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Research Paper

Commerce

Performance Appraisal And Career Growth

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ABSTRACT

Every organisation inducts the employees on the job, conducts training programmes and keeps record of performances of it's employees. There come a great number of instances in the life time when some crucial managerial decisions are to be taken making differentiation amongst the employees on one or the other basis. It is carried out with the basic objectives: To extract the information which is useful in making and enforcing important decisions pertaining to selection, training, promotion, pay increases, transfers, lay-offs, discharges .In view of the importance of 'promotion' vis-à-vis 'career growth', various issues related with executive promotions in the organization were studied.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Every organisation inducts the employees on the job, conducts training programmes and keeps record of performances of it's employees. There come a great number of instances in the life time when some crucial managerial decisions are to be taken making differentiation amongst the employees on one or the other basis. The supremacy given to a particular employee is not always his basic qualification, training, length of service but it can be his extra efficiency shown in the job assessed on the basis of day–to–day appraisal done by his seniors. This is reflected through how effectively an individual is fulfilling the requirements of the job and it is always measured in terms of results.

"Performance appraisal is the systematic periodic and impartial rating of employees' excellence in matters pertaining to his present job and to his potentialities for a better job"1. Performance appraisal not only let the employee know, how well he is performing but should also influence the employee's future level of efforts, activities, results and task directions". It is the process of evaluating the performance and qualifications of the employees in terms of the requirements of the job for which he is employed, for purposes of administration including placement, selection for promotion, providing financial rewards and other action which require differential treatment among and members of a group as distinguished from action affecting all members equally"2.

Performance appraisal is also useful as a check on the success of recruitment, selection, placement and training procedure. Formal appraisal have been developed to reduce the element of favouratism and snap judgement in personnel decisions. But it is never a substitute for objective records of performance in terms of output, quality, piece work or incentive working. Appraisal is essentially subjective and therefore cannot be exact. But if it is based on pooled judgement periodically rendered by supervisors when each employee is compared with every other employee in the same workgroup or rated against specified standards of performance, the results are certainly better than the individual judgements and hasty opinions that might otherwise be used.

Performance appraisal has been defined as "Systematic assessment of an individual's performance in order to assess training needs, potential for promotions, eligibility for a merit increment as part of a pay or salary review or management succession planning"3. As an important tool performance appraisal provides valuable input information for various decision making areas of personnel management.

"Performance appraisal can be judgemental or developmental. As a judgemental process, the purpose of performance appraisal is to document what took place to account for the past. As a developmental process performance appraisal concentrates on employees and their needs as individuals"4. In the context of class I and class II employees, performance appraisal assumes greater significance since the executive and administrative manpower is more dynamic and multifarious as compared to other categories of manpower. It refers to all the formal procedure used in organisations to evaluate the personalities, contributions and potential of its employees.

OBJECTIVES OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Performance appraisal has been considered by different authors and thinkers as the most significant and indispensable tool for every type of organisation. The information it provides is highly useful in making decisions regarding various personnel aspects such as placement, transfer, promotion and enhancement of amoluments, training and development, motivation, by feed back and management by objectives. McGregor says, "formal performance appraisal plans are designed to meet three needs, one of the organisations and the other two of the individual namely:

(a) Provides systematic judgement to back up salary increments, transfers, demotions and termination.
(b) They are means of telling a subordinate, how he is doing and suggesting needed changes in his behaviour, attitude, skills or job knowledge. They let him know "where he stands" with the boss.
(c) They are used as a base for coaching and counseling the individual by the superior"5.

Performance appraisal determines who shall receive merit increases, counsels employees on their improvement, determines training needs, determines promotability, identifies those who should be transferred, moreover it improves employees job performance, encourages the employees to express their views or to seek clarification on job duties; broadens their outlook, capacity and potential; promotes a more effective utilisation of manpower and improves placement, facilitates selection reward and promotion of the best qualified employee, prevents and increases the analytical abilities of the supervisors.

Performance appraisal is basically judgement of characteristics, traits and performance of employees and is carried out every year in every organisation with a separate set of objectives that suit the conditions objectives and nature of the organisation. It is carried out with the following basic objectives:

- To extract the information which is useful in making and enforcing important decisions pertaining to selection, training, promotion, pay increases, transfers, lay-offs, discharges, salary adjustments. The informations are compiled well in advance to support every decision made in the organisation and can be used as evidence in case any decision is challenged in the court of law.
- To unify the procedure so that rating of all the employees is done in a uniform basis and is comparable in case of different groups of the employees.
- To motivate and direct the employees for their development by providing information regarding their weaknesses and enabling them to know the ways and means to overcome the same. Periodical appraisal will help in creating an environment in the organisation in which the criticism is taken boldly without any resentment.
- To create a clear basis for weeding out such individuals whose views are not in harmony with the company's objectives or management philosophy. Prior to it a system of persuation to adjust in the working can also be devised on the basis of performance.
- To create a competent and alert team of supervisors for accurate and analytical evaluation of all the employees. This helps them in understanding the employees and the organisation as a whole.

It may be emphasised here that the objectives to which performance appraisal system of an organisation is tuned will not be the same for all organisations. "There is a need to design an appraisal system that suit the conditions, objectives and personnel of the organisation"6.

In spite of theoretically incorporating important objectives towards effective human resource management "Performance appraisal system

in many organisations have become a ritual. In many places it is mistaken for a kind of system which enables the boss to decide the pay increments to the subordinates at the end of the year. The fact remains that the system should be primarily intended to consolidate an executives performance to achieve the overall objective of the organisation".

IMPORTANCE OF CAREER GROWTH

"A career is a sequence of positions occupied by a person during the course of a lifetime"15. A career is a sequence of separate but related work activities that provides continuity, order and meaning to a person's life, which is shaped by many factors, including heredity, culture, parents, age level and actual experiences in one or more organisations. Therefore any work paid or unpaid, pursued over an extended period of time, can constitute a career16.

Career planning of employees carried out systematically and regularly provides valuable information on the extent of current and potential utilization of human resources and is an important input to manpower planning process. Although career planning, manpower planning and succession planning are synonymous, they are complementary and are inter dependent for their effective working and implementation. All the three are essential for the organizational growth and development, effective utilization of available human resources, and optimum productivity. Manpower planning provides an inventory of the skill and potential available within an organization and the career plan provides a picture of the succession plan. The ability of an organization to ensure optimum utilization of its human resources depends on the extent to which it is able to meet the multiplicity of needs and aspirations of its employees. Organizations have, however, their own requirements and constraints which limit their capacity to meet the unique individual expectations. The changing expectations of employees and limits imposed by organisational constrains, usually create a situation of conflict. If this conflict is not resolved properly, the organisation will not be able to get the best out of the employees. Career planning provides a set of tools and techniques for productive resolution of this conflict between the individual and the organisation.

Career growth pattern of personnel in any organization is an important indicator of its health. Effective career management of manpower in any organization is crucial, both from the standpoint of individual employees as well as the organization as a whole. It is a "systematic approach to the identification and development of individual careers in the organization for the benefit of both individual and organization"

Need for achievement is one of the basic needs of people and therefore, adequate growth opportunities within an organization are key motivators for individuals. On the other hand, from organizational angle, a sound career growth pattern ensures the availability of competent executives at all levels from within the organisation.

PROMOTIONS

Promotion can be defined as "an appointment from a given position to a higher grade involving a change of duties to a more difficult type of work and greater responsibilities, accompanied by a change of title and usually an increase in pay"18.

The term 'career growth' is often used interchangeably with the term 'promotion', although it has a wider scope. "Advancement within an organization is ordinarily labelled as promotion"19. Nevertheless, promotion is undoubtedly the first and foremost method or tool, available to the organization to manage the career growth of employees.

In view of the importance of 'promotion' vis-à-vis 'career growth', various issues related with executive promotions in the organization were studied.

When a person chooses a career, he comes with certain expectations of promotional opportunities that the organization hopefully will have in store. At the same time, the importance assigned to promotional prospects vis-à-vis attractiveness of the chosen job varies from individual to individual. "When employees join an organization, they bring with them a set of wants, needs, desires and past experiences that combine to form job expectations. Job satisfaction expresses the amount of agreement between one's emerging expectations and rewards that the job provides"20.

The importance for promotional opportunities may be more for young and more qualified people, since "occupational status is increasingly dependent on educational attainment"and few years before retirement, "due to various physiological, social and other allied causes, a person becomes disinterested in his job and gives up the race"

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