

We have a plethora of books on Organization Development (OD) that view organizations as open systems with different elements of mission, strategies, structures, processes, leadership, culture, etc. in alignment, and responsive to the demands of the larger environment. Many of these books are not too different from one another. In the midst of such volumes, the book “Dialogic Organization Development: The Theory and Practice of Transformational Change” edited by Gervase Bushe and Robert Marshak is a truly pioneering work that puts the focus back on the heart of OD – the spirit of inquiry. Instead of change driven by diagnosing how to align organizational elements with the demands of the broader environment, dialogic OD concerns itself with how to induce new ways of thinking by engaging with organizational conversations that creates and frames understanding and action.

It is widely recognized that organizations today operate in an environment that is referred to as VUCA – volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. This edited volume is, therefore very timely because there is increasing need for stimulating alternative or generative images, shaping how people think about things, and coming to terms with adaptive problems that involve changing mindsets. A large number of thoughtful practitioners in India are turning to methods of dialogic OD like appreciative inquiry, open space, world café, etc. for addressing complex challenges that confront them.

There are a large number of management institutions in India, and the libraries of these institutions should procure this pioneering volume. There are specialized programs to train OD practitioners, which must utilize this volume that deals with both the theoretical bases and practices of dialogic OD. A large number of HR and OD practitioners in Indian organizations are exposed to the latest thinking in the field, and most of them are members of the National HRD Network (NHRDN). In November, 2014, NHRDN organized its huge annual conference on the theme of “Sustainable Growth in VUCA Times”. The importance of this volume should be made clear to the NHRDN members, so that they understand how they can benefit from the practical insights this book offers. Thus given the innovative and unfamiliar nature of the subject, this important book should be carefully marketed.

I wish this book all success.

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