RECENT TRENDS IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Continuous changes in technology, economic, social and psychological understandings and structures have influence on both Human Resources and their management. Current models of HRM suggest that expectations about HR roles are changing as organisations are striving to make the HR function leaner and more 'strategic'.

The aim of this article is to identify recent trends in human resource development and to review existing research with regard to these recent trends. As a result, the following trends are identified: Globalization and its implications, Work-force Diversity, Employee expectations, Changing skill requirements, Corporate downsizing, Continuous improvement programs, Re-engineering work processes for improved productivity, Contingent workforce, Mass Customization, Decentralized work sites, Employee involvement, Technology, Health, Family work life balance, Confidentiality. Per trend, relevant existing research is reviewed and avenues for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Diversity, Human resource management, Workforce.

AIM OF THIS STUDY

- The main aim of this paper is to study the recent trends in human resource management.
- To study the how human resource management to deal with effects of changing world of work.

I. INTRODUCTION

Human resource management (HRM or simply HR) is the management of human resources. It is a process of bringing people and organisations together so that the goals of each are met. It is a function in the organizations designed to maximize employee performance in service of an employer's strategic objectives. Human Resource Management has evolved considerably over the past century, and experienced a major transformation in form and function primarily within the past two decades. The role of human resource management in organisations has been evolving dramatically in recent times. HR is increasingly receiving attention as a critical strategic partner, assuming stunningly different, far reaching transformational roles and responsibilities. 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

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globalization, work-force diversity, changing skill requirements, corporate downsizing, continuous improvement initiatives, re-engineering, the contingent work force, decentralized work sites and employee involvement for which all and more have the financial implication to organization. Driven by a number of significant internal and external environment forces, HRM has progressed from a largely maintenance function, with little if any bottom line impact, to what many scholars and practitioners today regard as the source of sustained competitive advantage for organizations operating in a global economy.

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II. RECENT TRENDS IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

2.1 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 growth of liberal cross-border trade, the use of communications technology and the expansion of transnational companies are not likely to let up. Attracting global talent requires staying abreast of new strategies for finding and attracting talent. 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. HRM would be required to train management to be more flexible in its practices. Business technology consultancy Infosys decided to hire Chinese graduates and started

by inviting and teaching a select group of Chinese students English at its office in Mysore, India, allowing the company to source workers from a neighbouring country cost-effectively

2.2 Work-force Diversity

Workforce diversity means similarities and differences among employees in terms of age, cultural background, physical abilities and disabilities, race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation. No two humans are alike. Diversity is critically linked to the organization's strategic direction. The workforce composition is also changing over the years. Demands for equal pay for equal work, putting an end to gender inequality and bias in certain occupations, the breaking down of grass ceiling have already been met. 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.

In current scenario, employing diversified workforce is a necessity for every organization but to manage such diversified workforce is also a big challenge for management.

2.3 Employee expectations

Nowadays workers are better educated, more demanding and are ready to voice strong, violent and joint protests in case their expectations are not met. The list of financial and non-financial demands is ever-growing and expanding. In fast-changing industries such as software, telecom, entertainment and pharmaceuticals the turnover rations are rising fast and if HR managers do not respond positively to employee expectations, the acquisition and development costs of recruits is going to mount up steadily. An efficient organisation is, therefore required to anticipate and manage turnover through human resource planning, training schemes followed by appropriate compensation packages.

2.4 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.

2.5 Corporate downsizing

Whenever an organization attempts to delayer, it is attempting to create greater efficiency. The pressure to remain cost effective has also compelled many a firm to go lean, cutting down extra fat at each managerial level. The premise of downsizing is to reduce the number of workers employed by the organization. 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.

2.6 Continuous improvement programs

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. HRM plays an important role in the implementation of continuous improvement programs. HRM must prepare individuals for the change. This requires clear and extensive communications of why the change will occur, what is to be expected and what effect it will have on employees.

2.7 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. 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.

2.8 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. 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.

2.9 Mass Customization

There is a lot going on already within HR concerning mass customization, the optimal combination of mass production with customization. HR will need to take the tools of marketing around customization for consumers and clients and applying them to the task of talent segmentation. 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.

2.10 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. 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.

2.11 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.

2.12 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. 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.

2.13 Health and Safety

The area of safety and accident prevention is of great concern to managers, at least partly because of the increasing number of deaths and accidents at work. Failure to provide a safe place to work can result in major fines and even criminal conviction for managers. Supervisors play a key role in monitoring workers for safety. With the emergence of the wellness clubs and fitness centres 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. 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.

2.14 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.

2.15 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 labour 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

III. CONCLUSION

Globalization is a force that increasingly touches the lives of people living in all countries of the world. Country borders are metamorphosing from barriers to bridges as a result of trade liberalization, increasing levels of education among women and workers in developing countries, and advancements in technology. Goods, services and labour talent are now flowing more freely across the globe than ever before.

The opportunities are abundant, organizations to improved job opportunities and higher wages for skilled workers. The challenges are equally copious. Organizations need to deal with an ageing workforce; they must attract, integrate and maintain multicultural employment pools. As a rule human resource management has to venture into new trends in order to remain relevant corporate development partner.

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