

UNDERSTANDING SCHOOLS IN THE CONTEXT OF CLASSICAL AND NEO-CLASSICAL THEORIES OF MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Theories of management came into existence in different contexts and there is clear evidence of the development of neo-classical theories by challenging classical theories with the emphasis on human factor into management. Yet, there are instances of unexpected outcomes of management in public administration in India today. In the recent time some researches strongly uphold that classical theory of management still has relevance in process of management. On the other hands, it was found that much importance is given to human relation factor in management. In this context this study was undertaken in Nuapada District of Odisha. The population of the present study was consisted of all elementary schools of Nuapada District. It is located in the western part of Odisha. For the purpose of this study Komna and Khariar blocks were purposively selected where 40 teachers and 10 Headmasters from 10 different schools were interviewed. The purpose of this study was to examine the application, effects and challenges of classical (scientific, bureaucratic and administrative) and Neoclassical (human relation) approaches of management in the functioning of school. Thus, keeping in view the requirements of the study exploratory design was adopted. The findings of the study suggest that there is comprehensive application of the major propositions of both classical and neoclassical theories in school management. It is undoubtedly established that neoclassical theory of management has provided acceptable and sustainable paths in management but cannot be afforded to substitute it with the classical approach to management in totality. Rather the blended approach of classical and neoclassical theory of management can bring success in the form of effective and smoother management of school as productive social unit.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Management theories were evolved in response to solve the problems of industrial organizations. The classical theory of organization accepts that the administration is a common structural concept, which has a common applicability, irrespective of the condition and framework. The principles suggested by classical management theory have great relevance in the approaches of management. It makes a clear distinction between operative activities and managerial activities. This theory emphasizes adoption of scientific methods, defined set of objective and principles with defined set of works to the problems of management and highlight mutual cooperation between employers and employees which strengthen production and efficiency of workers (Sarkar and Khan, 2013). The importance of classical theories of management may be pointed out from the study Relevance of Classical Management theories to modern public administration in which Alfred G. Nhema (2015) explained that the classical theories provided a solid foundation and strong system of accountability for modern public administration that includes the primacy of the rule of law, a commitment to due process in serving the public good, a concern for efficiency in service delivery and for probity in the use of public funds. But it has certain limitations that it considered physiological factors and neglects psychosocial factors. It stressed organization is machine and man as its components which results into inefficiency in the organization.

Neoclassical theory of management grew out of the limitation of the classical theory. Under classical approach attention was focused on jobs and mechanical aspects of organization. Workers resisted this approach as it did not provide the social and psychological satisfaction. Therefore, attention was shifted towards human side of management. It emphasizes humans' needs, drives, behaviors and attitude of individual (Sahu, 2017). This approach recognizes an organization as a social system subject to the sentiments and cultural patterns of the member of the organization, group dynamics, leadership, motivation; participation, job environmental, etc. constitute the core of the neoclassical theory. This approach changed the view that employees are tools and furthered the belief that employees are valuable resources. Neoclassical approach is not free from limitations

like, it lacks the precision of classical theory because human behaviour is unpredictable, lack of scientific validity and suffers from a clinical bias, and its findings are tentative. Lastly its application in practice is very difficult because it requires fundamental changes in the thinking and attitude of both management and workers (Sarkar and Khan, 2013). Some research study found that the

Classical management theory is essential in managing the organization and institution (Ehiobuche and Hui-wen., 2012, Nhema, 2015). On the other hand, emphasis was given to application of human relation approach in management of organization (Krishnamurthy, 2015, and Thamarasser, 2016). Some studies find that there is lack of application of human relation and classical approach management of organization (Kishore and Sowmya, 2014). So, despite much advancement in the development of theories, management of organization has been a complex affair and the field of educational management is one of them. In present day situation the system of education comes across with manifold challenges such as students' unrest, irregularity in teaching, lack of confirmation with the methods and techniques prescribed by the authority, lack of proving quality education, lack of discipline, cooperation and coordination among the teaching staff, lack of non-teaching staff and students, mismanagement of staff by administrator, misuse of resources, unavailability of adequate infrastructure instead of having the required resources, in appropriate distribution of works, time management, dissatisfaction of teacher towards their profession, unsatisfied guidance and counselling, inappropriate planning, organizing, controlling and reporting the plans and activities etc. To understand all these problems closely this study "contextualizing classical and neoclassical theories of management in school" was undertaken. However, this attempts to contextualize the major propositions classical and neoclassical theories such as planning, division of work and responsibility, true science of work, authority taken from classical theories and the principle of individual's choice and freedom, communication and cooperation, team works, encouragement and motivation, human relation, individual being and participatory management are taken from neoclassical theories of management. The population of study was consisted of all elementary schools of Nuapada District, Odisha. The District is located in the western part of Odisha. For the purpose of this study Komna and Khariar blocks of Nuapada district were purposively selected where 40 teachers and 10 Headmasters from 10 different schools were interviewed. Precisely the purpose of this study was to examine application, effects and challenges of classical (scientific, bureaucratic and administrative) and Neoclassical (human relation) approaches of management in the functioning of school. Thus, keeping in view the requirements of the study exploratory design was adopted.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The major findings of the study are drawn after the analysis and interpretation of relevant data based on the eleven major propositions of classical and neoclassical theory of management together. In the study it was found that there was application of the principles of these theories in schools' practices. Neoclassical theory of management provided sustainable paths to management. The blended approach of classical and neoclassical theory of management has been effective and productive in functioning of schools. Nature of school management in sample blocks has been described in the subsequent sections.

(1) Planning: the principle of planning of classical theory of management is operational in all 10 schools. For all types of activities of school in which all the teachers and SMC members participate and share their opinions, suggestions and feedbacks for the planning the future course of actions. A high majority of teachers report that sometimes problems arise in the planning process but such problems are resolved with proper discussion and deliberations. However, half of the respondents view that for qualitative and effective plan, the management lacking fund and support from the Government. (2) Division of Works and Responsibilities: all respondents of this study report that the management of school assign the works and responsibilities to the members of institutions according to their knowledge, skills and capabilities. 30 respondents, out of 40, view that the management imposes extra works and responsibilities on them because of non-availability of required staff. (3) True Science of Work: most of the respondents of this study view that the school management follows the practices of working methods, fixed laws, rules and principles for the proper and effective functioning of educational enterprise but half of the respondent complained that all the rules and regulations are not properly implemented in the school. Conflicts and disagreement sometime occur while implementing the fixed laws, rules and principles in the management of school but all these conflicts and disagreement are resolved within the institution. (4) Authority: 35 respondents of 40 strongly state that the authority of school possesses the power and capabilities of planning, guiding, and supervising in management of school activities. The authority guides, directs and supervises the members of management in their works and responsibilities. All the respondents complemented the authority, for its openness in consideration of opinions and recommendations of teachers, students and SMC members while taking any collective decision of schools. But in the process of management sometime problems and conflict occurs because of disagreement, misunderstanding regarding certain issues between the authority and subordinates which leads to ineffective functioning of schools. (5) Individual's Choice and Freedom: in this study half of the respondents

view that the management system considers the individual's choice and freedom while assigning any class, curriculum transaction or any sort of activities in the process of management. All the stakeholders have right to say against the authority if their choice and freedom is not considered in the management process of schools. However, the principle 'individual's choice and freedom' is not practised in some schools because of the problems of staff shortage. (6) Communication and Cooperation: in the study most of the respondents state that there is very good and cordial cooperation and communication for conducting every activity of the schools in the management system. Few respondents of the study view that all the teachers cooperate in the management process but no SMC member shows willingness to cooperate with them. They are not getting required level of cooperation and proper communication from the SMC members for the management of school's affairs. (7) Team works: all the informants of the study view that their management system acts like a team for the smoother and effective functioning of schools. In team work sometime some teachers and staff members become unwilling to discharge a particular activity of the school and hence the team work sometimes does not become much effective. (8) Encouragement and motivation: half of the respondents accept that all teachers and students are getting motivation and encouragement from the management to discharge their duties and responsibilities. The students directly get encouragement from the management of school and teachers and other members of school management also getting encouragement from the society, community and system of education. Other half of the respondents view that no separate encouragement is given to them for better performance, even 12 respondents state that they are facing problems related work load. (9) Human Relation: all the respondents of the study agree on the point that there is good relationship between and among all the members of the school management and students. But maintaining good relationship with teachers and students is not always easy task for the authority and teachers of the schools. They also state that some time they face problems in maintaining good relationship with colleagues and students. (10) Individual being: all the respondents of the study accept the fact of consideration of individual being by the management of school as unique being and different from others who brings certain attitudes, beliefs, thinking, ideas etc. However, some respondents complaint that sometime management is confronting problems while considering the individual being to the process of management because of staff shortage and required material resources which are crucial for differently able individual. (11) Participatory management: in this study, irrespective of their position and gender, all the respondents agree that the management take into consideration the participation of all teachers and members of management committees for the proper and democratic management of the school. However, 15 respondents express their disappointment over the participation of SMC members for not being serious in the management process of the schools. In one school there was no School Management Committee (SMC) and the school was working without the SMC. Sometime the teachers express their unwillingness to participate in the management process of the school. All the respondents of this study accept the importance of participation of the entire stakeholders in the process of management and ensuring democratic working place and conditions in schools.

CONCLUSION

From the findings on the major propositions of both classical and neoclassical theory of management many relevant conclusions can be drawn. In this study it was found that blending of the propositions of both classical and neoclassical theory can have significant implications on any formal organization like school. **Planning** is universally accepted principle of every organization. In classical theory of management planning for the organization is carried out by the authority, which is criticised for not being democratic in terms of the interest, will and motivation of the stakeholder of organization as revealed in the study. Planning becomes more effective and better when the principles of neoclassical theory is blended with classical theory of management in which participation of all stakeholders is ensured and their will, opinions, suggestions and feedbacks are taken into consideration. **Division of works and responsibility** should be done according to knowledge, skills and capabilities of personnel is the one of the principles of classical theory of management. Due to lack of teaching personnel works and responsibility are imposed on teachers as a result they feel disappointed towards their duty and hence functioning of schools is affected adversely. Measures should be taken to avoid the problems of imposing the works and responsibilities, beyond their capacity, to teaching personnel. While assigning works and responsibilities the interest, will and capacity of the individual should be taken into consideration. **Practices of the true science of works** (i.e. fixed working methods, laws, rules and principles) are essential for the proper and effective functioning of educational enterprise. Conflicts and disagreement sometime come on the ways while implementing the fixed laws, rules and principles in the management of school. So, there should be proper mechanism and channels to resolve the problem of implementing the true science of works. While implementing true science of works there should be flexibility where one can go beyond the fixed rules and regulations to deal with the given challenges and problems. **The authority** of school must possess the power and capabilities of planning, guiding, and supervising for better and effective management of school activities. Authority should consider the opinions and recommendations of teachers, students and SMC members while taking any decision of school. Authority should be competent enough to solve the problems and conflict due to disagreement, misunderstanding regarding certain issues between the authority and subordinates which may lead to

malfunctioning of schools. In modern educational enterprise consideration of individual choice and freedom has become more essential and important. All members of the institution must have the right to express their concern before the authority. By considering the individual's choice and freedom the management can utilize the resources to a best level. The management cannot take the full advantage of individual putting restrictions on their freedom and personal choice. So, individual's choice and freedom is an important in management of institution. **Cooperation and communication** are integral part of human civilization. Without cooperation and communication no organization, institution, society or community can function better in way as established through this study. Hence, it becomes very essential and integral part in every aspect of life. There should be very good and cordial cooperation and communication for conducting every activity of the schools smooth and effectively. **Team spirit** is an important factor for any organization for its smoother and effective management. Teamwork enables the employee to accomplish tasks faster and more efficiently than tackling them individually. Team culture for discharging tasks reduces workloads for all employees by enabling them to share responsibilities or ideas. One should also consider employees' levels of interest in the project at hand, which positively influences the efficiency or speed of their output in accomplishing the task. So, every one of the organization should have team spirit and good cooperation among themselves to achieve the objectives of their enterprises. In team work, if teachers and other staff members become unwilling for particular activity of the school in that case the authority of institution should lead the team taking all the members together in a group. Classical theory of management does not give importance on motivation and encouragement of individual worker and as a result the fullest growth and expansion of individual would not possible. But neoclassical theory of management gives importance to individual's motivation and encouragement. Because motivation is what that causes one's to act, whether it is getting a glass of water to reduce thirst or reading a book to gain knowledge. But motivation and encouragement cannot be sustained for long in the absence of a balance approach in entrusting responsibilities. So, such types of problems should be solved as early as possible to get the benefits of stress-free individuals for the proper and effective management of school enterprise. Each employee brings to job situation carries certain attitudes, beliefs, and ways of life as well as certain skills-technical, social, and logical. Each one is participating part of the organization and has to be taken as human being acting in group. Thus, an individual should be recognized as interacting with social and economic factors which is very important consideration in any management activity of organization. The school management is confronting some problems while considering the individual being because of staff shortage and required material resources. Such situation cannot continue for long where individual being is compromised. So, such problem should be solved for the fullest growth and development of individual in particular and institution in general. **Human relation** is the process of training the members of organization, addressing their needs, fostering a workplace culture and resolving conflicts between different employees or between employees and management. The management should consider the physical, psychological and sociological aspects of its human resources. By considering the psychological aspects of teachers and students the management could address their mental conflicts and stress and similarly by considering the sociological aspects the management could solve many societal problems. Understanding ways that human relations can impact on the costs, competitiveness and long-term sustainable development and growth of an organization. So, consideration of physical, psychological and sociological aspect in human relation is very important for school management which has been probed in this study. **Participation of workers** in management is a tool which promotes better relations and establishes industrial and institutional peace as also found in this study. The need is to implement it honestly to reap its merits in the form of mutual understanding, increased efficiency of workers, increased production etc. Workers' participation in management implies mental and emotional involvement of workers in the management of schools. It is considered as a mechanism where workers have a say in the decision-making. Participation of workers in management gives them a sense of importance, pride and accomplishment; it creates a sense of belongingness with the place of work and workmanship and increases the possibility of creativity. So, participation of all stakeholders in the management of organization is an essential attribute of its functioning.

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