RECENT TRENDS IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this article is to establish the importance of human resource management (HRM) and how it emerged, to provide some evidence of its context, to discuss its potential and future development. Many specialists underlined the fact that human resource requires more attention and careful management than any other resource of an organization.

KEY WORDS

Human Resource Management, Trends, Practices.

INTRODUCTION

Human resource management is a process of bringing people and organizations together so that the goals of each other are met. The role of HR manager is shifting from that of a protector and screener to the role of a planner and change agent. Personnel directors are the new corporate heroes. The name of the game today in business is personnel. Nowadays it is not possible to show a good financial or operating report unless your personnel relations are in order. Over the years, highly skilled and knowledge based jobs are increasing while low skilled jobs are decreasing. This calls for future skill mapping through proper HRM initiatives.

Indian organizations are also witnessing a change in systems, management cultures and philosophy due to the global alignment of Indian organizations. There is a need for multi skill development. Role of HRM is becoming all the more important.

NEW TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL HRM

International HRM places greater emphasis on a number of responsibilities and functions such as relocation, orientation and translation services to help employees adapt to a new and different environment outside their own country.

Some of the recent trends that are being observed are as follows:

- The recent quality management standards **ISO 9001** and **ISO 9004** of 2000 focus more on people centric organizations. Organizations now need to prepare themselves in order to address people centered issues with commitment from the top management, with renewed thrust on HR issues, more particularly on training.
- Charles Handy also advocated future organizational models like **Shamrock**, **Federal** and **Triple I**. Such organizational models also refocus on people centric issues and call for redefining the future role of HR professionals.
- To leapfrog ahead of competition in this world of uncertainty, organizations have introduced **six-sigma practices**. Six- sigma uses rigorous analytical tools with leadership from the top and develops a method for sustainable improvement.

- **Human resource outsourcing** is a new accession that makes a traditional HR department redundant in an organization. Exult, the international pioneer in HR BPO already roped in Bank of America, international players BP Amoco & over the years plan to spread their business to most of the Fortune 500 companies.
- With the increase of global job mobility, recruiting competent people is also increasingly becoming difficult, especially in India. Therefore by creating an **enabling culture**, organizations are also required to work out a **retention strategy** for the existing skilled manpower.
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HR MANAGERS SHOULD DO THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO ENSURE SUCCESS-

- Use workforce skills and abilities in order to exploit environmental opportunities and neutralize threats.
- Employ innovative reward plans that recognize employee contributions and grant enhancements.
- Indulge in continuous quality improvement through TQM and HR contributions like training, development, counseling, etc
- Utilize people with distinctive capabilities to create unsurpassed competence in an area, e.g. Xerox in photocopiers, 3M in adhesives, Telco in trucks etc.
- Lay off workers in a smooth way explaining facts to unions, workers and other affected groups e.g. IBM, Kodak, Xerox, etc.
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HR MANAGERS TODAY ARE FOCUSING ATTENTION ON THE FOLLOWING-

- Policies- HR policies based on trust, openness, equity and consensus.
- Motivation- Create conditions in which people are willing to work with zeal, initiative and enthusiasm; make people feel like winners.
- Relations- Fair treatment of people and prompt redress of grievances would pave the way for healthy work-place relations.
- Change agent- Prepare workers to accept technological changes by clarifying doubts.
- Quality Consciousness- Commitment to quality in all aspects of personnel administration will ensure success.
- Due to the new trends in HR, in a nutshell the HR manager should treat people as resources, reward them equitably, and integrate their aspirations with corporate goals through suitable HR policies.

TOP 10 HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES-POSTRECESSION

1. Safe, Healthy and Happy Workplace: Creating a safe, healthy and happy workplace will ensure that your employees feel homely and stay with your organization for a very long time. Capture their pulse through employee surveys.

2. Open Book Management Style: Sharing information about contracts, sales, new clients, management objectives, company policies, employee personal data etc. ensures that the employees are as enthusiastic about the business as the management.

3. Performance linked Bonuses: Paying out bonuses or having any kind of variable compensation plan can be both an incentive and disillusionment, based on how it is administered and communicated. Bonus must be designed in such a way that people understand that there is no payout unless the company hits a certain level of profitability.

4. 360° Performance Management Feedback System: This system, which solicits feedback from seniors (including the boss), peers and subordinates, has been increasingly embraced as the best of all available methods for collecting performance feedback.

5. Fair Evaluation System for Employees: Develop an evaluation system that clearly links individual performance to corporate business goals and priorities. Each employee should have well defined reporting relationships. Self rating as a part of evaluation process empowers employees.

6. Knowledge Sharing: Adopt a systematic approach to ensure that knowledge management supports strategy. Store knowledge in databases to provide greater access to information posted either by the company or the employees on the knowledge portals of the company.

7. Highlight performers: Create profiles of top performers and make these visible through company intranet, display boards etc. It will encourage others to put in their best, thereby creating a competitive environment within the company. If a systems approach is followed to shortlist high performers, you can surely avoid disgruntlements.

8. Open house discussions and feedback mechanism: Ideas rule the world. Great organizations recognize, nurture and execute great ideas. Employees are the biggest source of ideas. The only thing that can stop great ideas flooding your organization is the lack of an appropriate mechanism to capture ideas.

9. Reward Ceremonies: Merely recognizing talent does not work, you need to couple it with ceremonies where recognition is broadcast. Looking at the Dollar Check is often less significant than listening to the thunderous applause by colleagues in a public forum.

10. Delight Employees with the Unexpected: occasionally delight your employees with unexpected things that may come in the form of a reward, a gift or a well-done certificate. Reward not only the top performers but also a few others who are in need of motivation to exhibit their potential.

NEW TREND OF UPGRADING TALENT
A downturn can give smart companies a chance to upgrade their talent.

Consider Cisco Systems' approach to downsizing during the last recession. In 2001, as deteriorating financial performance forced the elimination of 8,500 jobs, Cisco redesigned roles and responsibilities to improve cross-functional alignment and reduce duplication. The more collaborative environment fostered by such moves increased workplace satisfaction and productivity for many employees.

IBM retained its employee-development programs during its major performance challenges in the mid- to late 1980s. It took the arrival of Lou Gerstner as CEO and a new strategy to turn the company around, but the historical investments IBM had made in developing its people helped achieve a successful turnaround.

Before undertaking widespread layoffs, companies should use their performance-management processes to help identify strong employees. Companies that conduct disciplined, meritocratic assessments of performance and potential are well placed to make good personnel decisions. These companies should also bring additional strategic considerations to the decisions. They should assess which types of talent drive business value today and which will drive it next three years from now.

Cost cutting during a downturn is often necessary to ensure a company's current profitability and future competitiveness.

CHANGES IN TECHNOLOGY
Technology is a tool that can be used to aid the recruiting process.

Technology cannot replace human touch and therefore cannot be used to build relationships

Technology has indeed been a blessing. The reaction time to any problem has been slashed over a hundred times and leaders, managers and the worker fraternity in general is more connected now than ever before.

Technology is secular. In fact the role of technology in the arena of staff management has been incredible and today the function has become completely technology-driven. The function right from the recruiting stage to the exit interview and everything that comes in between is largely driven by technology.

Impersonal recruiting: They were rather candid about the way they recruit and the role of technology in their recruiting process. One of the speakers went to the extent of saying that thanks to technology there is no real need of meeting the candidate or even speaking to him. Recruiting managers can make their decision by simply exchanging mails!

The trend is indeed horrifying. If every recruiting manager were to select recruits on the basis of the mails exchanged then the concept of a "competitive edge" or a "differentiating factor" will not be there at all since everybody would be doing exactly the same thing.

The scenario can be nerve- wrecking and therefore it's time recruiting managers wake up and understand that technology is only a tool and it can be no standards be used to replace relationships.

A typical sales activity needs four basic pre-requisites for its success. These include:

- Establish and nurture a relationship
- Identify customer needs
- Strategies to overcome difficulties in meeting the needs
- Complete the sale

Each of these factors is relevant even as we see recruiting as a sales strategy. Hence recruiting managers must use technology in the third stage where difficulties hampering the activity need to be overcome by use of means that are both time and cost-effective.

KEY HRM PRACTICES IN INDIAN ORGANIZATIONS

HRM Practice	Observable Features
Job Description	Percentage of employees with formally defined work roles is very high in the public sector.
Recruitment	Strong dependence on formal labour market. Direct recruitment from institutions of higher learning is very common amongst management, engineering and similar professional cadres. Amongst other vehicles, placement agencies, internet and print media are the most popular medium for recruitment.
Compensation	Strong emphasis on security and lifetime employment in public sector including a range of facilities like, healthcare, housing and schooling for children.
Training and Development	Poorly institutionalized in Indian organizations. Popularity of training programs and their effect in skill and value development undeveloped.
Performance Appraisal	A very low coverage of employees under formal performance appraisal and rewards or organizational goals
Promotion and Reward	Moderately variable across industries. Seniority systems still dominate the public sector enterprises. Use of merit and performance limited mostly to globally orientated industries.
Career Planning	Limited in scope. The seniority based escalator system in the public sector provides stability and progression in career. Widespread use of voluntary retirement scheme in public sector by high performing staff. Cross functional career paths uncommon.
Gender Equity	Driven by proactive court rulings, ILO guidelines and legislature provisions. Lack of strategic and inclusion vision spread.
Reservation System	The central government has fixed 15 per cent reservations for scheduled castes, 7.5 per cent for scheduled tribes and 27 per cent for backward communities. States vary in their reservation systems.

Selection of employees requires careful evaluation of the personal characteristics of the candidate and his/her spouse. Training and development extends beyond information and orientation training to include sensitivity training and field experiences that will enable the manager to understand cultural differences better. Managers need to be protected from career development risks, re-entry problems and culture shock. To balance the pros and cons of home country and host country evaluations, performance evaluations should combine the two sources of appraisal information. Compensation systems should support the overall strategic intent of the organization but should be customized for local conditions.

CONCLUSION

The World Competitiveness Report rated India's human resource capabilities as being comparatively weaker than most Asian nations. A dramatic shift in recruitment practices has been taking place as globally pretend Indian companies as well as global technical services rivals have made India a battlefield of recruitment for the best workers. The recognition of world class human resource capability as being pivotal to global success has changed Indian HRM cultures in recent years. While the historical and traditional roots remain deeply embedded in the subjective world of managers, emphasis on objective global concepts and practices are becoming more common. Three very different perspectives in HRM are evident.

 Firstly, Indian firms with a global outlook;
 Secondly, global firms seeking to adapt to the Indian context; and
 Thirdly, the HRM practice in public sectors undertakings (PSV'S).

As the Indian economy becomes more globally linked, all three perspectives will move increasingly towards a cross verging strengthening. Interestingly, within the national context, India itself is not a homogenous entity. Regional variations in terms of industry size, provincial business culture, and political issues play very relevant roles. The nature of hierarchy, status, authority, responsibility and similar other concepts vary widely across the nations synerging system maintenance. Indeed, organizational performance and personal success are critical in the new era.

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