

HUMAN DIMENSION IN INFORMATION AGE



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RECENT TRENDS IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN INDIA

Dr.D. VENKATESWARARAO ,

Assistant Professor, P.R .GOVT ,COLLEGE,(a) KAKINADA.

CH.Balaji ,

Assistant Professor,

P.R .GOVT ,COLLEGE,(a)

KAKINADA

Abstract:

Continuous changes in technology, economic, social and psychological understandings and structures have influence on both Human Resources and their management. Organizations approach their human capital in a more sensitive way in order to win the loyalty and commitment of them, while increasing profit and maximizing the efficiency/effectiveness of its work power. Human Resources Management helps achieving these goals by recruiting, training, developing, motivating and rewarding employees. Therefore, the identification of current research interests is essential to lead them in defining organizational human resources strategies.

Introduction

The world of work is rapidly changing. As a part of organization, Human Resource Management (HRM) must be prepared to deal with effects of changing world of work. For the HR people it means understanding the implications of globalization, work-force diversity, changing skill requirements, corporate downsizing, continuous improvement initiatives, reengineering, the contingent work force, decentralized work sites and employee involvement for which all and more have the financial implication to organization. Let alone on the employees side where engagement, satisfaction, motivation, retention, absenteeism, turnover have to be checked. As a rule human resource management has to venture into new trends in order to remain relevant corporate development partner. Look at the new trends below;

1. Globalization and Its Implications

Business today doesn't have national boundaries – it reaches around the world. The rise of multinational corporations places new requirements on human resource managers. The HR department needs to ensure that the appropriate mix of employees in terms of knowledge, skills and cultural adaptability is available to handle global assignments. In order to meet this goal, the organizations must train individuals to meet the challenges of globalization. The employees must have working knowledge of the language and culture (in terms of values, morals, customs and laws) of the host country.

Human Resource Management (HRM) must also develop mechanisms that will help multicultural individuals work together. As background, language, custom or age differences become more prevalent, there are indications that employee conflict will increase. HRM would be required to train management to be more flexible in its practices. Because tomorrow's workers will come in different colors, 'nationalities and so on, managers will be required to change their ways. This will necessitate managers being trained to recognize differences in workers and to appreciate and even celebrate these differences.

2. Work-Force Diversity

In the past HRM was considerably simpler because our work force was strikingly homogeneous. Today's work force comprises of people of different gender, age, social class sexual orientation, values, personality characteristics, ethnicity, religion, education, language, physical appearance, marital status, lifestyle, beliefs, ideologies and background characteristics such as geographic origin, tenure with the organization, and economic status and the list could go on. Diversity is critically linked to the organization's strategic direction. Where diversity flourishes, the potential

benefits from better creativity and decision making and greater innovation can be accrued to help increase organization's competitiveness. One means of achieving that is through the organization's benefits package. This includes HRM offerings that fall under the heading of the family friendly organization. A family friendly organization is one that has flexible work schedules and provides such employee benefits such as child care. In addition to the diversity brought by gender and nationality, HRM must be aware of the age differences that exist in today's work force. HRM must train people of different age groups to effectively manage and to deal with each other and to respect the diversity of views that each offers. In situations like these a participative approach seems to work better.

3. Changing Skill Requirements

Recruiting and developing skilled labour is important for any company concerned about competitiveness, productivity, quality and managing a diverse work force effectively. Skill deficiencies translate into significant losses for the organization in terms of poor-quality work and lower productivity, increase in employee accidents and customer complaints. Since a growing number of jobs will require more education and higher levels of language than current ones, HRM practitioners and specialists will have to communicate this to educators and community leaders etc. Strategic human resource planning will have to carefully weigh the skill deficiencies and shortages. HRM department will have to devise suitable training and short term programs to bridge the skill gaps & deficiencies.

4. Corporate Downsizing

Whenever an organization attempts to delayer, it is attempting to create greater efficiency. The premise of downsizing is to reduce the number of workers employed by the organization. HRM department has a very important role to play in downsizing. HRM people must ensure that proper communication must take place during this time. They must minimize the negative effects of rumours and ensure that individuals are kept informed with factual data. HRM must also deal with actual layoff. HRM dept is key to the downsizing discussions that have to take place.

5. Continuous Improvement Programs

Continuous improvement programs focus on the long term well-being of the organization. It is a process whereby an organization focuses on quality and builds a better foundation to serve its customers. This often involves a companywide initiative to improve quality and productivity. The company changes its operations to focus on the customer and to involve workers in matters affecting them. Companies strive to improve everything that they do, from hiring quality people, to administrative paper processing, to meeting customer needs.

Unfortunately, such initiatives are not something that can be easily implemented, nor dictated down through the many levels in an organization. Rather, they are like an organization wide development process and the process must be accepted and supported by top management and driven by collaborative efforts, throughout each segment in the organization. HRM plays an important role in the implementation of continuous improvement programs. Whenever an organization embarks on any improvement effort, it is introducing change into the organization.

6. Re-Engineering Work Processes For Improved Productivity

Although continuous improvement initiatives are positive starts in many of our organizations, they typically focus on ongoing incremental change. Such action is intuitively appealing – the constant and permanent search to make things better. Yet many companies function in an environment that is dynamic- facing rapid and constant change. As a result continuous improvement programs may not be in the best interest of the organization. The problem with them is that they may provide a false sense of security. Ongoing incremental change avoids facing up to the possibility that what the organization may really need is radical or quantum change. Such drastic change results in the re-engineering of the organization.

Re-engineering occurs when more than 70% of the work processes in an organization are evaluated and altered. It requires organizational members to rethink what work should be done, how it is to be done and how to best implement these decisions. Re-engineering changes how organizations do their business and directly affects the employees. Re-engineering may leave certain employees frustrated and angry and unsure of what to expect. Accordingly HRM must have mechanisms in place for employees to get appropriate direction of what to do and what to expect as well as assistance in dealing with the conflict that may permeate the organization. For re-engineering to generate its benefits HRM needs to offer skill training to its employees. Whether it's a new process, a technology enhancement, working in teams, having more decision making authority, or the like, employees would need new skills as a result of the re-engineering process.

7. Contingent Workforce

A very substantial part of the modern day workforce are the contingent workers. Contingent workers are individuals who are typically hired for shorter periods of time. They perform specific tasks that often require special job skills and are employed when an organization is experiencing significant deviations in its workflow. When an organization makes its strategic decision to employ a sizable portion of its workforce from the contingency ranks, several HRM issues come to the forefront. These include being able to have these virtual employees available when needed, providing scheduling options that meet their needs and making decisions about whether or not benefits will be offered to the contingent work force. No organization can make the transition to a contingent workforce without sufficient planning. As such, when these strategic decisions are being made, HRM must be an active partner in these discussions. After its entire HRM department's responsibility to locate and bring into the organization these temporary workers. As temporary workers are brought in, HRM will also have the responsibility of quickly adapting them to the organization. HRM will also have to give some thought to how it will attract quality temporaries. This is sometimes done on consultancy basis. Consultancy work is often a short time basis and to re-invent the organization's operation such a workforce of consultancy is vital.

8. Mass Customization

There is a lot going on already within HR concerning mass customization, the optimal combination of mass production with customization. We've seen companies basing employment arrangements on learning styles and personalities, allowing employees to choose between lower base pay and higher bonuses vs. higher base pay and lower bonuses, and changing from career ladders with a straight shot to the top to career lattices where a sideways move is considered a good career move. Here, HR has done a great job of applying HR principles to its own traditional functional processes. HR will need to take the tools of marketing around customization for consumers and clients and applying them to the task of talent segmentation. The key is to optimize. At one extreme, a personal employment deal for every individual would be chaotic. At the other extreme, defining fairness as "same for everyone" risks missing important benefits of customization, and in fact may be unproductive and unfair. Thus, HR should develop principles for understanding the optimal level of customization in the employment relationship. Moreover, because customization will often mean that different groups of employees receive different employment arrangements based on their needs or the way they contribute, HR must develop principles that equip leaders to explain these differences to employees. Our work suggests that while many HR managers understand the need for customization and differentiation in principle, they resist it because they simply don't feel well-equipped to explain them. It is far easier to say, "We do the same thing for everyone, so it's out of my hands." The concept of fairness is sometimes confused with treating everyone the same.

9. Decentralized Work Sites

Work sites are getting more and more decentralized. Telecommuting capabilities that exist today have made it possible for the employees to be located anywhere on the globe. With this potential, the employers no longer have to consider locating a business near its work force. Telecommuting also offers an opportunity for a business in a high cost area to have its work done in an area where lower wages prevail.

Decentralized work sites also offer opportunities that may meet the needs of the diversified workforce. Those who have family responsibilities like child care, or those who have disabilities may prefer to work in their homes rather than travel to the organization's facility. For HRM, decentralized work sites present a challenge. Much of that challenge revolves around training managers in how to establish and ensure appropriate work quality and on-time completion. Work at home may also require HRM to rethink its compensation policy. Will it pay by the hour, on a salary basis, or by the job performed? Also, because employees in decentralized work sites are full time employees of the organization as opposed to contingent workers, it will be organization's responsibility to ensure health and safety of the decentralized work force.

10. Employee Involvement

For today's organization's to be successful there are a number of employee involvement concepts that appear to be accepted. These are delegation, participative management, work teams, goal setting, employee training and empowering of employees. HRM has a significant role to play in employee involvement. What is needed is demonstrated leadership as well as supportive management. Employees need to be trained and that's where human resource management has a significant role to play. Employees expected to delegate, to have decisions anticipatively handled, to work in teams, or to set goals cannot do so unless they know and understand what it is that they are to do. Empowering employees requires extensive training in all aspects of the job. Workers may need to understand how new job design processes. They may need training in interpersonal skills to make participative and work teams function properly.

11. Technology

With the current technological advancement and its projection in the future, it has brought in new eyes in the face of HRM. A number of computerized systems have been invented to help in the HRM of which they are seen as simplifier of HR functions in companies. Large or multinational organizations using some of the human resources information systems are reaping big. You do not have to stay in a particular location to do your duties but you can do on a mobile basis. For instance the paper work files are being replaced by HRMIS which may be tailor made or Off the Shelf. These systems help in handling a lot of data on a chip other than having a room full of file shelves. What HRM is concerned with here is the safety (confidentiality) of the data/information of staff, and therefore it is at the forefront of having to train personnel in operating such systems and developing the integrity of such personnel to handle the sensitivity of the matter.

12. Health

With the emergence of the wellness clubs and fitness centers together with the need for having healthy workforce, it has emerged that HRM has to move to another step like having to subscribe for its employees to such clubs, paying health insurance services for the staff. This is not only a productivity strategy but also a strategy used to attract and retain valuable employees. In the current situation as it is now especially with the outbreak of HIV/AIDS epidemic, it has been seen to be of value to have infected and affected employees have special attention so that they can have confidence of support from the employers. With its effect leading to stigmatization, HRM has to think of counseling and guiding such employee so that despite of the effect they (employee) remain productive. Cancer is another kind of issue that has seen the current trend in HRM look closer to health and wellness of employees. Cancers of all types are endemic to employees. Couple with other communicable and non communicable diseases HRM has no option other than to advice management to invest in health care packages that will revitalize the

performance of the affected and infected employees' Therefore for HRM to continue showing relevance it has shifted to providing health services to staff through health insurance, sensitization, and free medical treatment bills. This has seen high results in not only in performance but also in attraction and retention of highly qualified personnel.

13. Family Work Life Balance

Over a long time now in HRM history it has been a big debate about family life work balance. Employees have been on toes of the employers to see if there could be justice done and on the other hand employers have been keen to minimize the effect of the same. The fact is a happy family is equal to a happy workforce. With the current trend HRM have to work it out that every employee's family to some extent is a happy one. Therefore investing in what may seem out hand for the organization is inevitable. It is time HRM to convince management to organize family day out for the staff and their families, sacrifice sometimes for days off to enable employees to attend to their family issues. Still it is realized that the family bond is a cost to employer in terms of time but it is a great motivator the employee. Which leads to high productivity. Therefore the HRM has to stay tuned the the dynamics of family needs of employees and go a step ahead to provide development assistance like loans to meet family needs and social development.

14. Confidentiality

The current trends have been seen as new challenges in the terms of costs especially in the short run but for organization to strive well in this competitive market to together with the labor mobility it is imperative important to rethink the HRM in terms of the current trends at all levels. It goes without say that as longer as there is no clear defined human resource management strategies in the given organization there is definitely a problem boiling in the same organization or an explosion is bound to happen. With the current trend in managing the most valued organization resource, organizations have to dig deeper to maintain ShareShare 14 Current Trends in Human Resource Management **Conclusion:**

In today world, the Human Resource Management plays a very significant role in the daily life. On the one hand, the Soft and Hard Human Resource Management influence on the business and lets them development rapidly. It can improve employee's motivation in a business and pay attention to company's policy and law respectively, which can increase the efficiency of company and get higher profits. On the other hand, trade unions help the employee to achieve negotiation successfully in the early time; it means the employee can negotiate a better wages and a good working condition. However, at the present, the employment law gradually becomes the focus in the world, because it has more restrictive and more favorable to protecting employee's benefit. In the future, the Human Resources Management will continue to play its role in each business.

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