



Ensuring organisational growth through appropriate collaboration and amalgamation of the human factor: The HRD way

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Abstract

There has been an increasing realisation that the organisation's success is dependent on the synergy created by its human resources. Growth can only be ensured through appropriate collaboration and amalgamation of various personnel around organisational goals/tasks. It is therefore, essential to create an appropriate work culture environment and ethos which would provide the impetus for achievement and accountability. This is one of the major tasks of any management: This concern has given rise to the concept of Human Resource Development. HRD like any other process of development has to have a futuristic outlook, although it cannot ignore the need for optimum utilisation of the existing human capabilities to meet the present requirements. The strategic aspects of HRD are thus related with the designing of HRD systems in the light of future states of the organisation.

Keywords: Career planning, HRD programme, human resource development, organisational development, performance appraisal

Introduction

The success of any organisation in the long run depends very much on the quality of its human resources. Human resources comprise the aggregate of employee attributes including knowledge skill, experience and health which are presently and potentially available to an organisation for the achievement of its goal. In other words human resources consist of the value of the productive capacity of the firm's human organisation. Of all the prime resources of an organisation, men, materials, money and machine the human resource is recognised as the most vital and the most valuable. For it is the quality of manpower that ultimately determines the success of an organisation. The importance of the human factor also stems from the fact that whereas all other resources depreciate in value with the passage of time and use. The human resources appreciate in value through the acquisition of greater knowledge through experience and efficiency and thus reflects a inherent dynamism and development potential.

There has been an increasing realisation that the organisation's success is dependent on the synergy created by its human resources. Growth can only be ensured through appropriate collaboration and amalgamation of various personnel around organisational goals/tasks. It is therefore, essential to create an appropriate work culture environment and ethos which would provide the impetus for achievement and accountability. This is one of the major tasks of any management: This concern has given rise to the concept of Human Resource Development.

Human Resource Development (HRD) is said to be the core of a larger system known as Human Resource System, wherein HRD is mainly concerned with providing learning experiences for the people associated with an organisation through a behavioural approach adopting various processes. "The Individual is provided with learning experiences not in isolation but he shares others' learning experiences also. Such learning experiences are provided with the main objective of developing human beings for their advantage

and harnessing their physical, mental and intellectual endowments and abilities for the growth of the organisation. In a broader sense, the term HRD means those learning experiences which are organised for a specific time and designed to bring about the possibility of behavioural change.

Human Resource Development: Core of Human Resource System

Human Resource Development (HRD) in the organisation context refers to the process whereby the employees are continuously helped in a planned way to

- Acquire or sharpen capabilities required to perform various tasks and functions associated with their present or future expected roles;
- Develop their general enabling capabilities as individuals so that they are able to discover and exploit their own inner potential for their own and/or organisational development purposes; and
- Develop an organisational culture where superior-subordinate relationships, team-work and collaboration among different sub-units are strong and contribute to the professional well-being, motivation and pride of employees.

Dr. T.V. Rao has suggested the following process mechanisms or sub-systems for HRD-

1. Performance Appraisal (PA)

Performance Appraisal data forms basis for decisions for developing the potential employee for higher level jobs and is basis for feedback and counselling. Performance Appraisal Data indicates the job training needs of each individual.

2. Potential Appraisal Development (PAD)

Potential Appraisal Development is based on career plans and career plans are prepared by using Potential Appraisal Development (PAD) data. Training may be provided to develop candidates with potential.

3. Feedback Performance Coaching (FPC)

Feedback and Performance Data can be used to monitor individual development and the data can be used for identifying training. Career counselling and verbal rewards can be part of feedback.

4. Training

Training may be undertaken on the basis of career development plans. Training can be part of Quality of Work Life (QWL) programmes and Organisation Development (OD). Training can be used as a reward.

5. Career Planning (CP)

Career Planning data are used for human resources audits and career planning and help in conducting research on promotion patterns for Organisation Development (OD) programmes.

6. Employee Welfare and Quality of Work Life

Group efforts can be rewarded through Quality of Work Life (QWL) measures Quality of Work Life (OWL) improvements can be part of Organisation Development (OD) activities.

7. Rewards

Performance Data is used for rewards and reward data are entered for development.

8. Organisation Development and Systems Development (OD and SD)

The human resources information can be used for systems development and organisation development purposes.

9. Human Resources Information

Human resources information helps in determining organisation's major human resources needs strategies and philosophies.

These mechanisms are used to initiate, facilitate and promote the process of HRD in a continuous way. All the process mechanisms are linked with corporate plans, particularly with human resources planning.

In large professionally managed organisations HRD functions are increasingly managed by specialist managers in separate HRD departments. At some places, HRD has been set up as a discrete function in addition to the conventional personnel management. Some organisations have re-casted personnel function. HRD has been thus incorporated into personnel function to include the development of human resources. HRD is projected as a superior function in relation to traditional personnel function and is regarded as the cure for organisational problems like lack of motivation and commitment, low performance, etc. The development aspects of human resource management has been separated from the maintenance aspects which include salary and wage administration, promotion and transfers, management of grievance and discipline. As the operational and developmental functions in human resources management are largely interdependent, the separate identity given to the HRD function generates mutual resentment and tension between HRD and personnel management. Mr. N.R. Seth, Former Director, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad has therefore, advocated that personnel, Industrial Relations and HRD functions need to be managed as an integral part of a single,

comprehensive task of human resource management. The goals of HRD are not very different from many past espoused goals of personnel management. The HRD approach to these goals be based on new w knowledge and techniques.

Significance of HRD

HRD is confused and is considered coterminous with training. Training itself is not enough for HRD. Training is specific in purpose and looks at the short term objective of bridging the gap between actual and expected performance. The HRD concept is much wider, and the commitment is for the long term. HRD embraces almost all areas of an organisation and places emphasis on the development of individuals as integral parts within an organisation, along with the development of methods and systems.

The significance of HRD arises from the basic tenet that people 'constitute the active resources of every organisation, indeed of every nation, who really determine the efficiency of utilisation of all other resources - physical and financial. Given the premise that the measure of growth of an organisation depends upon the "thrust-drag" ratio- the ratio of the force of the thrust that the organisation makes in moving forward and the force of the drag that pulls the organisation backwards – it is easy to establish that with all their capabilities and potentials, the human resources have a key role to play in shaping an organisation and improving its thrust-drag ratio. HRD is also important because:

- It helps in the integrated growth of employees;
- It helps employees to know their strength and weaknesses and enable them to improve their performance and that of organisations.

The most critical element in the management of any organisation is the contribution which its human resources can be made to achieve. According to a study conducted at the Harvard Business School, an average worker in the United States need to utilise only about 25% of his total ability to be able to retain his/her job. This percentage presumably is lower in India given the much greater job security and poorer job designs. Thus, about 80% or more of an employee's potential capability in terms of knowledge, skill, talent etc. may be said to remain untapped. On the other hand, the most unique feature of human resources is that their contribution can be enlarged considerably through the process of development. This is not possible in the case of physical resources which are governed by laws of mechanics, nor of financial resources subject to the economic laws of demand and supply.

HRD in any organisation can be realistic when

- the organisation believes that development of employee is in its own interest.
- the organisation will provide opportunities and conditions for the development and optimisation of human resources.
- the management is willing to invest adequate time and resources for the development of the employees and personally participate in the development.
- managers have concern for growth or subordinates.
- employees are willing to avail of given opportunities for growth and receive such help from the managers as may be necessary for this development and improving performance.

Scope of HRD

The well-known Aristotelian saying is worth quoting while analysing the scope of HRD. Aristotle said, "It is as natural for a human being to develop and achieve his full potential as it is for an acorn to grow into a majestic oak tree."

The focus of HRD essentially is, on enabling people to self-actualise through a systematic process of developing their existing potentialities and creation of new ones, unfolding and tapping potential capabilities of people both in the present and for the future. This is because organisations facing the challenges of a competitive environment and of change need to develop systems by which the development of human resources can be ensured to meet the changing organisational needs.

HRD has a wide-ranging scope as its objectives include-

- Providing a comprehensive framework for the development of human resource in the organisation;
- Developing a climate for employees to discover, develop and use their full capabilities for the organisation;
- Increasing the capability of an organisation to attract, retain and motivate talented employees;
- Facilitating systematic generation of information on human resources for manpower planning, development placements, career planning and succession planning.

HRD systems and efforts thus embrace several functions to attain the aforesaid objectives:

1. Manpower planning, career planning and development systems;
2. Training concerned with the present and future needs of the employees;
3. Performance appraisal and assessment of potentials of employees for determining their developmental requirements aided by a feedback and counselling system to help every employee in discover his/her 'capabilities and areas of improvement';
4. Reinforcement or reward systems for creating a climate of excellence in performance and collaborations;
5. Organisation development to improve the climate of the organisation and make it more satisfying and productive.

Status of HRD

The status of HRD in any organisation should be judged not only by reference to the various functions like man-power planning, training and development, etc. undertaken in the organisation in a systematic manner, but also by reference to the HRD systems and efforts as a total integrated approach. There are instances of man-power forecasts having been made for a five-year period for various categories of staff in the organisation based on estimates of business growth and changes likely to take place in production processes, management and work technology. This is no doubt a prerequisite for human resource development. But an equally important requirement is that of instituting an effective and reliable Manpower Information System which is possible if personnel inventory is maintained on the computer providing ready information of the profile of work force in terms of age, qualification, training, experience, etc. This institutional memory is likely to be increasingly more useful as an organisation grows.

Employee training and management development as instruments of HRD are widely practised by organisations in India. However, according to one management expert who

has been associated with institutions conducting training programmes, "a great deal of investment on training goes down the drain because of factors like irrelevance of training to the needs of the organisation and the staff, ad hoc and distress nominations in the training programme and vague and generalised contents not clearly aimed at the development of specific skills."

Likewise, performance appraisal is carried out in many organisation as a matter of formality coupled with a detailed procedure even if penalties are recommended by way of stopping increments in pay. There is little conscious effort made to achieve the objective of developing personnel through the process of performance appraisal.

The system of rewards and punishments, often referred to as the reinforcement system, is constrained by the fact that management have hardly any discretion of granting pecuniary rewards, nor do they have much leeway in inflicting financial penalties on employees. Explorations in the effectiveness of non-pecuniary rewards have started in some organisations. Any conscious and systematic effort for changing the organisational climate in which individuals and groups would feel motivated to learn skills and grow in maturity through mutual trust and confidence is also wanting in most organisations.

Strategies for Formation of HRD Programme

HRD like any other process of development has to have a futuristic outlook, although it cannot ignore the need for optimum utilisation of the existing human capabilities to meet the present requirements. The strategic aspects of HRD are thus related with the designing of HRD systems in the light of future states of the organisation.

Manpower planning which is a prerequisite to HRD should include steps to take stock of the human resources of an organisation both in relation to the present work-load norms as well as for the future based on business forecasts relating to growth and productivity and work-load norms to prevail. It is also necessary that the forecasts should be reviewed every year so that the long-term (five-year) perspective plan can be rolled on. Manpower forecasts need to be supported by a reliable Manpower Information System so that relevant information is continuously available to management so that development, deployment and utilisation of personnel can be on a scientific basis. This is again predicted on a computerised personnel inventory whereby information relating to the various dimensions of workforce profile may be retained and retrieved whenever necessary.

Following Wikstrom, human resource planning (having a wider scope than 'Man-power' planning) may be said to consist of the following activities, viz.,

- Forecasting future requirements of human resources (all categories of personnel) either on the basis of projections of trends in economic environment and developments in industry, or as judgmental estimates based on specific future plans of the organisation.
- Making an inventory of present human resources and assessing the extent to which the resources are optimally employed.
- Anticipating human resource problems by projecting present resources into the future and comparing them with the forecast of requirements so as to determine their adequacy, quantity, as well as quality-wise.
- Planning the necessary programme of recruitment, selection, training, development, utilisation, transfer,

promotion, motivation and compensation to ensure that future requirements are met.

Obviously, human resource planning cannot be rigid or static. It should be amenable to review, modifications and adjustments consistently with the changing needs and circumstances. For any dynamic enterprise, human resource planning is as essential as production, marketing and financial planning. For individuals in an organisation, human resource planning helps in improving their skills, development of their potential capabilities and using the potentials to the maximum extent.

Job Analysis is an essential ingredient of human resource planning as it defines human resource needs in concrete terms and provides a realistic basis (in terms of specific requirements of each job) for hiring, training, placement, transfer and promotion of personnel. Since the goal basically is "to match the job requirements with the aptitude, abilities and interests of employees," job analysis "helps in charting the channels of promotion and lateral lines of transfer." Further, job analysis provides necessary information which helps in determining the content and subject matter of in-company training programmes.

The strategy for designing training programmes should aim at matching specific training needs with the contents of the training programmes. While training needs may be identified by reference to the line managers reports on lapses in work efficiency caused by lack of knowledge and skill, the effectiveness of training programmes can be checked periodically from the feedback of trainees and their superiors. Monitoring placements after training in specialised functional areas is recognised as a means of enhancing the payoff from training programmes. The system of pre-training briefing and post-training debriefing of the staff identified for training is worth introducing so as to secure the line managers' involvement in training. In the briefing before training, the supervisors should advise the trainees specifically about skills and knowledge to be learnt for self-development as also for improving work performance. The 'debriefing' session after training, should be devoted to the trainees giving the supervisor their own ideas about the quality, relevance and usefulness of the training programme. On-the-job training may not be adequate for development skills and knowledge for all categories of staff; therefore, in-company or institutional training may be arranged. But the two must be linked with proper planning and administration of the training programmes. Formal training and structured learning, though necessary, may not be sufficient for unfolding the potential capabilities of employees. Project work, social assignments, job-rotation, etc. are other methods of development which may be required for imbibing necessary attitudes besides practice of skills for effectiveness in the present jobs and future assignments of the employees.

In the strategic context, a distinction may be made between training and development. Training' may be regarded as a short-term process by which non- managerial personnel learn and refresh technical knowledge and skills for a definite purpose. On the other hand, 'development' is regarded as a long-term educational process for managerial personnel.

In the restricted sense, 'training' programmes may be aimed at increasing productivity of existing employees and new

recruits; improving the quality of products or services; (0) improving health and safety; fostering initiative and creativity; prevention of obsolescence of skill due to age, temperament and change of technology; personal advancements; and meeting future personnel needs.

Management development which is described as an educational process may also be degraded as a process of training and growth whereby managerial personnel gain and apply skill, knowledge, attitudes and insights to manage the work of the organisation effectively and efficiently. It involves a systematic and organised procedure of learning for general purposes. These purposes may be concerned with productivity, quality, human resource planning, and morale building, and so on. More basically, the objective of management development consists of developing problem-solving abilities, consensus-obtaining ability, depth of insight, technical and conceptual skills, tenacity to live on dissent and decision-making skills.

A public sector undertaking in the heavy engineering industry normally conducts human resource development programmes for middle and higher management personnel (E-3 and above level of executives). The nature of programmes conducted by the company's own Human Resource Development Institute included training in general management (as executive development/supervisory development, effective supervision/decision making and participative management programme). Behavioural science oriented programmes (including transactional analysis, counselling skills, and achievement motivation), computer programmes (as skill-oriented programmes), and functional management programmes (e.g. programmes on office management, finance for non-finance executives, materials management, industrial safety, time management, cost reduction and waste control).

From the point of view of human resource development, a potent instrument is performance appraisal. The strategic significance of some of the methods of performance appraisal needs to be considered by management in the context of HRD. For instance, the Forced Distribution method evolved by Joseph Tiffin involves rating of employees on two parameters, *viz.* job performance and promotability. Although, this method is not suitable for wage administration, employees who are considered and rated as "very likely promotional material" can be identified. Again, the 'Free-form Essay' method of appraisal has certain commendable features for HRD purposes. It includes appraisal of performance, assessment of promotability and potential for assuming responsibility, and above all, a statement of career development indicating the employee's career development plan carried out so far. With proper orientation and briefing of the appraisers (supervisors), the descriptive assessment undertaken annually on the above parameters could be a valuable guide to HRD programmes overtime.

What is of utmost importance in performance appraisal as a medium of personnel development is the open system approach with focus on key performance areas and critical attributes for various jobs? An open system of appraisal will ensure that the superior reporting authority uses the appraisal of his subordinate for objective and, to the extent possible, non-evaluative feedback on the performance of the subordinate, which may form the basis of counselling the subordinate and enable him to overcome his short-comings and build on his strengths. Useful data may also be derived

in the process about the training needs of the employee, which may help planning for his development and career progression. Moreover, the appraisal may reveal specific potential of the employee for assuming higher responsibilities in the organisational hierarchy.

Reward Systems providing for need based benefits constitute another vital area of HRD. Monetary and financial rewards have two limitations. One is that their impact on motivation is found to wear out very soon, in any case beyond a certain limit. Secondly, the discretion of management in granting pecuniary rewards, or enforcing penalties for poor performance, has little scope in practice. It is therefore considered useful as a long-run strategy to focus on employee development through a system of recognition and appreciation of employees who evince and succeed in learning new skills and updating knowledge. The HRD programme should provide for a system of identifying and rewarding, even in non-monetary terms, those who sustain their interest in leaning through training programmes and varied job exposures. Reinforcement of learning and renewal efforts of the personnel whose promotability is high can also be possible by giving weightage to professional qualifications and work experience in difficult/ problem-ridden areas.

Summing-up

To be a sustainable proposition, HRD programmes must also be formulated simultaneously with the building up of an organisation climate through organisational development (OD) efforts which will be conducive to mutual trust and confidence among employees and their superiors and allow every individual the freedom and opportunity to acquire and apply skills and grow in maturity. OD efforts for that purpose should/involve steps aimed at growth of individuals, role effectiveness of personnel in key positions, as also team building and collaboration for achieving corporate goals. With OD effort as an integral part of HRD programme, it should also be possible to initiate steps for enrichment of the contents of jobs as a deliberate measure so as to provide for greater job satisfaction through increased responsibility. Mutual trust, openness and constructive confrontations between superior-subordinate dyads (pairs) can 'so be promoted through counselling. It can have ripple effects changing the overall organisational climate and contributing to team building and collaboration. The strategy of HRD programme hinges among other things on the promotional opportunities available to the employees. Counselling, open system of performance appraisal, and training facilities usually contribute to the promotability of employees, an organisation climate pervaded by openness, trust and confidence is of great significance as it provides the necessary motivation to employees in their quest for career advancement.

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