to be made based on the external environment, changes in technology and so on.

3) **Relationship:** Interpersonal relationship between employees and between the employees and management is extremely important and thus under this box with the help of varied techniques the relationship in the organisation needs to be enhance. This will lead to reduction in conflict and effective performance amongst the employees. Diagnosis of relationships and also communications is extremely relevant as an y problems diagnosed in this area may be dealt with at the earliest in order to avoid any complications and obstacles in the organisational processes.

4) **Rewards:** To work towards change process and towards organisational development some kind of driving force is required. An appropriate reward system will serve as a suitable driving force. Diagnosis of reward system is also important in order to find out whether they are suitable and on par with the work activity and performance displayed by the employees.

5) **Leadership:** All the boxes that we discussed are crucial but an effective leader is required not only to supervise the whole activity but also to maintain integrity and balance. Diagnosis has to be carried out with regard to the effectiveness of leadership in an organisation so as to develop suitable

intervention and training programmes in case if the leadership is not found to be effective in an organisation.

6) **Helpful mechanism**: Various mechanisms, like technological support, help from experts and other facilities should be available to facilitate the whole process of managing change. Diagnosis in this area will help the organisation update their technology and also develop various other facilities.

This model will also be discussed in the context of managing change.

Self Assessment Questions

1) Discuss relationship as one of the boxes in the model suggested by Weisbord.

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2) Discuss the box pertaining to helpful mechanism.

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2.6 LET US SUM UP

The purpose of organisational diagnosis is to establish a widely shared understanding of a system and based on that understanding to determine whether change is desirable. Diagnosticians attempt to change an organisation as its necessary to accomplish the purpose of diagnosis change in one part of the system affects the other part. Organisational development focuses to improve the organisational capacity to handle its internal and external functioning and relationships. It should also include the things like improved interpersonal and group process with effective communication, enhanced ability to cope with organisational problems of all kinds etc. It also includes improved skill in dealing with destructive conflict and higher levels of trust and cooperation among members of the organisation. These all objectives stem from a value system based on an optimistic view of the nature of man that man in a supportive environment is capable of achieving higher levels of development. This all process should be carried out more scientifically by testing the hypothesis and continual reviewing of results. The diagnostic component and the action component are intimately related in dual way in development of the organisation.

This unit highlights that diagnosis is a conceptual and collaborative process involving both managers and consultant. It aimed at discovering the cause of specific problems and directed in assessing the departments of the organisation. The organisation is viewed as open system to coordinate the behaviours of its department. As open system organisation are hierarchically ordered and composed of groups. It consists of environmental inputs, a set of design components called a strategic orientation and a variety of outputs. Diagnosis thus involves understanding each of the parts and then to assess how the strategic orientation starts with each other.

In today's world of growing competition and globalization, any organisations needs to carry out diagnosis of its structure, systems, sub systems and processes in order to understand them in a better manner and to further carry out changes and modifications.

Thus in the present unit we discussed about the concept of the diagnosis in an organisational set up and further discussed about the purposes and perspective of diagnosis. We also highlighted the three phases of organisational development namely, entry, data collection and feedback. Then we explained various organisational processes that may be required to be diagnosed in order to promote organisational effectiveness. Lastly we discussed the Marvin Weisbord's 'Six Box Model' that helps us understand the diagnosis in an organisation in a better manner with the help of the six boxes namely, purpose, structure, relationship, rewards, leadership and helpful mechanisms.

2.7 UNIT END QUESTION

1) Discuss in detail the concept of diagnosis and its relevance in an organisational set up.

2) Explain any two phases of diagnosis in an organisation.

3) Discuss the purposes to carry out diagnosis in an organisational set up.

4) Discuss various organisational processes that need to be diagnosed.

5) Describe the Six Box Model.

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