

CLASSICAL SCHOOL OF THOUGHTS- II

Lecture 4 is continuation of the evolution of public administration & management. At the end of the lecture students will be able to understand:-

1. Human relations school and the work of the main contributors

Contributors of This Approach

The main contributors to human relation schools were Elton Mayo, Chester I. Barnard and Herbert Simon.

The Human Relations School was the response to Classical School. Those who believed in the assumptions of classical school ignored the human element in the organizations. They looked at human beings as mechanical devises. Initially the methods of Classical Schools worked, and then gradually these stopped giving intended results.

Human relations theory has diverse tradition of models, techniques, research findings, and ideas that often trace their roots back to the Hawthorne Experiments.

Hawthorne studies

Elton Mayo, Roethlisberger and other undertook the famous experiment at Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company at Cicero, Illinois, USA, between 1927–1932. Before that from 1924 to 1927, the National Research Council (USA) did study in collaboration with Western Electric Company to determine the effect of illumination and other conditions on workers and their productivity

Researchers conducting the experiments at the Hawthorne Plant of Western Electric Company placed two groups of employees doing the same work into separate rooms.

One group was treated as the control, and the second was test group. The control group is one for which the variables like light, temperature and working conditions are not changed. The test group is one for which the variables like light temperature etc., are changed. The test group in the Hawthorne Experiment was exposed to various experimental changes such as increased lighting, decreased lighting, rest, pauses, and so on. For the test group the light was gradually decreased. It was decreased to the extent that it was as little as moonlight.

The researchers of Western Electric Company expected the experiments to lead to different levels of performance for the experimental (control) group, and for the test group. To the amazement of the researchers, both groups increased their performance.

The Researchers concluded that the experimental design was problematic, which allowed extraneous factors to enter the design that led to these unanticipated results. What Mayo and his colleagues found that employees in the groups were treated as special. They were given attention by management, separated from other employees, and encouraged to perform. They found in general that improvements in productivity were due to social factors as morale, good relations with managers and members of group. Employees who are given attention by management, who are treated as special, and who perceive their work as significant can become highly motivated and thus become more productive. This phenomenon arising basically from people being “noticed” is called Hawthorne effect. What the Hawthorne studies emphasized that organizations are not just machines & tools but are also social systems.

Chester I. Barnard

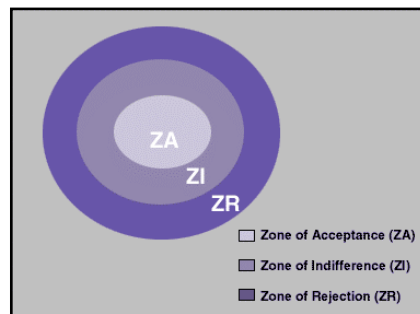
Chester I. Barnard wrote the most influential book entitled “The Function of the Executive”. He was the president of Bell Telephone Company in New Jersey, USA from 1927 to 1948. Barnard was much influenced by Mayo and others of Human Relation Schools. His analysis of the manager was that the manager has to understand the behaviour of people in organization and maintain a system of cooperative effort in formal organizations. In his book he emphasized the following:

- ❑ He focused on the social implications (aspects) of organization. In response to Scientific Management Theory, Barnard added the human component to the work situation.
- ❑ He argued that the manager's role included gaining cooperation, defining purposes, and providing a system of communication.
- ❑ He believed that the subordinate was the ultimate source of authority; he or she chooses whether to accept or reject orders given by the manager.

According to him subordinates had three zones or range of orders that workers will operate under:

- ❑ The zone of rejection,
- ❑ The zone of acceptance,
- ❑ The zone of indifference

The Three Zones of Employees



According to Barnard If employees are managed properly, the zone of acceptance can extend into the zone of indifference, thereby increasing the worker's tolerance for the manager's orders.

- ❑ If managed inappropriately the zone of indifference will turn into the zone of rejection, thereby decreasing the worker's tolerance for the manager's orders.
- ❑ Barnard believed that organizations could be improved by the adoption of:
 - ❖ A cooperative attitude between functional units (worker & managers)
 - ❖ Interdepartmental instruction (coordination among departments)
 - ❖ The cross training of personnel (training of employee from different departments of the organization)

Herbert Simon (1916 – 2001)

Herbert Simon was influenced by Barnard's work and his focus in the organization was human behaviour particularly focusing on decision making. He pointed out that Classical School focused on rational processes of increasing output, ignoring that human beings have limited cognition and knowledge of complex problems.

According to him group behavior requires not only the adoption of correct decisions, but also the adoption by all members of the group of the same decisions.

According to Herbert Alexander Simon organizations are important because it:-

- ❑ It provides the environments and structure that mold and develop personal qualities and habits
- ❑ Provides those in responsible positions with the means for exercising authority and influence over others
- ❑ Structures communications, determines the environments of information in which decisions are taken

The major contribution of Simon was to the understanding of decision making in organization and artificial intelligence. Simon got Nobel Prize in Economics in 1978. (For his work see: <http://citiseer.ist.psu.edu/correct/15784>)

Concepts

- ❑ **Illumination experiment:** the experiment conducted at Hawthorne Electric Plant to study the group behaviour on performance.
- ❑ **Hawthorne effect:** when group receives attention from supervisor
- ❑ **Productivity:** output per worker
- ❑ **Human Relations School:** the view that human behaviour (group) has important influence on productivity and performance of organization