Career Development Challenges for the 21ˢᵗ Century

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Abstract

Every organization is essentially a combination of physical and human resources. Human resources refer to the knowledge, education, skills, training and proficiency of the members of the organization. All organizational resources are important for achieving the objectives of an organization. In fact, the effectiveness of an organization lies in the judicious blending of the two resources to achieve optimum competency. Organizations are managed by people and through people. Human resources are the collection of people and their characteristics at work. Human competency development has become an essential prerequisite for long run growth and development of the organization. For organizational survival, growth and excellence, competent and motivated employees are essential. HRD oriented performance appraisal is used as a mechanism by supervisors for various activities which are necessary for development. Employees generally are trained on the job or through special In-house training programmes. Rewarding employee performance and behavior is an important part of HRD. Many organizations have either started new HRD departments or have appointed HRD Managers or at least have strengthened their personnel departments to look after the HRD function. Career planning enables it to say who on the basis of performance and potentials appraised and evaluated, could be groomed for or fitted in higher level assignments, and where, when and how. A properly conceived and executed programme of career development serves the good of individuals, the organization, and society. A well-designed career development effort will assist employees in determining their own career needs, develop and publicize available career opportunities in the organization, and match employee needs and goals with the organization.

1. Introduction

When we talk about organizational resources, 1980's can be called on a decade of "Human Resource Development (HRD)". The human input is recognized as the most effective for maximum output and efficiency of any organization. Hence, the human competency development has become an essential prerequisite for long run growth and development of the organization which develops the economy of the nation. So, many organizations have setup new departments known as "HRD Departments" which symbolize the recognition of importance of people's competency development. Some organizations like service sector and public sector undertakings are taking HRD as synonymous with training. But HRD is not only the training but it is overall development of the employees. HRD uses various mechanisms to develop human competencies. Organizations, with the help of HRD have started motivating supervisions, line managers, top management, union leaders and other categories of employees to recognize their respective roles in developing their own and their subordinate competencies. Human Resource Development is the process of helping people to acquire competencies. In an organizational context, HRD can be derived as a process by which the employees of an organization are helped in continuous and planned way to acquire or sharpen capabilities required to perform various functions associated with their present or expected future roles, to develop their general capabilities as individuals and discover and exploit their inner potential for their own and/or organizational development purposes, to develop an organizational culture in which supervisor-subordinate relationships team work, and collaboration among sub-units are strong and contribute to the professional well-being, motivation and pride of employees.

2. Mechanisms for HRD Process

HRD process is facilitated by mechanisms like performance appraisal, training, organization development, feedback and counseling cover development, potential development, job rotation and rewards. HRD creates opportunities for employees to acquire new competencies through a process of performance planning performance planning feedback training periodic review of performance, assessment of developmental needs and creation of developmental opportunities through training, job rotation, responsibility etc. There is need for HRD for successful achievement of organizational objectives the human factor is the most important factor, because it is the living sector among all other factors of production. The human beings or the people in the organization need knowledge, attitudes, values and skills to effective handling of their tasks. The greater-the quality of performance of tasks, the higher level of

skills are required in the people. Hence, competent and motivated employees are essential for organizational survival, growth and excellence. The ways in which people can show the effectiveness and improvement are cost reductions reduction in delays; increased customer satisfactions; improved quality and promptness of services; market image, etc. In order to develop these factors employees' competencies need to be developed through HRD. If there is improvement in the quality of administration, HRD activities may need to be undertaken to equip the administration with better competencies. When a profit making business organization wants to expand itself and diversity in its activities, it needs to develop its employees in all aspects to face the new challenges and new tasks required for the venture.

2.1 Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal of some type is practiced in most organizations all over the world. A written assessment to which the employee has no change to respond is still common in most countries. Many studies indicate that this type of appraisal serves no purpose. It is time that more organizations began to utilize the performance appraisal interview between the manager and the subordinate, during which the subordinate's strengths and weaknesses are discussed, concerns are shared, and the subordinate is given the opportunity to defend or improve any deficits in his or her performance. HRD oriented performance appraisal is used as a mechanism for supervisors to; understand the difficulties of their subordinates and try to remove these difficulties; understand the strengths and weakness of their subordinates and help the subordinates to realize these; to help the subordinates to become aware of their positive contributions; to encourage subordinates to accept more responsibilities and challenges; to help subordinates to accept more responsibilities and challenges; to help subordinates to acquire new capabilities; to plan for effective utilisation of the talents of subordinates. Every supervisor has the responsibility to ensure the development of his or her subordinates in relation to the capabilities required to perform their jobs effectively. Generally, the supervisor schedules individual meetings with each employee to discuss the employee's performance communicate the performance areas that need attention, and jointly establish areas to be worked on or goals to be achieved by the next scheduled discussion. Such performance appraisal interviews may be scheduled every three months or once or twice a year. Goals and objectives that have been agreed upon in each meeting are reviewed in the next meeting. During this review, the supervisor attempts to understand the difficulties of the subordinate and to identify his or her development needs. Before each review, the employee is prepared for the discussion through self-assessment, identifying factors that have contributed to his or her performance and factors that have hindered it, as well as the types of support that he or she needs from the supervisor or others in order to do better in the next period. The supervisor also prepares for the meeting by listing observations, problems, suggestions, and expectations. During the appraisal meeting, the supervisions help to develop mutual understanding and the data generated reported to the higher management and is used in making decisions about individual employee development as well as developmental needs of the work group or the entire organization.

2.2 Potential Appraisal

In organizations that subscribe to HRD, the potential of every employee is assessed periodically. Such assessment is used for developmental planning as well as for placement. It is assumed under this system that the company is growing continuously. A dynamic and growing organization needs to review its structure and systems; creating new roles and assigning new responsibilities must continuously be developed among employees. The identification of employee potential to ensure the availability of people to do different jobs helps to motivate employees in addition to serving organizational needs. Every year or two, the supervisor of a group of employees assesses the potential of each of them to perform different usually higher level functions on the basis of the supervisor's observations and experiences during that period. Of course, many supervisors see their subordinates doing only those jobs to which they are assigned. The ideal way to judge a person's potential would be to try the person on each job for which his potential is being assessed. This is not feasible in most organizations, so simulation activities are prepared to provide some information about the potential of employees in specific areas. Any employee can request such assessment. It should be clear whether or not there is a position available in the company to which the employee could be transferred or promoted. Knowledge of one's strengths is key factor for development and also increases the satisfaction of the individual. People often do not recognize their strengths. Therefore supervisors are given the responsibility for ongoing observation and feedback to subordinates about their strengths and their weaknesses, as well as for guidance in improving performance capabilities.

2.3 Planing & Traning

Corporate growth plans are not keep secret. Employees are helped to prepare for change; in fact, the employers help to facilitate the change. To increase employee understanding and commitment they want to know the possibilities for their own growth the career opportunities. The managers and supervisors have responsibility to transmit information to their subordinates and to assist them in planning their careers within the organization. Training is linked with performance appraisal and career development. Employees generally are trained on the job or through special In-house training programmes. In-house training programmes are developed by

in-house trainers or consultants hired for the task and periodic assessment are made of the training needs within the organization. The effects of all training programmes are monitored and added to the data concerning training needs. Managers and employees who attend in-house or outside training events are also expected to submit proposals concerning any changes they would like to suggest on the basis of their new knowledge. The training received by employees is thus utilized by the organization for its development. Organizational development includes research to ascertain the psychological health of the organization. This is generally accomplished by means of periodic employee surveys. Efforts are made to improve organizational health through various means in order to maintain a psychological climate that is conducive to productivity.

2.4 Rewards

Rewarding employee performance and behavior is an important part of HRD. Appropriate rewards not only recognize and motivate employees, but also communicate the organization's values to the employees. In HRD systems, innovations and use of capabilities are rewarded in order to encourage the acquisition and application of positive attitude and skills. Typical rewards include certificates of appreciation, newsletter announcements, and increase in salary, bonus, special privileges, and desired training. Promotions are generally not considered as rewards because promotion decisions are based on appraisals of potential whereas most rewards are based on performance. Rewards may be given to individuals as well as to teams, departments and other units within the organization.

2.5 Employee Welfare And Quality Of Work Life

In developing countries, employees at lower levels in the organization usually perform relatively monotonous tasks and have fewer opportunities for promotion or change. In most countries, many employees belong to trade unions. In order to maintain their work commitment and motivation, the organization must provide some welfare benefits such as medical insurance, disability insurance, and holidays and vacations. Quality-of-work-life programmes generally focus on the environment within the organization and include basic physical concerns such as heating and air conditioning, lighting, and safety precautions: additional physical amenities such as food and beverage facilities, recreation and aesthetics; and psychological and motivational factors such as flexible work hours, freedom to suggest changes or improvements, challenging work, and varying degrees of autonomy. HRD systems focus on employee welfare and quality of work life by continuously examining employee needs and meeting them to the extent feasible. Job-enrichment programmes, educational subsidies, recreational activities, health and medical benefits, and the like generate a sense of belonging that benefits the organization in the long run.

2.6 Human Resources Information

All appropriate information about employees should be stored in a central human resources data bank (usually by means of computer). This includes all basic information about each employee, training programes attended, performance records, potential appraisals, accomplishments, etc. This data is utilized whenever there is a need to identify employees for consideration for special projects, additional training or higher level jobs.

3. Development History of HRD

In the last decade especially in the last five years, the term HRD has become very popular and. Many organizations have either started new HRD departments or have appointed HRD Managers or at least have strengthened their personnel departments to look after the HRD functions. In India, Larson and Toubro Ltd., is the first company to introduce this concept among the private sector companies with an objective of facilitating growth of employees, especially people at the lower levels. Among the public sector Government companies was BHEL which introduced this concept in 1980. Even while introducing HRD many organizations were under the impression that it was nothing but Training and Development concept. Certain companies started renaming their Training and Development departments as Human Resource Development Departments and some have created new departments. Later some other personnel management functions like Performance Appraisal, Potential Appraisal, Career Planning and Development, Feedback and Counseling, Organizational Development and Data Storage Systems are included as sub-systems of Human Resources Development. A survey by Industrial Team Service indicated that the personnel function is no longer viable if it doesn't include or give scope for employment, training, welfare measures, employee education, employee benefits, industrial relations and industrial insurance. Thus, the concept was subjected to serious criticism and this has ultimately paved the way for the emergence of Human Resources Development.

4. HRD at Micro & Macro Level

HRD is mainly concerned with developing the competencies of people. HRD is applied to both institutional (Micro) as well as national (Macro) issues. However, the main objective is to develop the newer capabilities in people so as to enable them to tackle both present and future challenges while realizing organizational goals. However, it is useful both at macro and micro levels. At the

macro level HRD is concerned with the development of people for the nation's well being. It takes health, capabilities, skills, attitudes of people which are more useful to the development of the national as a whole. While calculating the national income and economic growth, the prospective HRD concept examines the individual's potentialities, their attitudes, aspirations, skill, knowledge etc., and establishes a concrete base for the economic planning. However, HRD's contribution at Macro Level has not gained popularity as yet. HRD has concerns for grass-root development in the organizations. It is small wonder; HRD is well received by companies' managements as they realized its importance and foresee its future contribution for the individual and organizational development. Generally, HRD at micro level talks of the organizations' manpower planning, selection, training, performance appraisal, development, potential appraisal, compensation, organizational development etc. HRD's involvement in all these areas in mainly with an objective to develop certain new capabilities in people concerned to equip them to meet the present job challenges and to accept future job requirements.

5. The Concept of Career

The word 'career' means moving upward in one's chosen line of work-making more money; having more responsibility, achieving more status, prestige and power. A career is the individually previewed sequence of attitudes and behavior associated with work-related experiences and activities over the span of the person's work life.The learn career does not imply success or failure except in the judgment of the individual that a career consists of both attitudes and behavior and that it is an ongoing sequence of work-related activities. Although the concept of career is clearly work-related it must be understood that a person's non work life and roles play a significant part in a career.

5.1 Career Planning

Career Planning essentially means helping the employees to plan their career in terms of their capacities within the context of organizational needs. It is described as devising and organizational systems of career movement and growth opportunities from the point of entry of an individual in employment to the point of his retirement. It is generally understood to be a management technique for mapping out the entire career of young employees in higher skilled supervisory and managerial positions. Thus, it is the discovery and development of talents, and planned deployment and redeployment of these talents. A career can be defined as a sequence of separate but related work activities that provide continuity, order and meaning to a personnel's life. There is difference between Career Planning and Manpower Planning. The latter enables the personnel department of an organization to report on the inventory of skills and potentials available in the organization. The former enables it to say who on the basis of performance and potentials appraised and evaluated, could be groomed for or fitted in higher level assignments, and where, when and how. Again manpower planning provided higher management the data on what by way of human resources, is immediately available within the organization if certain conditions change such as expansion of the existing plant, a technological innovation, a new plant construction, a new branch opening, a new line of production, etc. Career planning gives only a picture of the succession plan and of the potentials for the development of the persons already in position for the future manpower needs caused by retirements and other casualties and future developments. It has to build theoretical career, ladders for all key and important employees. If such important employees have to be retained their aspirations for growth have to be satisfied.

5.2 Career Planning Versus Succession Planning

These two expressions are not synonymous, but they are similar. Succession planning is generally required for higher level executives, while career planning covers executives at all levels including highly skilled employees and operatives. Both have the same requirements and implications as Management Development Programmes for the executives. Generally, career planning in an organization means that it has a succession plan for the higher level executives. The succession plan involves identification of vacancies that are likely to occur in the higher echelons, and to locate the probable or likely successors. In career planning we may have charts showing the career paths of different categories of workers showing how they can advance up in the organization, but the succession chart in respect of a particular position may not take the same form. There are two components of career planning and development, Career Development Programme and Career Planning Activities. Career development involves three activities assisting employees in assessing their own internal career needs; developing and publishing available career opportunities in the organization; aligning employee needs and abilities with career opportunities; Internal Career Assessment. Since a person's career is a highly personal and extremely important element of life, each person is to make his or her decision-making process by providing as much information as possible to the employee showing what type of work would suit him the most, considering his interest, skill aptitude, and performance in the work that he is already doing. For rendering such help some big organizations provide formal assessment centre/workshops where small groups of employees are subjected to psychological testing, simulation exercises and depth interviewing.

5.3 Process, Activities & Development Of Career Planning

The process of career planning involves a number of activities such as preparation of personnel inventory of the organization; Building career paths or ladders for various categories of employees; Locating or identifying employees with necessary potential for career planning of persons for different steps of the career ladder or paths; Maintaining age balance while taking employees up the career path; Review of career development plan in action. With its entire plus points career planning is not easy to implement. It has its own difficulties and problems, such as it does not suit a very small organization. There should be opportunities for vertical morality if career planning has to become a reality. Career planning is not an effective management technique for a large number of men who work on the shop floor particularly for those who are illiterates, less educated and perform jobs for which labor supply is abundant. Since, the members of a family expect to move faster than their professional colleagues in the career ladder; they upset the career planning exercise. Career development includes any and all activities that prepare a person for progression along a designated career path. Thus career development may involve both formal and informal means. Career development programs may be conducted in-house or by outside sources, such as professional organizations or colleges and universities. Certain principles should be observed with regard to career development. First, the job itself has the most important influence on career development. Each day may present a different challenge. What is learned on the job has much more influence on development formally planned development activities. Second, the type of development skills that will be needed is determined by the specific type of job demands. The skills needed to become a first-line supervisor will likely be different from those needed to become middle manager. Third development will occur only when a person has not yet obtained the skills demanded by particular job. If the purpose of a transfer is to further develop an employee, and this individual already possesses the necessary skills for the new job, little or no learning will take place. Finally, the time required to develop the necessary skills can be reduced by identifying a rational sequence of job assignments for a person. Prior planning is necessary to ensure that individuals are developed in a timely manner.

5.4 Programme Encouraging Career Development

After understanding the importance of career development, an organization typically offers numerous opportunities to employees. These opportunities can involve simply a tuition reimbursement programme or a detailed counseling service for developing individual career path plans. The commitment to career development can delay the obsolescence of human resources that is so costly to an organization. Career development programmes involves career counseling the employment interview; career counseling during performance appraisal; psychological assessment and alternative planning; special career counseling for high potential employees; and counseling for downward transfers. In career planning, we may take planned job progression for new employees to acquire necessary experience for future jobs; Committee performs annual review of strengths and weaknesses and develop five year career plan for each management person plan for high-potential employees to place then in a particular target job to prepare supervisors for upper level management positions through rotation. Human Resources involves computerized inventory of backgrounds and skills to help identify replacements; Succession planning or replacement charts at all levels of management. Career information system involves job posting for all non-officer positions individual can bid to be considered; Job posting for hourly employees and career counseling for salaried employees. Management for supervisory development includes Responsibility of the departmental head to develop managers and Management development committee to alter the career development of managers.

6. Conclusion

The human input is recognized as the most effective for maximum output and efficiency of any organization. Many organizations have setup new departments known as "HRD Departments" which symbolize the recognition of importance of people's competency development. Organizations need for HRD is for Survival, Growth, Diversification, Effectiveness, Development of systems and services, Change and dynamic role in the industry, Achieving excellence through proper leadership role. In organizations that subscribe to HRD, the potential of every employee is assessed periodically. Supervisors in an HRD system have the responsibility for ongoing observation and feedback to subordinates about their strengths and their weaknesses, as well as for guidance in improving performance capabilities. The HRD philosophy is that people perform better when they feel trusted and see meaning in what they are doing. In the HRD system, corporate growth plans are not keep secret. All appropriate information about employees should be stored in a central human resources data bank i.e. computer. HRD process is facilitated by mechanisms like performance appraisal, training, organization development, feedback and counseling cover development, potential development, job rotation and rewards. Career planning is generally understood to be a management technique for mapping out the entire career of young employees in higher skilled supervisory and managerial positions. Career planning in an organization means that it has a succession plan for the higher level executives. Career planning may not be so effective if it is attempted for a period exceeding a decade because of some social, environment, political and other constraint. After understanding the importance of career development, an organization typically offers numerous opportunities to employees.

7. References

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