

An Analytical Study on the Human Resource Management in Sugar Factories in Tamil Nadu



Commerce

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INTRODUCTION

The economy of any nation pivot son on natural resources men and women workers and technological progress. In the modern era, the economists have announced "human resource" as an advent in the international arena in a thumping fashion. The human resource is indubitably the most dynamic backbone of any economic enterprise; "the resource of all resources" will take a giant leap over all resource components. Business experts highlight the issues such as global competition, the fast changing information and technology; composition of workforce etc., the business performance has successfully transited from the slow growth economy a fast growing one.

There was a shift from the tradition bound personnel management to people oriented service. The conventional personnel management is more bureaucratic whereas the human resource management attaches more importance to humanism and humanization. New techniques and styles of managing have been developed. Personal administration, industrial relations and labour welfare have become the integral parts of the broad human resource practices. Human resource professionals must concentrate more on the deliverables of their work and less on just getting the work done. They must tackle the complex, social, economic legal and ethical issues. An efficient human resource is a strategic asset.

EVOLUTION OF HRM

The development of human resource management in UK and USA was largely voluntary. But in India, it emerged because of Governmental intervention and compulsion. In the beginning of the 20th century, various malpractices in the recruitment of workers and payment of wages were prevalent; they caused a colossal loss in production. The Royal Commission on Labour in India (1931) under the chairmanship of J.H. Whitely recommended the abolition of the "Jobber" system and the appointment of labour Officers industrial enterprises to perform the recruitment function as well as to look after the welfare of the employees. After independence, the labour welfare Officer was identified with the personnel manager created by legislation under Section 49 of the Factories Act 1948. The role of a personnel manager was that of a ustodian of personnel policy implementation, in compliance with different enactments of the factories legislation. Over the years, a new approach - the human resource management has emerged; it focuses more on developmental aspects of human resource with a pragmatic flexible approach.

MAJOR CHALLENGES FACING TODAY'S HR PROFESSIONAL

HR professionals are primarily responsible for developing HRM practices that enhance competitive advantage. HR professionals have two responsibilities

- (1) to ensure that their own talents are treated ethically and
- (2) to ensure that their own talents are appropriately utilized by their companies.

Organizational Ethics Related to HRM

Almost all HRM decisions have ethical consequences. Despite the abundance of laws designed to ensure fair treatment at the workplace, employees are often treated in an unethical manner. 1 In some instances, employers skirt the law; in others, the "letter of the law" is followed, but employees are nonetheless treated unfairly by management or by other employees.

i) Unethical Behavior

According to a recent survey, the most serious ethical problems

involve managerial decisions regarding employment, promotion, pay, discipline and favoritism.

ii) Workplace Ethics and the HR Professional's Job

HR professionals play three roles in the area of workplace ethics. Firstly they must observe the actions of organizational members to ensure that all individuals are treated fairly and legally. Secondly HR professionals investigate complaints bearing on ethical issues, such as sexual harassment or violations of employees' privacy rights. Thirdly HR professionals serve as company spokespeople by defending the company's actions when confronted by a regulatory agency or the media. Furthermore, HR professionals themselves should act ethically. In an ethical dilemma, HR professionals must be willing to take a strong stand, even if it means putting their jobs at risk. If they choose to turn a blind eye, they become part of the problem and thus must take the blame.

Organizational Utilization of HR Professionals

HR Professionals should also ensure that their organizations appropriately utilize their talents. HR professionals can contribute significantly to a firm's competitive advantage. Unfortunately, many firms set up roadblocks that prevent HR staff from making such contributions.

The HRM function has traditionally been viewed as the Rodney Dangerfield of business "They don't get any respect". The enormous benefits attached to better HRM practices are often ignored because many managers perceive that HRM cannot contribute to competitive advantage to the same extent that more innovative technologies and business strategies can As an HR professional at Texas Instruments noted:

In the past, the HR function has been like a spare tire kept in the trunk. In an Emergency, it's taken put, but as soon as the emergency is over, it's put away. HR's failure to earn credibility with upper management has created two specific problems for HR professionals. First, upper-level managers often reject their advice and do not select HRM's best practices. Second, HR professionals are rarely asked for their advice on broader management issues.

Increasing the HR Professional's Sphere of Influence

A recent survey of over 200 HR professionals has found out that most of them (58 percent) do not consider themselves full-fledged participants at the firm's "executive table"; they are often left in the dark when important executive decisions are made.⁶ To ensure that companies use their skills fully, HR professionals must dramatically increase their sphere of influence within their organizations. Their role should be that of a full business partner.

HR professionals must form a partnership with operating managers. Both parties recognize that one cannot build sustainable competitive advantage based solely on the type of products offered or the type of technology used. The only thing that will uphold a company's future competitive advantage is the caliber of people in the organization. HR professionals and line managers should both be concerned with how to effectively provide an environment in which people can do what they are capable of doing.

To be full business partners, HR professionals must shift from being the narrow specialists of the past to being members of general management teams. HR professionals must work side by side with managers as partners in Handling all kinds of busi-

ness activities, not just function-specific ones. The vice president of Scott Paper Company notes that the human resource executive must be "at the management table initiating ideas to make us more productive". HR is no longer sitting on the sidelines. We're trying to figure out how to put together a catalogue and how to improve the turnaround time to our customers.

The International Scenario and Human Resource Management

There are numerous difficulties in attempting to create a model of HRM even within the cultural context of one country, the United States, and there are further complexities in attempting to apply such models to other national settings. This is also compounded by the variety of organizational and managerial styles in different organizations in different sectors depending on the products they make and the services which they provide within the diversity of national and regional cultures. Not surprisingly, 'underlying theory which describes and explains variations in comparative human resource systems has been slow to develop' (Begin, 1992).

In the European Community alone, there are significant differences in human resource practices. For example, in many Italian organizations recruitment is often based on the contacts of family and friends, whilst although such practices do exist in Northern Europe, they are generally frowned on as a form of nepotism. In France, graphology is widely used in the selection process but hardly used in Scandinavia or the UK where there is more scepticism about its effectiveness. In Germany and Sweden there are large numbers of directors and senior executives who have engineering qualifications whereas in the UK they are more likely to have accountancy backgrounds. In addition, labour market policies differ widely across Europe and there can be significant variance in policies and practices between countries, which appear similar in their socio-economic and political structures, for example between Denmark and Sweden (Brewster, Hegewisch, Holden and Lockhart, 1992)

The Indian scenario and human resource management In the 50s, there was a strong belief that employees were not expected to question 'why' but only 'to do-and-die'. In the 60s, terms like "manpower", "staff" and "personnel" came to be used and instead of controlling the employees, it became more and more acceptable to manage personnel as studies revealed that productivity of the workers could be improved if they were organized for the work. Moreover, in the late 70s, people realized that beyond a point, productivity depended on people. In addition, workers started demanding whatever they expected from the employers over and above their salaries.

'Personnel' came to be called 'human resources'. Sharing the global thinking, Indian managers and behavioral scientists accepted

and introduced such theories, models and concepts as theory X/Y/Z, two-factor theory of motivation, Contingency model, social-comparison processes, Porter-Lawler model, socio technical system, job enrichment, managerial grid, participative management, empowerment, quality of work life, total quality management and Kaizen. At the same time, experts observed that there were some strategic challenges of current times such as accelerating rates of change in all aspects of business—increasing competition, globalization of business, technological change, changing work culture, resource constraints, and transition from industrial to information society, unstable market owing to economic conditions increasing demands by corporate stakeholders, and a complex psychological environment. We are now witnessing the emergence of a global village. However, are we prepared for the ensuing challenge. Hierarchy, status, authority, responsibility, and accountability are structural concepts. However, in the Indian context, emotions, feelings, empathetic perceptions, impressions and the affective components have influenced people more than anything else. In a work environment, people do not like being treated as puppets, blamed, belittled or bossed over. On the other hand, managers feel that they only should 'think' and workers must only do. The idea that the boss is always right still persists. The boss-subordinate relationship creates stressful situations, hampering the environment conducive to human resource management. The subordinates expect that the boss should have integrity, higher performance skill, commitment, guidance and leadership qualities, and patronizing tendencies, accessibility, wider vision, sense of empowerment, and credibility. On the other hand, the boss expects that his subordinates should have a commitment to job, integrity, competence, reliability, initiative, loyalty to the organization, self-discipline and a good sense of accountability and involvement. HRM basically refers to a balanced interaction between these two sets of expectations. A good HRM environment ensures harmony between the boss and the subordinates. However, a healthy corporate philosophy ensuring uniform policies at all levels of an organization is necessary.

Conclusion:

Indian organizations are experiencing as transition a transition. The workforces of the 50s and 60s have retired. The middle-level is now at the top with the hangover of all possible middle-class values. The new generations of MBAs are pouring into industrial organizations. Young executives in their mid-30s are heading HRD/HRM divisions in big companies. Moreover, due to the unprecedented advancement in information technology, there is a growing need to understand and manage this transition, and give a direction to this change process. In order to achieve an effective HRM strategy, we have to integrate HRM with HRD, IR, and organization development (OD). The HRM strategies in India in the 21st century have to focus on better individual-organization interface and greater emphasis on organizational effectiveness than on personal success.