TECHNIQUES

✓ Job rotation and slow promotion

In Japan, life-time employment means limited upward mobility. Movement is predominantly lateral through job rotation. Promotions are based on seniority.

✓ Complex appraisal system

In addition to the output, employees are appraised on the basis of traits such as creativity, honesty, seriousness, maturity and cooperation with others. Employees' performance in the long run is given more importance, since evaluation is done not exactly on the basis of immediate performance. Employees are naturally motivated to demonstrate loyalty and commitment by their attitudes and actions.

✓ Emphasis on work groups

The Japanese system gives far greater attention to organising tasks around groups than around individuals. Autonomous work teams are constituted. Tasks are assigned to such teams and the group members of the team then decide among themselves the best way for performing the tasks.

✓ Open communication

The Japanese system is inherently designed to foster open communication. Job rotation and emphasis on groups means that employees build an informal network that facilitates extensive face to face communication. The physical work setting is also designed to foster communication. People work in cubicles and in open space which facilitate interaction and open communication.

✓ Consensus decision- making

In the Japanese model, the manager while taking decisions discusses them to those who may be affected by the decision. When all are familiar with the proposal, a formal request for a decision is made, and as a result of the previous informal preparations, it is easily ratified.

✓ Concern for the employee

Managers spend a great deal of time talking to employees about everyday matters. They take keen interest in employees' needs and problems. In fact, the concern for employees is one of the parameters on which managers performance is appraised. Japanese companies offer a wide range of benefits to their employees. Beyond the usual incentives, a comprehensive

offering of cultural, athletic, and recreational activities is very common. For instance, an annual calendar of office events might include several overnight trips, monthly Saturday afternoon recreation, and an average of six office parties- all at the company's expense. In addition, welfare measures like subsidized family housing for married, dormitories for the unmarried, nurseries for pre-school children, scholarships for children, mortgage loans and the like speak a lot about the concern for employees.

William Ouchi, an American management thinker, had extensively studied Japanese organisations and gave a name to their management practices, called "theory z". He strongly advocated for the adaptation of Japanese practices for the American companies to improve productivity. It is appropriate here to understand how Japanese practices differ from American management practices.

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

Creativity, in general, may be defined as an "escape from mental stuckness". In the organizational context, it may be viewed as new insights which points to better ways of dealing with reality. It involves a departure from conventional thinking to non-conventional thinking. It entails establishment of a relationship between the hitherto unrelated things, ideas or concepts. A close examination of many products enables us to understand how apparently

unrelated things are related to produce a new product. The ubiquitous wet grinder found in many of the kitchens may be cited as a best example where a relationship is established between the electric motor and the conventional stone used in the Indian homes for grinding purposes since times immemorial. Similar is the case with the electric bulb and the lens that are combined to develop the overhead projector used in the classrooms. The same logic holds good for many products that we see around.

The Creativity Process

Creative people, in general, are few and far between in any society. Many products and services that we take for granted these days are the result of their creative thinking. It was J.P.Guildford, a noted psychologist who coined the phrases 'divergent' and 'convergent' to describe different thinking styles in the early 1950s. Accordingly, Convergent thinking is the sort of thinking most of us are trained to do. Divergent thinking is quite different from convergent thinking. It is intuitive thinking and is quite different from convergent thinking. It is intuitive thinking useful to deal with problems permitting several possible solutions where novel, unexpected answers emerge.

Physiologically, our brain has two distinct hemispheres: one on the left side, and the other on the right side. Psychologists have long back established that these two halves have totally different jobs. The function of the left side of the brain is linear thought process- the type of thinking involved when you solve a mathematical problem. The right side of the brain acts or behaves in a different way. Its functions are connected with imagery, and with intuition or 'gut-feel'.There is an obvious parallel between convergence/divergence and the left brain/right brain model. In other words, convergent thinking takes place in the left brain

while, divergent thinking in the right brain. Having understood the two spheres of the human brain, let us acquaint with the process of creativity:

Idea generation: The individual selects a problem to work on or more likely become aware that a problem or need exists. This is the starting point for the new product development indeed. This refers to the awareness about the 'gaps' in the market.

Preparation: The individual becomes obsessed with the idea/ problem, recalling and collecting information that seems relevant and dreaming up hypothesis without evaluating them. Openness to experience, tolerance for ambiguity and willingness and courage to redefine the existing concepts, beliefs are the important psychological attributes required at the stage.

Incubation: After assembling the available information, the individual relaxes and the subconscious mind becomes active. In this not much understood but crucial step, the individual often appears to be idle or day dreaming, but the subconscious is in fact trying to arrange the facts into a pattern. Psychological freedom and safety are important at this stage.

ORGANIZATIONAL CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

Just as individuals differ in their ability to translate their creative talents into results, organizations also differ in their ability to translate the talents of their members into new products, processes or services. To make the organization creative, managers need to know the steps involved in the creativity process presented above and take appropriate initiatives to encourage the process.

MANAGING AN INTERNATIONAL WORKFORCE

Whenever an organization expands its operations to other countries, it tends to become multicultural and will then face the challenge of blending various cultures together. The managerial personnel entering another nation need to adjust their leadership styles, communication patterns and other practices to fit their host country. Their role is to provide fusion of cultures in which employees from both countries adjust to the new situation seeking a greater productivity for the benefit of both the organization and the people of the country in which it operates.

MANAGEMENT OF DIVERSITY

"Managing for Diversity" pertains to a philosophy that is purely motivated by business purpose and market advantage. It is seen as a strategy for improving organizational competitiveness and efficiency. It is distinctly different from policies grounded in social purposes such as equal employment opportunity or affirmative action. It focuses on managing the mix of individuals assigned to a task, involved in the subordinate-supervisor relationship,

or employed in the organization. It may address decisions about composition of work groups, choice of supervisor, and training and other support for diverse groups.

Types of Workforce Diversity

Gender Diversity: Women have been moving steadily into occupations, professions and managerial jobs previously reserved for men. Their access to education and training continues to improve, providing many with the necessary qualifications to aspire to jobs in senior management.

Age Diversity: Mature workers are competent, dependable, strong work ethics, punctual, committed to quality, lower absenteeism, less likely to change jobs, proven ability to take of business. Fresher/ young people are enthusiastic, innovative and have the zeal to prove them. An organization should try to maintain a balance between mature and young employees because it provides the organization a competitive benefit.

Cultural Diversity: The biggest driver for a higher-level diversity strategy is the need to tap the creative, cultural and communicative skills of a variety of employees and to use those skills to improve company policies, products and customer experiences.

THE FUTURE TRENDS OF WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

- ✓ Society will become more diverse and, therefore, the workforce and the marketplace will become more diverse.
- ✓ There will be more globalization of corporations, which will lead to a more global workforce, marketplace, and economy
- ✓ Diverse work teams will be a reality in organizations
- ✓ Diversity will become more of a business concern than a social concern and be more closely linked to competitive strategies
- ✓ Diverse populations will make more money and spend more money and this increase in wealth will empower diversity
- ✓ Senior managers will become more involved in diversity issues because they will realize that the diverse workforce needs to be better utilized in order to remain competitive
- ✓ More managers will face the challenge of dealing with backlash and diversity training will be integrated more with other types of training.