TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

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Introduction :

Transactional analysis popularly known as TA is a fascinating theory introduced by Eric Berne[1] and developed by Harris[2] and Jongeward.[3] It is a technique for examining an interaction between two individuals. In addition to exchanging information in organizations, people communicate to reinforce their feelings about themselves. In this process, they make transactions with each other. These transactions are helpful in making participants comfortable and free to work or they can also make people uncomfortable and entrapped in emotional conflicts. The·identification and analysis of these transactions from communication are what transactional analysis (TA) is concerned with.

Transactional analysis is the simplest way to understand and modify, if necessary, human behaviour. It is the study of moves people make in their dealings with each other and is based on the idea that people's interactions resemble moves in a game. People making such moves are sometimes perfectly clear about their purposes and can predict the results of their moves. For instance, if a manager insults an employee, the manager can easily predict how that employee will feel and react subsequently. According to the California psychiatrist Eric Berne, TA teaches how people make moves, or transoctións, of which they are not aware. For example, a manager reviewing a performance appraisal with an employee may speak words that would sound merely descriptive if printed one page and read aloud. However, if these same words are spoken in a highly critical/tone of voice the employee may listen more carefully to the voice tone rather than to the words. TA thus helps us to be aware of the moves we make in our daily transactions with others and to predict the consequences of such moves ; it then teaches us how to make such transactions more efficient, and often, much more pleasant. TA thus provides the manager with the useful model of interpersonal relationship for analysis and understanding of human behaviour. It assists him in motivating, directing, counselling, and interviewing--and in fact, anything in which communicating plays an important role.

While TA was originally used as a group psychotherapeutic tool, it has been moving rapidly into corporations as an integral part of the training programmes to improve the interpersonal skills of the employees. It has become increasingly popular because of the following noteworthy reasons :

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- One of the greatest appeals of TA is that it avoids traditional psychological jargon. The basics of TA are simple to learn.

- TA is readily demonstrable (in organizations as well a in day-to-day life).

- It increases the efficient use of time.

- It provides a means of reducing the amount of bad feelings experienced by an individual.

- It can be used to improve the efficiency of communication.

- It reinforces and complements other management-development activities, including training in communication, leadership, brainstorming, job enrichment, management by objectives, organizational development programmes, and other similar prog-rammes.

What is a transaction :

Transactional analysis explains human behaviour in terms of a number of separate but related transactions. The early pioneer in TA, Eric Berne, was fond of games and described much of what goes on between people as a series of moves or plays. For instance, in gin rummy, one person plays a card, the other person picks up one card and plays another, and so on until the final play is over. A transaction is much the same. A person sends a message the is received by the first gentlemen. Thus, two people and from two to four ego states are directly involved. This clip, blip, or unit of human interaction is termed as transaction, and the diagnosis of such transactions is termed as transactional analysis. Thus, a transation is essentially an interaction between individuals. As Dedley Bennette contends "all social, psychological, material and spiritual contacts between individuals can be defined as transa-ctions".[4]

Ego states :

Ego state is defined as "a system of feelings accompanied by related set set of behaviou-ral patterns."[5] More simply, 'ego states' refers to the chief ways that individuals demonstrate their states of being in the world. TA offers a way for people to respond without being coerced in a given situation. To do that with autonomy and spontainiety they must be aware of the dynamics which are in action. The awareness comes from knowledge of human personality as depicted by three symbolic circles—which represent ego states, or states of mind. In fact, transactional analysis begins with the fundamental proposition that an individual has three ego states that characterize his personality—parent, adult, and child. The transactions between individuals are influenced by the particular ego state of each person at the time infor-mation is exchanged. Let us examine briefly these ego states.

(i) **Parent :** These behavioural characteristics are acquired from external feelings and experiences imposed upon an individual as an young child when the only alternative was to unquestionably accept certain mandates and consequences. In the diagram, the circle with

P in it, at the top of the snow-man like figure is called parent. (see the figure 1). Thus, in this state people act like the domineering parents. That part of the personality which is dogmatic, overprotective, authoritative and righteous is called the parent states. Every person has a parent in the sense that everyone experiences external stimuli in his childhood years (say first five to six years). This represents a huge collection of recordings in the brain of unquestioned, rather imposed external stimuli (events) perceived by an individual. The parent ego state can be nurturing, critical or negative. When the nurturing parent dominates, the individual gets comfort, recognition and prais in time of distress and reassurance in times of need and necessity. For instance, "I am sure that the problem will work out to be okay soon" is a statement made by a *nurturing parent*. Negative parent may be critical or oppressive, suffocative and over-controlling. For instance, "I advise to be careful you may involve in an accident if you drive your vechicle carelessly" is a statement made by a *negative parent*. When negative parent dominates, an individual tends to lecture and is hell-bent in not accepting others' ideas.

(ii) Adult : Adult ego state is the part of a person that is factual, logical, and objective, has no predetermined feelings, and evaluates a situation by investigation (either personally or by gathering data) and analysis of facts. People act like matured adults here. Adult is sensitive to the data in the here and now, dispassionately looking at what is happening. This adult ego state represents the rational, objective part of an individual's personality. It is linked to reality-testing, decision-making and problem-solving analysis. It is that part of personality as he figures out by himself. The decisions made by adult-dominated individuals are logical and largely non-emotional.

(iii) Child : Child ego state, represented by the circle with C on the bottom, is full of subjective feelings and it involves behavioural characteristics learned in infancy and early childhook. This is the most important part of an individual's personality which is associated with behaviour arising out of an emotional base – sadness, anger, rebellious nature, playing, loving, enjoying, etc. The *child ego state* is characterized by 'impulsiveness, affection, creation, confirmation, curiosity, dependency depression, and fearfulness'. Child may take on characteristics of either the natural child, the little professor, or the adaptive child. The *natural child* is spontaneous, expressive, self-centered, affectionate, curious, impulsive and untrained. The *little professor* child tends to be manipulated, creative, and initiative. Finally, the *adaptive child* has a tendency to react in a way determined by parental figures.
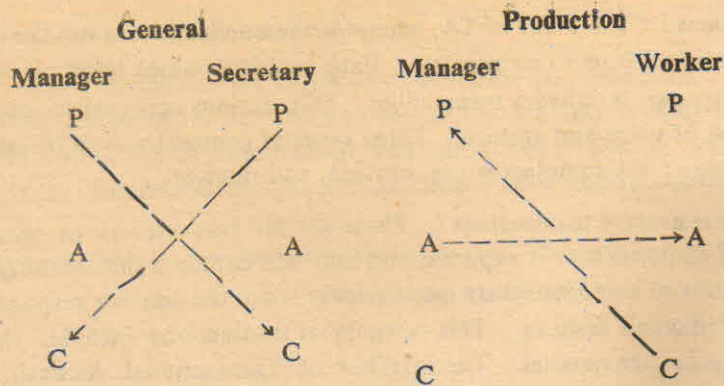
(P) Parent (P)

(A) Adult (A)

(C) Child (C)

Fig. 1 Three ego states

Human behaviour is evoked from these three ego states and a healthy personality maintains happy balance between all these three ego states.

	General			Production	
Manager		Secretary	Manager		Worker
P		P	P		P
A		A	A		A
C		C	C		C

General Manager

"Miss Deepika, if you make any more typographical erros on letters, I am sure you will be replaced".

Secretary (Deepika) :

"What are you talking sir. Your hand writing looks like chicken scratching and I am tired of your constant bellyaching. I would like your decision to replace me".

Production Manager

"Can you complete the target output of 200 units this week".

Worker :

"What do you mean ? Do you thing I am really goofing off ?

The second law of Transactional Analysis is "When the lines of the transactional diagram cross, it is crossed transaction, and communication will stop ! Crossed transactions are the primary source of interpersonal conflicts in an organization. These transactions lead to escalating exchange to a point of no return for both the individuals being involved in communication. They might continue the feud for an extended period of time and it could ultimately result in dysfunctional consequences by hurting the feelings of members involved in communication, Some forms of crossed transactions are more explosive and some other forms are less explosive but certainly disturb the interpersonal relations.

Ulterior transactions : The third general classification of transactions is 'ulterior', involving a total of three or more ego states. An ulterior transaction has a hidden meaning ; what is really going on is different what appears to be going on. When three ego states are involved the ulterior transaction is termed as 'angular' ; when four ego states are involved at once, the transaction is termed as 'duplex'.

Ulterior transactions involved messages between ego states that are different from the apparent or spoken ones. Sometimes a message is sent by a person conveys double meaning. Such transactions are complex to understand ; and/that is why these are named as 'ulterior'. These transactions involve at least two ego states on the part of the sender. The individual may project one thing but mean different thing. For example, when a manager says "you are welcome to discuss serious problems with me to reach a feasible solution" (adult), the actual

meaning may be that "you need not come to me if you have simple problems—afterall, you have to solve problems yourself and that is why you are being paid (parent state)". Such ulterior transactions are very difficult to identify and hence are not dealt with in transactional analysis. Figure 4 (a) illustates ulterior transactions.

Manager   **Employee**

P   P

Manager
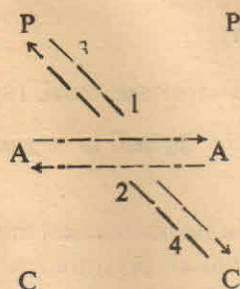
(1) (appearing adult) : "John, you are committing several mistakes. You shold be perfect in future".

(3) (ulterior, actnally thinking) "John, you are incompetent, you better regin".

A - - - - - - - - A

Employee

(2) (appearing adult) : "You are right sir, I will be more careful in my work." Selecting

C   C

(4) (ulterior, thinking child) : "You are assigning me the work which I am not supposed to do" Please help me in this connection by bearing with me even if I do mistakes".

Many of the cross-ups in communications within an organization are due to ignorance and unawareness of the powerful influence of transactions on communication outcomes. A complementary transaction suggests that communication channels are open and communication can continue ; a crossed transaction signifies that communication will stop (at that level) but that a more successful transaction can be initiated by one who is familiar with methods of moving others toward complementary types of transactions. Of all, ulterior transactions are the most difficult to digest as these transactions a most always have a hidden meaning different from the ostensible, or apparent, meaning.

Transactional analysis lays foundation for changing dysfunctional behaviour through the the development of mutual trust between people. It helps in making communication productive effective and . It also promotes authentic interpersonal relationship and provides a means of opening up channels of communication and of indentifying and deciding on the ways to eliminate the barriers to effective communication. Many organizations have been sponsoring transactionalanalysis programmes for their managerial personnel so that they identify their dominant ego states and develop more adult ego states, and develop their interpersonal skills.
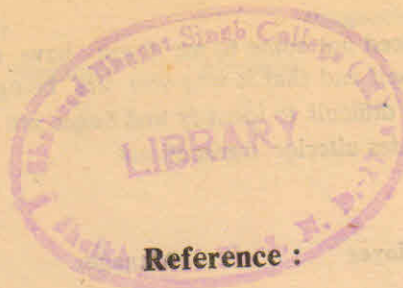
Reference :

1. Eric Berne "*Games People play*', (New York, Ballantine, 1978).

2. Thomas A. Harris, "*I am OK – You are OK*" (New York, Harper and Row, 1969).

3. Dorothy Jongeward "*Everybody* wins : *Transactional Analysis applied to organizations*" (Reading : Mass-Addision-Wesley, 1974).

   Dorothy Jongeward's major contribution to TA have been in its non-clinical application, though most of her discussion of theory is relevant to the clinical practitioners as well. Also see Muriel James and Dorothy Jongeward, "*Born to win*", Addison-wesley publishing company, 1971).

4. Dudley Bennett. "*Transaction Analysis and the Manager*", AMACOM (New York, 1976), pp-28.

5. Eric Berne, opcit. Also see K. Hedges Capon ; "*Spurious and Authentive Stroking*", Transactional Analysis Bullentin 6, No, 24 (Oct, 1967), pp 104. and Eris Berne, "*The structure and dynamices origins and coups*", *Philaderphia*, J.B. Lippui Cott Company, 1963.

   Robert L. Goulding ; Four Models of TA ; *International Jouranal of Group Therapy* : 26, No. 3. (July, 1976), pp. 385-392.

6. Adapted from James H. Morrison, and John O'Hearne : "*Practical Transactional Analysis in management*" (Addison-Wesley Pub co, Read, Massachusetts, 1977), pp. 16—17.