

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION

ASHUTOSH SINGH JELIYANG
NET

Abstract

Human resource development has a strategic role to play in government. The contextual and historical conditions affecting government systems give the HRD function in government a difficult and complex role to play. HRD has to provide for the development of administrators and personnel who in turn have to look after key developmental activities in the country. Hitherto, HRD in government has been confined to limited training activities, job rotation, selection, manpower forecasting, and maintaining of a personnel data bank. A new approach towards developing an integrated HRD system in government administration is called for. The main components of such a system are suggested to be activity, task or role analysis, identification of critical job attributes, performance appraisal, potential development, training, and organization development.

Introduction

The environmental and situational conditions under which the government operates have an important bearing on its HRD practices. By and large, the government is seen to be conservative and slow in managing and implementing HRD and its HRD activities are often constrained by red-tapism and bureaucratic delays. The government has been slow to introduce even fairly conventional HRD systems such as regular training and development of its personnel. There are a number of reasons "which may explain these characteristics of HRD in government.

Government institutions are very large and complex systems. To cope with the myriad tasks of administration, government organisations and institutions tend to be very diverse in nature and are scattered across the length and breadth of the country. The sheer size, spread, diversity and complexity of the administrative machinery make the "HRD function in government a highly complex one. A second factor is the historical context of government institutions. Although in a democratic system there may be frequent changes in the legislative branches of the government. The executive branches consisting of the administrative departments and related organisations, remain more or less stable. Consequently, there tends

to be a historical continuity in the structure, culture, practices and behaviour of these departments or organisations.

ROLE OF HRD IN GOVERNMENT

HRD in government can be given two interpretations. The first can be that it refers to the HRD activities in the various ministries, departments and government agencies. The second interpretation is that it refers to role of government at the macro environmental level; policies and conditions which affect HRD in various other organisations. For instance, the policies and directives of the government with respect to the employment and employment conditions of special sections of society, such as the backward classes, significantly impact HRD policies and practices at the micro organisational level. This chapter will examine government's role in HRD mainly from the former angle.

Objectives of HRD in Government Systems

According to K. M. Mathur, basic objectives of HRD in government administration systems are:

- 1) To equip the civil servant with precision and clarity in transaction of business;
- 2) To attune the civil servant to new tasks which called upon to perform in a changing world?
- 3) To develop resistance to the danger of becoming mechanised by visualising what he is doing in a wider setting and by persevering with his own educational development;
- 4) To develop his capacity for higher work and greater responsibility;
- 5) To develop and maintain staff morale particularly because large number of people has to deal with tasks' of a routine nature;

HRD in administration is an important part of macro-level human resource planning. An organisation that does not plan for its human resources will often find that it is not meeting either its personnel requirements or its overall goals effectively. There are four basic steps in human resource planning:

- 1) Planning for future needs,
- 2) Planning for future balance,
- 3) Planning for recruiting and selecting, and
- 4) Planning for development.

Role Set of Government

A number of departments and agencies were created on the lines of conventional bureaucratic structures. The Government also gave a lead role to the public sector in order to provide the major thrust for development.

Such a role-set suggests the possibility of conflicting expectations and priorities which have to be fulfilled. These according to Athreya, are:

1. To forecast, analyse and advise Ministers on strategies for achieving policy objectives.
2. To help in optimizing goals.
3. Approved programmes to be implemented in time.
4. Progress to be monitored and to give suggestions to the ministers for corrective action.
5. Performance comparison with other countries.

HRD Developments in Government

Industry has used HRD in an integrated form only recently. In Government, it is more so. Some important HRD developments in Government are given below.

1. Initial attempts were made to improve organizational effectiveness in Government. Paul Appleby from the US Public Administration came and studied the Indian administration set up. One of his recommendations was the need to transform administration from a 'colonial' to a development-oriented one. However, not much was done to implement the recommendations.
2. The Administrative Reforms Commission of 1967 emphasized the importance of better systems and training and development. This led to the setting up of an Administrative Reforms Cell, within the Home Ministry first. Three activities were strengthened among others, nomination of more officers for training within and outside the country, computerization of manpower data and more systematic postings for specialized assignments.
3. The Indian Institutes of Management, Calcutta and Ahmadabad started in 1962. By the early seventies, Indian Administrative Service Recruits were given management training and management concepts were also brought into the training institutions of other public systems such as Income tax. Postal and Police.

4. Failures in implementation of plans, projects and programmes led to an awareness of HRD. In 1985, a formal Ministry for HRO was set up.
5. With this new emphasis on HRD, ministers and secretaries of government departments were deputed to attend a variety of training and development programmes on management and HRD at reputed management institutes like the ASCI, the HM's, XLRI, Tata Management Training Centre, etc.

Current Systems of HRD in Government

1) Job Rotation

The move away from purely generalist training on history, constitution, procedures etc. towards specialised training, has also made possible more purposive rotation and transfer. The earlier concept of the jack-of-all-trades generalist, who can handle any assignment, is giving way to better fitment of role and person. 2)

Training

The nature, size and variety of the plans and programmes of social and economic advance that the country has undertaken determine the training of Government and public systems. Ten years ago, there were only a few Central and State training institutions for imparting induction training to their officers.

3) Selection

Even before independence, selection in government was "objective" in the sense of being based on competitive examinations. But this has a concomitant problem of rigidity. There is a very limited acceptance of mid-career entry.

4) Manpower Forecasting

This goes mostly by annual manpower budgeting and ad hoc proposals during the year. But the five year plans have provided an opportunity for at least once in five years for each Ministry to make its manpower forecasts. In the past such forecasts were mechanistic extrapolations. What are more remarkable recently are the pressures for efficiency and manpower reduction, in the following ways:

- a) Voluntary Retirement Schemes have been introduced, giving attractive benefits, at the end of twenty years' service.
- b) Additional workload is sought to be taken without increasing manpower.

- c) Information technology is helping to merge and sometimes eliminate routine jobs.
- d) More autonomous, "attached" organisations are being formed, to take work out, of the bureaucracy into more flexible entities.

5) Performance Appraisal

Performance Appraisal as a HRD tool has not yet been realised in Government systems. The predominant method of performance appraisal in government has been the confidential rating system, used largely for

6) Data Bank

The awareness of HRD has coincided with a sudden acceptance of computers in not only industry, where the debate has been raging for thirty years, but also in government. This has enabled the computerization of human resource data. The data bank and its use for drawing lists for training, rotation and promotion are becoming the norm in government. evaluation rather than development.

A NEW APPROACH TO HRD SYSTEM IN GOVERNMENT

The following are some of the important conditions that need to be fulfilled:

1. The goals or objectives should be clearly stated and preferably in observable and measurable terms.
2. The activities or tasks required to be performed for achieving the goals should be exhaustively identified and listed.
3. Each person or employee should have a complete list of the activities he is expected to perform and should be motivated or committed to perform these activities.
4. Each person or employee should have the capabilities or competencies required to perform these activities. If he does not have them, he should be helped to acquire these competencies.
5. Periodically the list of activities, their appropriateness to achieve the goals, division or allocation of these activities to different members, competencies needed and the competencies existing in the employees should be reviewed and competency gaps should be identified.
6. Competencies should be developed in employees or people on a continuous basis to perform these activities, tasks and functions.

Identification of Critical Attributes

Critical attributes are the important qualities the job holder is required to possess in order to perform the functions associated with his job well. In the activity/task/role analysis stated above, competency requirements are identified for each job holder by himself in consultation with his supervisors.

Performance Appraisal

Performance Appraisal systems as instruments of HRD have not yet been realised in government systems. A performance appraisal system can be a powerful tool of HRD when it is used to help an employee understand his tasks and the means of achieving them, identify the strengths and weaknesses he has relevant to his job, and acquire new competencies for self development in the job.

Potential Development

Every individual has some competency or the other. An organization interested in HRD needs to provide opportunities for identifying and developing such competencies so as to enable the future growth of people. The objective of potential appraisal system is to identify the potential of an employee to occupy higher positions in the organizational hierarchy and undertake higher responsibilities.

Training

Most of the training in government today is institution dependent. If training has to serve a useful purpose, the individual should feel a need for training, he or she should be sponsored for training at a suitable time, and he or she should be provided the opportunities or facilities to use his learning from the training.

Conclusion

HRD has a strategic role to play in government. The contextual and historical conditions affecting government systems give the HRD function in government a difficult and complex role to play. HRD has to provide for the development of administrators and personnel in turn have to look after key developmental activities in the country. Hitherto, HRD in government has been confined to limited training activities, job rotation, selection, manpower forecasting, and maintaining of a personnel data bank. A new approach towards

developing an integrated HRD system in government administration is called for. The main components of such a system are suggested to be activity, task or role analysis, identification of critical job attributes, performance appraisal, potential development, training, and organization development.

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