

STRATEGIC ROLES OF HRD PROFESSIONALS: AN ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

HRD is a new concept that has evolved in the last decade. HRD in USA is identified with training and development and it is only in the recent years that other components of HRD are being included under the term HRD. In India, some organizations have taken the lead of evolving and implementing an integrated HRD system. So HRD is an integrated and multidisciplinary approach to development of human resources in the organization. HRD, infact, is a positive concept in HRM. Development of human resources is essential for any organization that would like to be dynamic and growth oriented. Unlike other resources, human resources have rather unlimited potential capabilities. The potential can be used only by creating a climate that can continuously identify, bring to surface nurture and use the capabilities of people. HRD system aims at creating such a climate.

Introduction

Human resources constitute the only active factor of production. The factors like land, capital, and technology are passive. No matter what quantity and quality of these passive factors you have. These factors cannot assure you of high growth of your organization as their utilization depends upon human resources. For the growth of the organizations proper human resource management (HRM) is not enough, rather human resource development (HRD) too is essential. HRD involves the upgrading of skills, extending the knowledge resources, and competencies of human resource.

HRD is a new concept that has evolved in the last decade. HRD in USA is identified with training and development and it is only in the recent years that other components of HRD are being included under the term HRD. In India, some organizations have taken the lead of evolving and implementing an integrated HRD system. So HRD is an integrated and multidisciplinary approach to development of human resources in the organization. HRD, in fact, is a positive concept in HRM.

Development of human resources is essential for any organization that would like to be dynamic and growth oriented. Unlike other resources, human resources have rather unlimited potential capabilities. The potential can be used only by creating a climate that can continuously identify, bring to surface nurture and use the capabilities of people. HRD system aims at creating such a climate. A number of HRD techniques have been developed in recent past years to perform the above task based on certain principles. This unit provides an understanding of the concept of HRD system, related mechanisms and the changing boundaries of the HRD.

Meaning of Human Resource Development

In order to define HRD, let us first discuss Human resources and development separately.

HR+D

Human resources can be viewed as the sum of knowledge, skills, attitudes, commitment, values and the life of the people of an organization.

Development is acquisition of capabilities that are needed to do the present job or the future expected job.

HRD is thus defined as the process to enhance an employees' capacity to successfully handle greater responsibilities through formal and informal means. In other words, *HRD may be defined as a continuous process to ensure the development of employee competencies, dynamism, motivation and effectiveness in a systematic and planned way.* HRD brings about all round development of the people so that they can contribute their best to the organization, society and nation.

Definitions

According to T.V. Rao, "HRD is a process in which the employees of organization are continually helped in a planned way to:

- (a) *acquire or sharpen capabilities required to perform various functions associated with their present or expected future roles.*
- (b) *develop their general capabilities as individuals and discover and exploit their own inner potentials for their own organizational purposes.*
- (c) *develop an organizational culture in which superior-subordinate relationships, team work and collaboration among sub-units are strong and contribute to the professional well being, motivation of employees."*

According to Ishwar Dayal, "HRD involves:

- (a) *ways to better adjust the individual to his job and the environment*
- (b) *the greatest involvement of an employee in various aspects of his work and*
- (c) *the greatest concern for enhancing the capabilities of the individual."*

According to L.P. Singh, "HRD refers to improvement in the capacities and capabilities of the personnel in relation to the needs of that particular sector. It involves the creation of a climate in which the flower of human knowledge, skills, capabilities, creativity can bloom HRD seeks to provide a package of systems and processes through which these can be cultivated and enhanced among the people forming part of the network of roles in that sector."

Features or Nature of HRD

On the basis of the above given definitions, the following features of HRD may be identified:

- 1. Continuous and Dynamic Process:** HRD is a continuous and dynamic process which believes in the need for continuous development of personnel to face the innumerable challenges in the functioning of an organization. It is based on the belief that there is no end to the development of an individual and the learning process can continue throughout the life.
- 2. Planned and Systematic Approach:** HRD is a planned and systematic approach to the development of people. HRD is a system consisting of several interdependent and interrelated subsystems *e.g.* performance appraisal, training, job enrichment etc. While designing a HRD system, enough attention should be paid to building linkages between the various sub systems.
- 3. Inter-disciplinary Approach:** HRD is an inter-disciplinary approach. It involves collection of ideas for many sciences. It makes use of principles and concepts of behavioural sciences for the development of people. It uses knowledge drawn from psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics and political science for planning and implementing various programmes for the development of individuals, groups and the organization.
- 4. Micro and Macro Aspects:** HRD has both micro and macro aspects. At the macro level, HRD is described as the core of all development activities in the sense of improvement of quality of life of people of a nation. At the micro level, HRD involves the improvement in the quality of managers and workers so as to achieve greater quality and higher levels of productivity.
- 5. HRD improves quality of life:** HRD enables the employee discovers and utilizes his capabilities in service of organizational goals. He finds a new meaning in work, when managers support such initiatives through incentive plans and challenging work assignments. The whole effort of HRD, thus, is focused on improving the quality of life of employees working at various levels in an organization.

Thus, HRD is the essential ingredient of any human resource system poised to achieve

productivity, quality, efficiency and effectiveness.

Strategic Roles of HRD Professionals

In the article on HRD competencies and future trends in HRD **Pat McLagan** (1996) identified nine important roles for HRD practitioners to perform. As HRD practitioners create rather than just respond, they will seek leverage and ways to help managers, teams, and individuals take charge of their own human resource practices. **According to McLagan** “*HRD may be the only function in a clear position to represent human ethics and morality*”. It is in the following roles shown in Table .1 that the present HRD professionals are challenged to create new ways to address the human resources issues:

Table 1.1 Strategic Roles of HRD Professionals in Organization Activities

S.no.	Roles	Activities
1.	HR strategic advisor	In this role the issues and trends concerning an organization's external and internal people are brought to the attention of the strategic decision-makers.
2.	HR systems designer and developer	This role involves designing and preparing HR systems for implementation so that HR systems and actions are mutually reinforcing and have maximum impact on organization performance, development and endurance.
3.	Organization change consultant	This role means facilitating the development and implementation of strategies for transforming organization.
4.	Organization design consultant	This role involves identifying the work required to fulfill organizational strategies. It also involves organizing the work so that it makes efficient and effective use of resources.
5.	Learning program specialist	In this role learning needs are identified to design and develop structured learning programs and materials in a variety of media formats for self-study and workshop or electronic delivery.
6.	Instructor/facilitator	This is an increasingly difficult role. In it information is presented, structural learning experiences are lead and group discussions and group processes facilitated.

7.	Individual development and career consultant	This role involves helping people assess their competencies, values and goals so they can identify, plan, and implement development actions.
8.	Performance consultant	This role means assisting a group or individuals to add value in the workplace. It's a coaching and consulting role in which HRD people perform both analytical and systems design work.
9.	Researcher	This role involves assessing HRD practices and programs and their impact empirically. It also means communicating results so that the organization and its people accelerate their change and development.

Source: McLagan Pat (1996), *Great Ideas Revisited. Training and Development*, January 1996, pp. 60-65

Mechanism

Various thinkers and professionals have given divergent views and designed the mechanism in different ways. There is unanimity of opinion among HRD practitioners regarding the following instruments of HRD:

- 1. Performance Appraisal:** Performance appraisal is an important instrument in HRD. It is the process of assessing the performance and progress of an employee or of a group of employees on a given job and his potential for future development. The objective of performance appraisal is to determine the present state of efficiency of an employee in order to establish the actual need for training. The process of performance appraisal consists of setting standards for performance, communicating the standards to the employees, measuring the performance and comparing the actual performance with the standards set.
- 2. The Instrument of Potential Appraisal:** Potential appraisal is used for providing necessary data which helps in preparing career plans for individuals. This technique aims at development of latent abilities of individuals. This is a process of developing in the employees, capacities to perform new roles and responsibilities. This need is generally, felt when the organization is diversifying or introducing changes. The major objective of potential appraisal is to ensure a good match between the

employees and the job.

3. **Counselling and Monitoring:** Counselling is a two way process in which a counselor, provides advice and assistance to his subordinates. Performance counselling means the help given by a superior to his subordinate in improving the performance. It is infact, a process of guiding a subordinate to adjust better with his work environment and to better understand others so that his dealings with them can be effective and purposeful.
4. **Motivation among the Employees of an Organization:** It has been, generally, noticed that the performance of the personnel either as individuals or members of a group is less as compared to their capabilities in terms of skills, abilities and capacities. A climate of creativity must be developed and maintained by the management so that the performance levels must come upto the mark and growth becomes a way of life in the organization. This is possible only with proper motivation of employees.
5. **Training Tool:** Training is an investment in the HRD process which gives dividends both in short and long run. The ultimate goal of training is improving competence of the employees for raising the standards of organizational performance. An organization can do better if it invests in technology development and improvement of human systems, training is crucial for both of these. Lack of training may result in poor work performance, low production, demotivation and customer dissatisfaction. But it must be ensured by the HRD section that training is translated into practice. If one acquires knowledge but does not practise it, it will be useless.
6. **Building of Team work:** The HRD section must try to develop a habit of team work among the human resources. Team work requires among other things, that the members have an image of their own team mates, which coincides as precisely as possible with reality. In addition, each member must have a self image which adjusts to reality as much as possible and thus, coincides with the image the other members have of him.
7. **Creating Effective HRD Climate:** HRD climate is one of the pre-requisites of effective HRD process implementation. It is an integral part of organizational climate.

HRD climate creates interest and motivation among the employees to stay long in an organization. It creates growth opportunities and recognition. Its success is vitally based on top management's confidence in employees which will propel them to take initiative and meet challenging responsibilities for the organization. Employees' dignities and individuality is boosted when an effective HRD climate is created. A dynamic HRD climate can be conducive to development of both the individual as well as the organization.

- 8. Use of Quality Circle Technique:** A quality circle is a small group of employees doing similar or related work who meet regularly to identify, analyze and solve product related problems and to improve general relations. The quality circles are generally, autonomous units, usually led by a supervisor or a senior worker and organized as work units. The workers, who have a shared area of responsibility, meet periodically to discuss, analyze and propose solutions to ongoing problems.
- 9. Quality of Working Life:** The quality of the workers' conditions, both working and living, influences the workers' satisfaction and job satisfaction to a large extent. Inadequate working and living conditions produce adverse mental and physical effect on the employees, which leads to decline in their efficiency and ultimately in the overall productivity of the organization. The HRD system should take care of employee's health and well being of their families by providing them with better living and working conditions. Quality of working life generally, promotes a healthy atmosphere of development and motivation among employees.
- 10. Developing Emotional Intelligence:** Human resources are considered to be the greatest assets in any organization. It is, thus essential to understand the role of emotional intelligence in enhancing the productivity of the human resources to achieve the overall success. Emotions of the employees play an important role in determining their productivity and output. HRD should thus focus on enhancing the emotional intelligence of the organization.
- 11. Emphasis on Excellence:** Excellence is a state of mind which prepares the employees to perform duties with dedication. It also creates self reliance and helps him to have a vision and an urge to do better and better HRD approach should include, continuous

training and development for all, Performance planning and objective appraisal, Emergence of self managing groups with less supervision, Flexible attitude towards work and enriched job contents, Meaningful participation of workers in management, and Creation of a will to work.

Conclusion

Human resources constitute the only active factor of production. The factors like land, capital, and technology are passive. No matter what quantity and quality of these passive factors you have. These factors cannot assure you of high growth of your organization as their utilization depends upon human resources. For the growth of the organizations proper human resource management (HRM) is not enough, rather human resource development (HRD) too is essential. HRD involves the upgrading of skills, extending the knowledge resources, and competencies of human resource. HRD is a new concept that has evolved in the last decade. HRD in USA is identified with training and development and it is only in the recent years that other components of HRD are being included under the term HRD.

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