

CHALLENGES IN MANAGING HUMAN RESOURCES IN POST COVID BUSINESS SCENARIO

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ABSTRACT

Any organisation that wants to be dynamic and growth oriented or to succeed in post COVID business scenario needs human resource management. Organisations can become dynamic and grow only through the efforts and competencies of their human resources. Personnel policies can keep the morale and motivation of employees high, but these efforts are not enough to make the organisation dynamic and take it to new directions. Organisation climate and philosophy is not enough to yield the desired results. Planned efforts should be made to develop human skills in managers at all levels helping them to adopt a more balanced approach towards human resource. An important element of the effective management of business enterprise is its human resource. Managing human resources is the central and most important task of management.

Key Words: *Human Resource Management, Competencies, Employee Development*

In India, the origin of human resource management can be traced to the concern for welfare of factory workers during the 1920s. The Royal Commission on Labour recommended in 1931 the appointment of labour officers in order to protect the workers from the evils of jobbery and indebtedness to check corrupt practices in recruitment and selection in Indian industry, to act as a spokesman of labour and to promote an amicable settlement between the workers and management. During the 1960s the personnel function widened beyond the welfare aspect. Three major areas of practice, viz. labour welfare, industrial relations, and personnel administration emerged as a complimentary parts of personnel management. During the 1980s due to new technology and other

environmental changes, human resource development became the major issue. During 1990s the overwhelming role of human factor in industry has been realized. Growing awareness about the significance of human side of organization has led to the development of human resource management.

The new environment has thrown many challenges and opportunities. These challenges include:

- (i) To be quality oriented.
- (ii) To be cost effective.
- (iii) Quickly responding to the changing environment.
- (iv) To be customer oriented.
- (v) To be service centered.
- (vi) To be technology adoptive

All these challenges require HRD manager to perform the following functions:

1. First and important role is the continuous education of employee about the changes and challenges facing country. This is the area where we have lacked and the other countries like Taiwan, Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, China have progressed.
2. Educating the employees about the company in respect of sale progress, balance sheet, share price, financial parameters, productivity, plans, etc.
3. To assess and keep assessing the core competencies required at different levels and groups function wise. Strategies for developing these competencies to be evolved such as quality orientation, cost consciousness entrepreneurship, team work, attitudes may be for all employees.
4. Another task is to plan and implement strategy to develop new competencies at all levels, group work, appraisal system, feedback etc.
5. Last main and important task is to review, rewamp the existing people management systems e.g. incentive schemes, reward systems, organization structure, training policies, promotion policies.

Review of Literature:

Soleyman Iranzadeh, Khadijeh Bahrami (2013) investigated the impact of knowledge management in enhancing the creativity of the personnel working in west Azerbaijan Water and Sewage Organization (WSO) (**Soleyman, Khadijeh** pp. 55-59). **Rod Patrick Githens (2015)** in his study found that HRD not only focus on increasing the organizational performance; but also dealt with the issues like alternative work structures, politics, power, etc (Githens pp185-204). **Akhter et al. (2016)** the results showed that supervision and compensation have a significant effect on job satisfaction of teachers. The study suggested that the public and private sector should provide compensation rewards, moral supervision and supportive co-worker environment to increase the satisfaction level of employees (Akhter, N., Hussain, A., Bhatti p572). **Sanyal et al. (2016)** examined the relationship between organizational culture personnel effectiveness, and job related stress among teachers. The study highlighted the positive correlation among all the above factors (Sanyal, N., Fernandes, T., & Fatima, A 251-270). **Goswami R. and et al (2017)** made a comparative study on training and development practices in public and private sector banks and explored that private sector banks are more conscious to provide training to their employees. Both Public sector banks and Private sector banks have faced difficulties and challenges in the training and development department but the private banks provide superior training to their employees than the public sector banks (Gosswami. R., Pandey.M.,& Vashist. A). **Abdolshah and et al (2018)** they analyzed that various factors like working conditions, policies, procedures, supervisor's style, promotion opportunity and pay is to be examined to assess the job satisfaction. Job description index is a valid tool for measuring job satisfaction. F-test, t-test, SPSS and linear regression tools are used to examine the data. It is concluded that compensation variables, upgrade and colleagues, are at top three position, which affect the job satisfaction of personnel (Abdolshah, M., Khatibi, S. A. M., & Moghimi, M. 207-222). **Fahim (2018)** the study found that the use of good HRM practices is an important strategic tool for retaining the employees in the public sector organizations. The study also recommended that management should adopt effective measures to for retaining employees like Public sector organizations can apply appropriate strategic HRM practices for this purpose.(Fahim, M. G. A) **Elrehail et al. (2019)** the study added that in five star hotels in Northern Cyprus, mediator factor had no

effect on achieving competitive advantage but HR practices had a significant impact on competitive advantage. The study suggested the use of training and development programs which are specifically designed for the hotel industry (Elrehail, H., Harazneh, I., Abuhjeeleh, M., Alzghoul, A., Alnajdawi, S., & Ibrahim, H.).

Need and Importance of the Study:

Any organisation that wants to be dynamic and growth oriented or to succeed in post COVID business scenario needs human resource management. Organisations can become dynamic and grow only through the efforts and competencies of their human resources. Personnel policies can keep the morale and motivation of employees high, but these efforts are not enough to make the organisation dynamic and take it to new directions. Organisation climate and philosophy is not enough to yield the desired results. Planned efforts should be made to develop human skills in managers at all levels helping them to adopt a more balanced approach towards human resource. An important element of the effective management of business enterprise is its human resource. Managing human resources is the central and most important task of management. Thus there is an intense need to study the challenges faced by the various HR managers in this post COVID business scenario.

Objective of the Study:

The objective of the present study is to analyse the challenges faced in managing the human resources in the new business scenario and to provide suitable suggestions for the effective management of human resources in post COVID business scenario.

Research Methodology

- a. Research Design: Descriptive and analytical research design was used for investigation of the research problem.
- b. Data: For the purpose of the study secondary data has been used.
- c. Collection of Data: The secondary data was collected from the Annual Reports and other documents of the various service sector organizations. Various Books, Journals, Articles, Newspapers and websites were consulted and used wherever required.

Challenges for HRD Managers in Managing Human Resources in Post COVID Business Scenario

In today's post COVID business scenario, HRD focuses on employees' training and development. This helps to increase the performance and the competencies of employees which enhance individual employee growth and organizational growth in the long run. Profitable organizations ensure that all of their employees are trained in such an efficient and effective way that they become role models or benchmarks for other organizations.

- 1. HRD Learning Strategies and Theories:** HRD learning strategies and theories, such as behaviorism and situated learning, accentuate individual employee objectives should join with the organization where their career ladders are developed and guidance is given for reaching their potential successfully. When an employee becomes a competitive advantage for the organization through effective human resource development, he or she is responsible for the success of the organization. Organizational goals are accomplished through excellent employee performance.
- 2. Human Resources as the Strategic Partners:** In the present era the HR's main task is to play the role of strategic partner in the business enterprise. This is due to the reason that administrative functions like recruitment, training, retention, and the employee related paper work is at the low end of the HR value chain. In aligning human resource planning with the business strategy, the human resources of the organisation have to play the strategic role.
- 3. Increasing Role of Women Employees:** Throughout the world there is increasing role of women employees both in managerial cadre and in non-managerial cadre. The various companies in India launch time to time various recruitment programmes for women. Employment of women presents several challenges which HRD manager has to face. These are in the form of balancing career and family life, prevention of sexual harassment, and prejudices against women.
- 4. Human Resources as the Competitive Advantage:** HR can become the competitive advantage for firm and companies aspiring to become global players. If the work force is going to be global the company needs to recruit the right talent

and the role of HR is very critical in hiring decisions of the firm. Effective management of the workforce provides a very definite competitive advantage to those firms that are progressive enough, leverage the HR department appropriately.

5. **Scarcity amidst Plenty:** Human talent pool is limited while the demand is far outstripping the supply. There is a virtual war among companies to corner their share of the limited human talent that is available. HR will be ideally at the core of the work force management.
6. **Countering Erosion of Trust:** The workplace could become a very insensitive place because of business decisions like lay offs, golden handshakes etc. which might leave those lefts behind in a state of fright and suspicion. It is upon the HR professional to take up this challenge of bringing in some sensitivity and trust into the work place.
7. **Re-humanizing:** The past decade saw major efforts in the direction of humanizing the work place. The future might again require major efforts on part of the HR professional to make bonds which have got more or less severed due to the onset of email, telecommunication, flextime etc. Employees would see less of each other due to the convenience offered by modern technology.
8. **Employee Retention:** Employee retention offers the significant competitive advantage to the organisation. The global companies retain the competent and efficient performers. HR should also take the leadership role in employee management communications.
9. **Developing a Self-Renewal Capacity:** Self-renewal means building innovation and commitment to change into the organization's values. The HRD program should have developed within the organization an ability to constantly innovate. The self-renewing organization is constantly able to initiate new strategies leading to continue innovation.
10. **The Organization of the Future:** The organization of the future will be different from today's organization. In a world of global competitiveness and technological innovation, organizations are reengineering, restructuring, and flattening the

hierarchy to meet market pressures. Leading companies now envision an endlessly changing organization. The new term is reconfigurable--- an organization that is flexible and able to change on an annual, monthly, weekly, daily, or even hourly time frame. There is a continuing need for long-range strategies to improve organizational decision-making and work relationships to meet these changing conditions.

11. HRD and Leadership: In today's extremely competitive global world, HRD allows organizations to be successful because it allows effective management of employees through effective leadership. Organizations should appreciate that leadership can shape managerial successes and minimize the risks and threats for the business. Leadership is the root of success of any organization and consists of a vision of the leader to motivate employees, the aim of the leader to empower employees in the business, the objective of the leader to be transparent, collecting and implementing external information, and taking challenges to achieve success through high performance, productivity and innovation. HRD is fundamental to an organization's effective leadership. Therefore, an organization's leaders must possess HRD skills for creating an environment where employees are given major importance and developing HRD strategies that endeavor to satisfy the goals of the employee development and employee education are the three major concepts that a successful HRD professional would implement in his/her organization. The HRD skills of an organization should be concentrated upon implementing learning theories such as behaviorism and situated learning, conducting training programs, transmitting information and experience to all employees, involving them in organizational success and providing them with career counseling.

12. Change Agent: In contact of performance improvement role HRD acts as a key organizational change agent, to create a congenial environment in the organization by improving adaptability, capability, and capacity of the employees. This is possible when the employees know very well the changes necessary for attaining the mission and objectives of the organization. HRD professionals keep analyzing internal HR processes and procedures which meet the changing business scenario and enable employees for a better business strategy and HR strategy.

- 13. Leading by Example:** Since learning is so important to the enterprise, HR leads the way. As a result, HR professional master knowledge in three content areas related to their: position, profession, and organization. HR professionals master the generally accepted body of knowledge for the profession. This is best represented by their advanced degree or certification. HR professionals stay abreast of trends as well as the regulatory and operating environments in their industry. Many HR professionals have also gained street credibility by joining cross functional teams, completing externships, or spending a few years of their career outside of HR in the line functions of their organizations to better understand the “business of the business”.
- 14. Culture Building:** Culture in an organization is the perception about the developmental environment prevalent in the organization. HRD contributes in creation of the culture that characterizes openness, trust, fairness, and all the values close to the organization. Rebuilding the corporate culture is the area of focus for HRD with an aim to have disciplined thought, disciplined action and disciplined speech. Thus HRD stimulates a culture of learning in the organization. The HRD program helps the employees to identify the relationship between work and learning.
- 15. Counseling:** HRD provides every manager with an opportunity to demonstrate his genuine interest in the welfare and development of every member of the department. In this relation even the individuals with unsatisfactory performance are likely to appreciate the efforts of their boss to help them improve and succeed in meeting the criteria for productivity and success. The employees need not keep guessing the expectations of their boss from them.
- 16. Outsmarting the Competition:** Today's work environment is increasingly competitive. Most organizations create value and competitiveness through the smart deployment of human potential. This potential is enhanced, refined, leveraged or brought to bear through the purposeful enrichment of the knowledge, skills and abilities of its people. Therefore, learning is as essential a strategic action as having a business plan to operationalize goals or having an investment plan to capitalize on financial or other assets. Unlike other capital investments, the

value of learning appreciates, rather than depreciates. HR departments add strategic value to their organization by elevating the importance of learning and positioning its delivery as a competitive tool. HRD links the learning activities to how the organization creates value for its customers.

17. Focus on Quality: In the past in the protected environment with a lot of demand even for sub standard products customer and quality were never considered important and the entire focus was on quantity of output. Management believed only in “carrot and stick approach” of its employees and never thought of in terms of developing its quality of output. Now there is a wave in favor of Total Quality Management which calls for a change in the mindsets of individuals. This is successfully achieved through massive HRD efforts.

18. Emphasis on Core Competencies: With the licensing era coming to an end in India, companies now no longer need to preemptively secure licenses in diverse and unrelated areas to outwit their competitors. There is now a perceptible shift in favor of developing core competencies through mergers and demergers. Companies specialize their groups through HRD for gaining competitive advantage.

19. Improvement in Capabilities: HRD leads to the improvement in the capabilities of the employees by making them aware of the skills required for the effective performance of the job and by making the employees aware of the performance standards. HRD enables the employees able to take risk and make them innovative.

20. Improvement in Team Work: HRD enhances collaboration and team work in the organization. Employees trust each other and also become more open towards each other. Therefore, HRD improves the organizational climate.

21. Optimizing the Human Resources: The organisations have to optimize the human resources. The organisations have to address the issues like, which skills and competencies are vital for the execution of the business strategy, which skills should be performed by the core staff, what support systems are needed to help employees shift from team to team, how does company should operate in

multigenerational and multi cultural workforce. HR professionals have a critical role to play in helping their companies to find answers to the issues like these.

22. ***Employer of Choice:*** HR professionals will be required to increasingly play a role in making their company the “employer of choice”. In particular they must be the advocates for the HR policies and practices that knowledge workers young and old find attractive.
23. ***Contemporary Trends and Leading Practices:*** HR professionals have to continuously seek out and apply the contemporary trends and leading practices. It is most important that they must constantly reinvest their profession to ensure that their firms retain the competitive advantage.
24. ***Workforce Empowerment:*** For the corporate democracy to become a reality many companies are now vesting their employees with greater authority, expanding their job titles and increasing their accountability. In the country where the benevolent autocrat has been the preferred style, real empowerment of the workforce is a big challenge for the HRD manager. HRD manager develops capabilities among the employees to participate meaningfully in the matters related to them.
25. ***Improvement in Organisational Effectiveness:*** With the help of HRD organizations formulate the policies by considering the individual employees, which improves the overall organizational effectiveness and help the organizations in achieving its goals and objectives.
26. ***Performance Management:*** Managing performance is perhaps the key responsibility of line managers and an area where partnership between line and HRD will be more beneficial. HRD can help managers to understand how to define roles in the light of business drivers and how to identify the capabilities required to perform the job. The key performance indicators for each role should derive from the business drivers and are then built into role processes.
27. ***Fuller Utilization of Skills:*** Rewards are provided to the employees according to their performance, which enables the employees to fully utilize their skills and abilities for the fulfillment of the organizational goals. HRD leads to the improvement in the organization's health and self renewing capabilities.

- 28. Effective Procurement:** HRD helps the organization in procuring the right people and also at the right time when they are required in the organization. It makes the effective balance between the demand and supply of the personnel in the organization.
- 29. Improvement in the Employees Commitment:** HRD leads to the improvement in the employee commitment in the organization due to the greater objectivity in the administration of the rewards. With the help of the HRD the contributions of the employees are valued and rewarded in an effective manner. Therefore, people become more committed to the jobs because rewards are administered more objectively through HRD process.
- 30. Improvement in Skills:** The HRD helps in the improvement of problem solving and adaptation skills of the employees. The employees become more innovative, proactive, and risk taking. It also reduces the resistance to change. It provides an opportunity to the employees for continuous and all round growth of the employees through succession planning and career planning.
- 31. Changing Job Profile:** Nature of the jobs has changed over the period of time and this process is still continued. The major reason for these changes is the fast changing technology. The jobs of the employees are becoming that of thinking and collaborating rather than only doing. Changing job profile is putting the greater pressure on the HRD practitioners.
- 32. Issue of Human Dignity:** The issue of human dignity at the workplace assumes special significance in the 21st century. Organisational culture, managing and measuring scientifically team performance ought to engage attention of HRD practitioners. HRD managers are required to understand the impact of environment, structure and people in creating value chain in an organisation.
- 33. People as Revenue Streams:** Across the globe the celebrated companies share one common strategic philosophy – they perceive their people as the revenue streams and not the costs on the profit and loss account. All the successful firms realize that their high performing employees are critical to improving their market share.

- 34. Role Clarity:** HRD encourages communication between the work teams. People not only understand their roles better but also become aware of the expectations of the other members of the team.
- 35. Rapid Changes in Technology:** The world is facing rapid change in technology and so are our organizations. The biggest and foremost challenge which comes before HRD is to make its employees equipped with the changing technologies.
- 36. Transnational Suppliers and Customers:** Transnational suppliers and customers have now to be given a new face, as they need to play a transformational role in the changing scenario.
- 37. Fierce Competition:** With the advent of globalization and entry of MNCs and rapid changes in technology the Indian organizations face a fierce competition. To stand in the market and face the competition successfully has become one of the important challenges of HRD.
- 38. Innovation for Survival:** Nothing is permanent except change. The biggest challenge that comes before HRD professionals is to provide development opportunities, latest updating of skills of the present employees. To meet the challenges and fierce competition, innovation is the key to success.
- 39. World Class Quality Demand of Customer:** In today's market customer is the King. The products are to be manufactured as per the need, demand, want and desire of the customer. Every customer in the market looks for the value for money. With increase in competition, and awareness of the customer to maintain quality at an affordable price is the need of an hour.
- 40. Merger. Takeovers and Acquisitions:** With increase in competition, entry of MNCs mergers, takeovers, and acquisitions are bound to take place. With cross cultural mix, with diverse culture of various employees working in an organization the HRD department is responsible for providing all kind of developmental opportunities to its employees.
- 41. High Product Differentiation at very Low Cost:** Providing a distinct and a different product in the market which can satisfy the need of the customer. With the increase in competition and ease in availability of substitutes the product

should be differentiated with low manufacturing costs. Achieving a differentiation with low cost poses a challenge for HRD managers.

Challenges for Chief Executives in Managing Human Resources:

Chief Executive occupies an important position in the organisation. Human resource development of any organisation depends upon the functioning of the chief executives. Some of the important challenges faced by the Chief Executives for the development of the human resources are explained as follow:

- 1. Treating employees as great asset of the Organization:** Chief executive while performing his role is supposed to recognize that the employees are not mere persons rather they are the asset for the organisation. He must accept the philosophy of human resource development and try to implement this in a clear cut way. In this category he is expected to develop the human resources in all respects.
- 2. Incorporating HRD Plan with Organisational Plan:** Similar to the concept of the Management by Objectives, the same pattern is implemented by chief executives on a large scale. In this role the chief executive has to prepare and implement the various organisational programmes in such a way so as to evolve the overall management objective.
- 3. Role of Top Management:** The role of a chief executive should be like a top management. As earlier stated that the role of chief executive should accept the philosophy of human relations, his style should be of motivational theory, and he should perform a role of a father in the concern. He should know that what are the needs and the expectations of the individuals in the concern and should work accordingly. As a developmental style he should accept that subordinates are not perfect so the mistakes made by the subordinates should be treated as a part of learning process. In addition to the needs of that organisation he should try to develop and strengthen his working style. It should be done in such a way that effectiveness and efficiency in the firm improves.
- 4. Finding Right Man for the Right Position:** The success of an organisation depends on the working style as well as specialization of the persons working in

the concern. Further productivity also depends upon on the attitude of the employees towards work and organisation. Chief executive has to perform the role in such a way so that competent man should at a competitive job. Proper utilization of the efficiency of the person should be made by the chief executive.

5. Comprehensive Training and Development Policy: As it is a true fact that learning has no end. There always remains a scope of improvement as everybody learns from his mistake. Therefore this makes the role chief executive more important. The chief executive should develop the performance appraisal system for the purpose of monitoring the performance of the employees on the regular basis and to find out the training needs of the employees. This will enable the organisation to impart the training to the employees at the proper time.

6. Preparation for the Action Plan of HRD: There are different ways for implementing the action plan of HRD in the organisation. Now there is a growing concern for the HRD in the new organisations. The chief executive prepares the HRD plan keeping in view the organisational and individual objectives. Such plans are prepared for both the long term and short term.

7. Developing and Strengthening HRD Climate: For the successful implementation of HRD programme it is necessary to have the support of chief executive. He can motivate in team by developing a HRD climate in the organisation. HRD climate includes the following:

- Openness for expression
- Team spirit
- Trust
- Degree of freedom
- Correlation between words and expression

Chief executive can develop all this in his organisation by having the comprehensive plan of HRD.

SUGGESTIONS FOR MANAGING HUMAN RESOURCES IN THE POST COVID BUSINESS SCENARIO

Relying on the human resource department to recruit the best employees, design appropriate and effective training programs and institute successful retention programs can give the organization a competitive advantage in this post COVID business scenario. While competitors struggle with maintaining an experienced and motivated workforce, the organization can focus more on productivity and increased sales and at the same time the HR department plays an integral role in the workforce development.

- 1. Hire Professionals with Experience:** Human resource professionals vary in the kinds of skills and experience they bring to a job. Many are administrators proficient at processing payroll and executing benefits programs, but have little more leadership status than the clerical workers. The organization can upgrade the HR department to include recruitment specialists who also understand their company's strategic roles and can play an integral part in shaping their business success. Executive level human resource professionals can help to design job descriptions and training programs, advise the organization in defining salary level that will result in best new hires.
- 2. Give HR Leadership Positions:** The human resource department often is given job descriptions and told to fill the positions. Salaries are predetermined and the HR staff has little or no input in the hiring process. So the HR manager should be involved completely in the hiring process and the formulation of recruitment policy.
- 3. Allow HRD professionals to Determine Training Program:** In addition to defining employee jobs and required qualifications, an actively participatory HR department can monitor employee activity levels, morale and customer service success to design and implement appropriate training programs with line supervisors and executive management teams.
- 4. Provide HR Tools to Monitor Employee Performance:** The human resource department can build programs to track those employees who stand out. When the human resource professionals are involved in designing and providing employee

reviews, they can help the organization to spot talent and advise it on how it can best groom employees for promotions. They can provide designated employees with specific training and help the organization to devise opportunities for growth, serving as its eyes and ears for seeking out the best candidates that will push the organization into a competitive advantage.

5. **Communication:** Good communication is the foundation of sound management. The performance of all managerial functions depends on successful communication by the managers at various levels. HRD has to play an important role in ensuring that the communication is clear, correct, and controlled wherever possible. Communication is a key to ensure involvement of employees. Nothing substantial can be achieved unless people within the organization work towards the shared vision and mission. HRD should ensure that how we can reach out to people and relate with them in the sense of understanding what they want, how they think and what motivates them. Identifying the areas of improvement and the training needs and trying to bridge gap between the desired performance and the present performance should be the main objective of HRD.

Some other suggestions can be as follow:

1. Do not expect short term visible results due to HRD.
2. Encourage HRD managers to develop professionally and share their expectations with the organisations.
3. Develop a suitable HRD climate.
4. Develop training and development policy according to needs and requirement of the organisation.
5. Evaluate the system of performance appraisal as well as the potential appraisal in the organisation and also take the necessary steps for the organisational development.
6. Procuring competent people for the HRD department.
7. Developing the action plan for the HRD department.
8. Valuing the employee as a greatest resource of the department.

In today's post COVID business scenario, efficient and effective employees are a major source of success of an organization. A competitive advantage can be achieved if the performance of employees is increasing through the effective use of HRD theories and activities. To meet the demands of the consumers and to provide complete consumer satisfaction, organizations have developed new ways to increase employee's performance where the objectives of the organization and the individual employee are met. HRD and its employee development and learning theories are extremely important for any organization to be successful in the long run. HRD initiatives lead to high efficiency and performance, which in turn leads to the accomplishment of the goals and objectives of the organization.

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