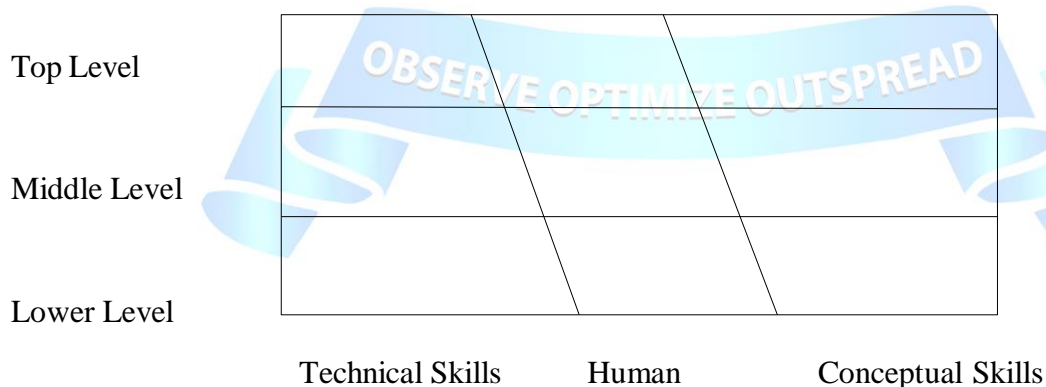


MODERN ERA – SYSTEM & CONTINGENCY APPROACH

Systems Approach	Contingency Approach
It treats all organizations alike irrespective of their size, cultural settings and dynamics	It treats each organization as a unique entity.
It stresses interactions and interdependencies among systems and subsystem	It identifies the exact nature of inter dependencies and their impact on organizational design and managerial style.
It studies organization at an abstract and philosophical level.	It is more down to earth and action oriented
It is neutral or non-committal on the validity of classical principles of management.	It firmly rejects the blind application of principles regardless of realities of individual situations.
It stresses upon the synergetic effect of organizations and the external input.	It is related to organization structure and design to the environment.
It is vague and complex.	It is pragmatic and action oriented.

MANAGERIAL SKILLS

Management job is different from other jobs. It requires elements of stewardship and commitment to the purpose. It involves the obligation to make prudent use of human and material resources. It requires sound judgment to handle complex situations. Further, the nature of the job becomes increasingly complex at each higher level because of the increase in the scope of authority and responsibility. Therefore, each higher level requires increased knowledge, broader perspective and greater skills. For the purpose of analysis, skills required of a manager are classified under three heads – technical, human (employee relations skill) and conceptual skills as shown in Figure 2.2. The exhibit helps in understanding the levels of management responsibility, the principal skill requirements, and the extent to which each kind of skill is required at each



Technical Skills

Technical skills refer to the ability to use the tools, equipment, procedures, techniques and knowledge of a specialized field. It is primarily concerned with the ways of doing the things. It implies proficiency in a specific field of activity. Technical skills are most important for the lower level managers, because by nature their job involves supervision of the workers. Effective supervision and coordination of the work of the subordinates, therefore, depends on the technical skill possessed by the lower level manager. Any supervisor without a sound knowledge of the job cannot make an effective supervisor. Such supervisors are not respected by the subordinates at the shop floor. The relative importance of the technical skills as compared to the other skills diminishes as one moves up to higher levels of management.

Human Skills

Human skills are primarily concerned with “*persons*” in contrast to “*things*”. When a manager is highly skilled in employee relations, he is aware of their attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs and recognizes their limitations as well as their usefulness. He accepts as an important fact of life, the existence of viewpoints and feelings, different from his own. Thus, human skills refer to the ability of the manager to work effectively as a group member and to build cooperative effort in the team he leads. It is the ability to work with, understand and motivate people. He understands why people behave as they do and is able to make his own behavior understandable to them. He can foresee their reactions to possible courses of action. His skill in working with others is natural and continuous. He does not apply it in random or in inconsistent fashion. It is a natural ingredient of his every action. The flair for understanding, empathizing and working with people are central to the human skills.

Conceptual Skills

Conceptual skills also called design and problem-solving skills involve the ability to:

- ✓ See the organization and the various components of it as a whole;
- ✓ Understand how its various parts and functions are related in network fashion; and
- ✓ To foresee how changes in any one of these may affect the others

Conceptual skills extend to visualizing the relation of the organization to industry, to the community and to the political, economic and social forces of the nation as a whole and even to forces which operate beyond the national boundaries. It is the creative force within the organization. A high degree of conceptual skill helps in analyzing the environment and in identifying the opportunities and threats. Managements of companies like ITC, Larsen & Toubro, Asian Paints, Bajaj Auto, Bharthi Telecom in the private sector and National Dairy Development Board, Bharat Heavy Electricals (BHEL) in the public sector, to mention a few, have amply demonstrated this skill in gaining a competitive edge over their competitors.

As you have understood by now – the three types of skills discussed so far are not mutually exclusive. In other words, management job always requires all the three skills, but in different proportions depending upon the level of management. There is a gradual shift in the emphasis from the bottom to the top of the pyramid. Technical skills and human skill are always in great demand at the lower level of management for it is there the productive processes and operations are carried out. It is there where you find most of the people.

It is there where the action takes place. In contrast, the need for conceptual skill is greatest at the top level of management. Obviously, top managers are not often involved in the direct application of specific methods, procedures and techniques, compared to those at the lower echelons of management. As evident from the foregoing discussion, at the entry level of the management job, that is, at the supervisory level, besides technical skills, a manager has to process human skills and the problem-solving skills (conceptual). To climb up the organizational ladder, one must not only be good at the skills required for the present job, but also learn and acquaint with the skills required at the next level. As result, in the event of promotion to the next higher levels, he/she would feel at home and discharge the responsibilities with ease.

Based on the differences in the type of skills required, organizations assess the training needs of the managers. Accordingly, appropriate training, development methods and programs are designed to equip them with the skills required at the respective levels. Although, each of these skills is needed in some degree at every level of management, there are successful executives who have no great number of technical skills. But they are able to compensate the lack of that skill through superior creative ability and skill in identifying the talent and empowering the people through effective human resources development practices and good leadership.

MANAGERIAL ROLES

Hennery Mintzberg, a contemporary management thinker has done lot of research on the various roles performed by a manager. A role, according to him, “Is an organized set of behaviors belonging to an identifiable office or position.” Just as characters in a play have specific roles, managers also play different roles. Through his studies, Mintzberg identified ten roles that managers play at various times to varying degrees. He classified them under three broad categories; interpersonal roles, informational roles, and decisional roles.

ROLE	Description	Identifiable activities from the study of Chief Executives
INTERPERSONAL		
Figure head	Symbolic head; obligated to perform routine duties of a legal or social nature.	Ceremony, status Requests, solicitations.
Leader	Responsible for the motivation and activation of subordinates; responsible for staffing, training and associative duties.	Virtually all managerial activities involving Subordinates.
Liaison	Nurtures and maintains network of outside contacts. The liaison role involves interface activities with environment.	Acknowledgement of mail, authorizing communication with external world.

INFORMATIONAL		
Monitor	Seeks and receives wide variety of special information from different sources. Thorough understanding of organization and environment; emerges as nerve center of internal and external information of the organization.	All activities concerned primarily with receiving and processing information.
Disseminator	Transmits information received from both within and outside the organization to members of the organization; some information factual, some involving interpretation and integration of diverse value positions of organizational influencers.	Forwarding mail for informational purposes, verbal contacts involving information flow to subordinates (eg; review sessions, instant communication flows)
Spokesman	transmits information to stake holders about external environment and organization's plans, policies, actions, results, etc;	board meetings; handling contacts involving transmission of information to outsiders.
DECISIONAL		
Entrepreneur	Searches the environment for opportunities and initiates action to bring about changes; supervises design of strategy and review sessions involving initiation or improvement of projects.	
Disturbance handler	Responsible for corrective action when organization faces unexpected disturbances and turbulence.	Strategy and review sessions involving disturbances and crises.
Resource allocator	Responsible for the allocation of organizational resources of all kinds; making or approval of all significant organizational decisions.	Scheduling requests for authorization; and activities involving budgeting and the programming of subordinates work.
Negotiator	Responsible for representing the organizations at major negotiations	Negotiation.

CONTINGENCY APPROACH

According to Kast and Rosen Zweig, “The contingency view seeks to understand the interrelationships within and among sub-system as well as between the organization and its environment and to define patterns of relationships or configurations of variables. Contingency views are ultimately directed towards suggesting organizational designs and managerial actions most appropriate for specific situations”. .

Management is entirely situational. The application and effectiveness of any techniques is contingent on the situation.

Management action is contingent on certain action outside the system or subsystem as the case may be.

Management should, therefore, match or fit its approach to the requirements of the particular situation. To be effective management policies and practices must respond to environmental changes.

Organizational action should be based on the behavior of action outside the system so that organization should be integrated with the environment.

Management should understand that there is no one hard way to manage. They must not consider management principles and techniques universal.

