



FORMATION OF THE NATAL INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY GROUP

The year 1983 has witnessed the re-alignment of two main psychology groupings in South Africa, SIRSA and SAPA, culminating in the formation of the Psychological Association of South Africa (PASA).

Various institutes have been formed under this new body, amongst which is the Institute for Industrial Psychology (IIP). Before the formation of this institute under PASA, the interests of industrial psychologists were catered for by the **Committee on Training and Professional Matters concerning Industrial Psychology** formed in 1978. However, this committee dealt mainly with matters relating to training of industrial psychologists, unlike the Institute which has broader objectives as outlined by Prof. Raubenheimer in the IIP first newsletter (December, 1983).

One notable tendency in all the developments that have taken place in South African industrial psychology circles is that the Reef has dominated and led the field. Natal, for instance, has been more or less in the background of events. However, 1983 has seen a resurgence of interest in industrial psychology in Natal and its contribution to psychology in South Africa. This resurgence took place at about the same time of the founding of the IIP*. This has led to a group of industrial psychologists (from both the academic world and practice, research and industry) coming together to form the Natal Industrial Psychology Group (NIPG). This group was formed about a year ago.

*This was merely a coincidence, the NIPG was not initiated by IIP. These were two independent developments.

The main aim behind the formation of the group was to set up a forum through which industrial psychologists in Natal could exchange ideas, information and experiences in various spheres of activity. The Group has held about nine meetings to date.

However, a particular concern for members of NIPG has been the direction industrial psychology has taken in South Africa, both as a science and profession. Arising out of this concern a workshop was held on 11 February, 1984. The overall purpose of this workshop was to achieve a common view amongst members, of the relevant future focus in industrial psychology.

Through groupwork and discussion a broad focus was identified as relevant for the future. This included, inter alia:

- (a) focus on relevant issues in South Africa on a dynamic, proactive basis.
- (b) creation of a broader awareness of psychological-environmental issues.
- (c) to be concerned with relationships in and between individuals and organisations within broader society via a broader perspective and a focus on all organisations (not just business organisations).
- (d) to broaden the science and practice of organisational psychology from its present non-disciplinary paradigm to a multi-disciplinary one in order for it to recognise and accommodate the wider social determinants of people's behaviour, outlook, attitudes and experience within

organizational setting.

Although it is too early to judge this Group, it is however worth mentioning the two major characteristics of it. First of all it has recognized the need and relevance of locating people's behaviour within the wider social context. This heralds a significant shift from the approach of mainstream industrial psychology, which has tended to be asocial. Secondly, the group has set itself the objective of critically reviewing current industrial psychological practice in an open and scholarly fashion.

If this tradition can be maintained, the group offers the much needed forum for open and critical debates on social-psychological issues in South African industry.

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