

A Study on HRD Climate in a Public Sector Cement Company - An empirical study

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Abstract: The need for converting human resource into human asset is gaining mammoth importance in organizations in the present day competitive world. This conversion results in the growth of organisations and the country as well. This is possible only if the employees of an organization are satisfied with their organization. That is, the HRD climate prevailing in the organization must be satisfactory to the employees. Hence, the present research was made to study the prevailing HRD climate in the study unit and to suggested measures to improve the same.

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INTRODUCTION

It is a known fact that every country strives hard for its steady and speedy economic growth. Though the economic development of a country can be achieved through the exploitation of natural resources, availability of physical and financial resources and international aid, none of these factors is more significant than efficient and committed manpower of the country. In fact it may be said that all developments come from the human mind.

Every organization strives for its survival and sustained growth. This can be achieved through one of the important resources of the organization, namely, the Human Resource. To utilize the human resources to the optimum, acquire their services, maintain their commitment, etc. an organization needs to provide and ensure a comfortable / favorable climate to them. The environment should develop both the organization as well as its human resources.

In this context, human resource management has been defined by Leon. C. Magginson as “the total knowledge, skill, creative abilities, talents and attitudes and beliefs of the individuals involved. Thus human resource management is a long-term perspective and a development function.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Many people use the terms HRM and HRD interchangeably. To what extent it is correct. In fact, the formal introduction of the concept of HRD was done by Prof Leonard Nadler in 1969 in American Society for Training and Development Conference. Various authors define the term HRD from their approach as it is of recent origin. A clear distinction between the objectives and coverage of both HRM and HRD can best be understood thus :

The basic objective of HRM is to develop competitive advantages based on human resources. In order to achieve this objective, it undertakes various

functions on proactive basis that ensure the availability of right people, at right place and at the right time. On the other hand, the basic objective of HRD is to develop human resources with matching organisational culture and to provide inputs for the effective performance of various HRM functions. From this point of view, HRD is a sub-system of HRM. The significance of HRD can best be understood from the HRD matrices given below:

HRD MATRIX

The interrelationship between HRD instruments, processes, outcomes and organizational effectiveness is presented schematically in the following chart.

HRD IN INDIAN INDUSTRY

Till the 1970's, the Indian industries were not very sure whether the HR philosophy would yield any concrete gains. Only in the 70's, the large units started slowly establishing HR units in their organizations. L&T was the first company to design and implement an integrated HRD system. The first workshop on HRD was held in 1979. The Xavier Labour Relations Institute (XLRI), Jamshedpur, was the first academic institution to set up a full-fledged centre for HRD. A national HRD network was setup in 1985. Looking at the gains from HRD systems, many leading Indian companies started creating separate HR department in their organization.

Prof.T.V.Rao, studied the HR practices in 53 Indian companies, both public and private and reported as :

Only 32 % of these companies had a formal HRD policy.

Only 30 % of these companies had a separate HRD department.

Only 26 % of these companies had development oriented performance appraisal systems.

About 55 % of the companies had definite training policy.

About 50 % of the companies had designated a person to take care of organization development (O.D) activities.

In about 80 % of companies, employee counseling is successful.

CHART: HRD MATRIX

HRD Mechanism or sub-systems or instruments		HRD Process & HRD Climate variables		HRD outcomes/ Variables		Organizational Effectiveness/ Dimensions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HRD Department Performance Appraisal Review - Discussing Feed back - Counseling sessions - Job Analysis Exercises Training - Communication policies - Job rotations - OD exercises - Rewards - Other mechanics 	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Role clarity - Planning of Development by every employees - Awareness of competencies required for job performance - Proactive orientation - More trust - Collaboration & team work - Authority - Openness - Risk- taking - Value generation - Classification of norms and standards - Increased communication - More objective rewards - Generation of objective, Data of an employee, etc <p>Other Factors Top Management styles, Investments' commitment, History, previous culture, Line Manager's interest, etc</p>	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More competent people - Better developed Roles - Higher work commitment & job involvement - More problem solving - Better Utilization of HR - Higher job satisfaction and work motivation and work motivation. - Better generation of internal resources - Better organized health. - More Team - Work synergy and respected for each other 	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher productivity - Growth and Diversification - Cost reduction - More profits - Better image <p>Other Factors Environment, Technology, Resources availability, History, Nature of business, etc</p>

(T.V.Rao, The HRD Missionary, Oxford & IBH Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1990, P. 13)

To judge HR climate, another survey was conducted by Prof. T.V.Rao and the survey reported an urgent need for introducing HR practices. Employers were not caring much to improve the quality of work life of employees. The employees themselves were not very enthusiastic about learning new skills in their own self-interest. With increasing competition, companies now-a-days have realized the importance of introducing systematic HR practices in a big way. Companies now talk about New People Management (NPM) with objectives such as (i) organizational learning must involve employee training (ii) job responsibilities must facilitate personal development (iii) business strategies must consider human resource issues (iv) company's profits must be linked to personal rewards, etc. In order to meet these objectives, companies must have people with requisite knowledge and skills. Those who add no value to corporate growth may be sent out.

Another survey of 35 companies was conducted by Business Today in 1996 which has reported a favorable HR climate in Indian industries.

Developing and executing HR policies and practices that align human efforts to corporate goals

is not easy. It needs consistent support and continued blessing of the top management. In order to elicit the best out of people, we need to greet them with good HR practices.

Prof.T.V.Rao has summed up the current thinking in the field thus: "We must understand that corporations are not in the business of HRD. They are in their own business. But, HRD is an important tool which unfortunately is being used in a limited sense. The corporate vision has not been attached to it. Actually, human resources must become the business of every one in the organization".

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many studies on human resource management have been made in the past, but they do not give much insight into the totality of human resource management. A few examples of such studies are given below:

Ann Parle (1997) in his study has observed that despite a jobless rate and a tight job market, workers are very anxious about the security of their jobs. He has also concluded that the HR professionals can contribute significantly to recognize employees and to show their gratitude towards increasing involvement in their jobs.

Benjamin (2012) A in his study had found that HRD climate had a strong influence on the level of effective commitment and had suggested the Nigerian Banks to inculcate openness, confidence, trust, autonomy, pro-action and authentication into their organization climate.

Bob Nelson (1997) has stated that the managers should consider using the power of the five I's to focus their time and energy on daily interactions with employees. The five I's are: Interesting work, Information (Share it), Involvement (encourage it), Independence (allow it), and increase visibility.

Deodhar (1980) in his study had referred to the problems faced by the labour in the sugar industry. He had suggested measures for improving the labour conditions in sugar factories.

Kapoor (1979) in his study felt that the most complex organization present in the world is apparently the man and still more complex is the management of men. This study has put emphasis on understanding of personnel and hence the importance of personnel management.

Rajagopalan (1982) notes that the human resources of an organization engaged in either manual or intellectual work simultaneously produce 'scrap' of human problems. The management concerns only with the results of human endeavor that is used solely for the production of finished goods and ignores the 'scrap' of human problems.

Sapru (1987) examined the role of banking institutions in public sector and how the personnel management within it can be revamped for the improvement of its performance.

Sue Glasscock and Kimberly Gram (1995) observed that the benefits from frequent and sincere appreciation can be seen on the bottom line every measurable corporate attribute, including productivity, sales, product quality and customer satisfaction.

Vadivelu (1989) made an attempt to study the personnel management policies and practices in selected Central Co-operative Banks in Tamilnadu. The above review shows that most of the studies have been carried out only on one or two aspects of HRM. That is, there was not even a single study to cover the whole system of HRM. Hence it was felt that an extensive study must be conducted to study the HRD climate in an organization. For this purpose, the researcher has selected a public sector cement company for her study (For the purpose of confidentiality, the name of the organization is not revealed in this article).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To understand HRD climate in the organization.
- To study the level of satisfaction of employees on the HRD climate prevailing in the organization.
- To identify the areas of improvement in the existing HRD system.
- To suggest measures to improve HRD climate in the organization.

HYPOTHESES

Apart from the above listed objectives, the following hypotheses are also set for the study.

- (i) Null Hypothesis: There is no association between the designation of employees and their satisfaction on HRD climate.

Alternate Hypothesis: There exists an association between the designation and their satisfaction on HRD climate.

- (ii) Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the opinion of the employees regarding the HRD climate in the organization.

Alternate Hypothesis : There exists a significant difference in the opinion of the employees regarding the HRD climate in the organization.

At the end, the hypotheses were also tested with the help of the data collected.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Universe:

All the employees working in the organization constitute the universe of the study. Thus the size of the universe in 690.

Sample :

A sample must have the characteristics of the universe. Hence the sample elements must be carefully selected. The employees of the organization have been classified into 3 categories, namely, Officers, Administrative Staff and Workers. Officers include all executives, managers, and assistant managers; Administrative staff include the supervisors, superintendents and clerical staff; Workers include all the factory & mines workers doing physical (manual) work.

As HRD aspect is more concerned with these categories of employees, it was decided to follow stratified random sampling technique in selecting the sample. This technique will help the different categories of employees to have their due representation in the sample. As the size of the universe of the study is 690 employees, the size of the sample was decided to be 150 (that is, around 20 % of the universe). The size of universe and the sample along with the classification are given in Table1.

Table 1 – Size of universe and sample along with the classification

Sl. No	Category of employees	Employees strength (Universe)	Sample respondents (Sample)
1	Officer	42	8
2	Administrative Staff	127	26
3	Workers	521	116
Total		690	150

(Source: Primary data)

DATA COLLECTION

The study uses both primary and secondary data. The primary data for the study have been collected with the help of a questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of two parts: the first part speaks about the personal data and the second part deals with the opinion survey of the respondents about HRD climate in their organization. The questionnaire was pretested with a sample of 15 respondents and was improved suitably. First, the questionnaire was framed such that the response of the respondents were measured with five point scale, namely, Always True, Mostly True, Sometimes True, Rarely True and Not at all True. Almost all the respondents in the pre-test reacted that there was no much difference between the opinions “Always True” and “Mostly True”. Hence, it was decided to use any one of these two options. Thus the scale of measurement was fixed at four point, viz., “Always True”, “Sometimes True”, “Rarely True” and “Not at all True”. The secondary data for the study have been collected from the records of the company, journals, reports, website, etc.

TOOLS FOR DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected were tabulated and analysed with appropriate statistical tools using SPSS. The statistical tools used include weighted average, Chi-square test, and T-test.

Weighted average is an average whose component items are multiplied by certain values (weight) and the aggregate of the products are divided by the total of weights.

Chi- Square test is used to find out whether one or more attributes are associated or not. In this study, the association between designation and opinion of employees on HRD climate was tested.

Student’s t-test is used to test the existence of significant difference in the mean score between two groups with respect to some aspect. In this study this test is used to test the existence/ non-existence of significant difference in the opinion of two groups of employees, viz., (i) Employees engaged in line & staff functions, and (ii) Employees engaged in line function only, with respect to HRD climate in the organisation.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected have been analyzed with the help of the statistical tools as mentioned above and the results are given below.

D) OVERALL SATISFACTORY LEVEL OF THE EMPLOYEES ON THE HRD CLIMATE IN THEIR ORGANIZATION.

The HRD climate of the organisation can be assessed by getting the opinions of its employees on some statements describing HRD aspect. For this purpose, 20 statements (as suggested by Professor T.V.Rao) were designed and they are given below (Table 1).

Table 1. Aspects

S. No	Aspects	S. No	Aspects
1	Personnel policies facilitate employee development	11	Grievance Redressed immediately
2	Effective utilization of employees’ potential	12	Higher authorities way of dealing a mistake
3	Services are recognized	13	Participates in Management activities
4	Helped to acquire competence	14	Employees’ sponsored for Special training
5	Seniors guide juniors	15	Freedom to express their opinion
6	Welfare facilities are satisfactory	16	Employees informed Career Opportunity
7	Psychological climate is conducive	17	Sufficient delegation of authority
8	Freedom to share their personal problems	18	Job rotation increases efficiency
9	Promotions based on efficiency	19	Policies motivate employees
10	Employees are given sufficient training	20	Team spirit is of high order

The opinions of the employees on each statement were obtained (with the help of a questionnaire). The respondents were asked to rate each statement on a 4-point scale as given below.

Always True	-	4
Sometimes True	-	3
Rarely True	-	2
Not at all True	-	1

The composite score given by an employee to all the statements will reveal his opinion about the HRD climate in the organization. The same procedure was followed to determine the composite score of each respondent of the study.

The scores may range from 20 to 80, when the scores on all the 20 statements are added to get a composite score. Scores closer to 80 indicate an excellent HRD climate (which is rare in practice), scores above 60 indicate a good HRD climate and

scores below 40 indicate that the HRD climate in the organization is not satisfactory. (This conclusion is based on the reference: made by Prof.T.V.Rao, The HRD Missionary - Role and Functions of HRD Managers & HRD Departments, Oxford & IBH Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, Page 61).

The scores of the respondents are given in the following Table (Table 2).

Table 2: Scores On Overall Satisfactory Level

Score Category	20-40 (Poor HRD Climate)	40-60 (Good HRD Climate)	60-80 (Excellent HRD Climate)	Total
Officers	0	6	2	8
Administrative Staff	2	18	6	26
Workers	18	96	2	116
Total	20	120	10	150
Percentage to Total	13.3	80	6.7	100

(Source: Primary data)

From the above table it can be understood that around 7% of the employees are highly satisfied with the HRD climate prevailing in the organization and that 80% employees are satisfied of the same. Only around 13% of the employees feel that the HRD climate in the organisation is not satisfactory to them.

II) RANKING OF ASPECTS LEADING TO HRD CLIMATE

To know the aspect of HRD climate that highly satisfies the employees, weighted average was calculated for each aspect and they are ranked accordingly. The ranks of the aspects are given in the following table.

Table - 3 : Ranking of aspects leading to HRD climate

S.No	Particulars	Mean Score	Rank
1	Promotions based on efficiency	3.0267	1
2	Employees' sponsored for Special training	2.6400	2
3	Employees informed Career Opportunity	2.6200	3
4	Employees are given sufficient training	2.5733	4
5	Grievance Redressed immediately	2.5000	5
6	Policies motivate employees	2.5000	6
7	Sufficient delegation of authority	2.4067	7
8	Participates in Management activities	2.3667	8
9	Psychological climate is conducive	2.2333	9
10	Helped to acquire competence	2.2200	10
11	Job rotation increases efficiency	2.0733	11
12	Personnel policies facilitate employee development	2.0333	12
13	Effective utilization of employees' potential	2.0333	13
14	Higher authorities way of dealing a mistake	2.0267	14
15	Team spirit is of high order	1.9733	15
16	Seniors guide juniors	1.9400	16
17	Services are recognized	1.9200	17
18	Freedom to share their personal problems	1.8400	18
19	Welfare facilities are satisfactory	1.5667	19
20	Freedom to express their opinion	1.5667	20

(Source: Primary data)

From the above table it is evident that the employees are highly satisfied with the promotional policy implemented and highly dissatisfied with the restriction in expressing their opinions and the welfare facilities provided to them in the organization.

III. TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis set for the study were tested and the results are given below :

Hypothesis 1 : To test the null hypothesis that there is no association between the designation of employees and their opinion on HRD climate, chi-square test was applied and the result is given below.

Test	Value	d. f
Pearson Chi- Square	6.847	4

Form above the table it is seen that the calculated chi-square value is 6.847. The table value of chi-square with 4 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance is 9.488. Since the calculated value of chi-square is less than the table value of chi-square, we accept the null hypothesis this sources that there is know association between the designation of employees and their opinion an HRD climate.

Hypothesis 2:

To test the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the opinion (mean score) of different aspects leading to HRD climate in the organisation, t- test was used. The calculations made for the aspects leading to HRD climate are given in the following table (table 4).

Table - 4 : t-test values for the various aspects leading to HRD climate

S.No	Particulars	Number	D. f	p-value
1	Personnel policies facilitate employee development	150	148	0.203
2	Effective utilization of employees' potential	150	148	0.741
3	Services are recognized	150	148	0.502
4	Helped to acquire competence	150	148	0.772
5	Seniors guide juniors	150	148	0.760
6	Welfare facilities are satisfactory	150	148	0.415
7	Psychological climate is conducive	150	148	0.619
8	Freedom to share their personal problems	150	148	0.916
9	Promotions based on efficiency	150	148	0.000*
10	Employees are given sufficient training	150	148	0.908
11	Grievance Redressed immediately	150	148	0.182
12	Higher authorities way of dealing a mistake	150	148	0.148
13	Participates in Management activities	150	148	0.000*
14	Employees' sponsored for Special training	150	148	0.146
15	Freedom to express their opinion	150	148	0.864
16	Employees informed Career Opportunity	150	148	0.013
17	Sufficient delegation of authority	150	148	0.233
18	Job rotation increases efficiency	150	148	0.183
19	Policies motivate employees	150	148	0.696
20	Team spirit is of high order	150	148	0.141

(Source: Primary data)

From the above table it is found that there exists a significant difference in the opinion of the respondents with respect to promotional policy based on efficiency (item no.9) followed in the organisation and the employee's participation in decision making by the management (item no.13). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected for the statements 9 and 13 and accepted for other statements.

FINDINGS

The following are the findings of the study:

- The scope for improving HRD climate in the organisation is significant. It is evident from the fact that the respondents are not fully happy with the existing HRD climate.

- Both the personnel policies and other policies of the organisation do not either help the employees for their personal development or motivate them for higher performance.
- The potentials of the employees are not fully identified and utilized effectively.
- The services of the employees are not recognized.
- There is no provision / possibility for the employees to acquire competence.
- The senior employees do not guide the juniors for their growth.
- Though various welfare facilities are available to the employees, they expect some more facilities / benefits.

- The psychological climate in the organisation is not conducive to acquire new knowledge and skills. This is due to the fear of instability of their service in the organisation.
- The relationship between the superiors and subordinates is satisfactory. This is evident from the fact that they discuss their personal problems with others for getting better solutions and very freely express and discuss their opinions with others. In other words, they work as a team.
- Efficiency of employees is not recognized. Their promotions are based only on their period of service and not on their individual efficiency.
- Sufficient training is not given to the employees. They are given training only at the time of entry into their services. This does not help them to acquire knowledge on new developments / system, etc. Hence, their efficiency is stagnant; it does not increase.
- Almost, all the employees have grievances regarding their work, working conditions, conditions of service, etc. There is no proper system to redress their grievances.
- The management is interested only in punishing the erring employees and not in correcting them. It shows that scientific management principles on personnel aspects are not followed in the organisation. Only the traditional approach, (ie) Master- Servant approach is being followed.
- There is no possibility for the employees to offer their suggestions to management.
- Special trainings such as cost savings, human relations, motivation, etc. are given only to the top management people and not to middle and lower level management people. Further, the managers who receive such trainings do not take interest to pass on the benefits either to other employees or to the organisation.
- The employees feel that they have no career opportunities for their development. They feel that they have to retire from the same position to which they were recruited.
- Sufficient authority has not been delegated to the employees concerned to take decisions in discharging their responsibilities. Lower level people have to contact their supervisors for all decisions and similarly, the top level people have to depend on the state government for all decisions.
- Though the technique of job- rotation is in force in the organisation, it has not given any fruitful result either to the employees or the organisation. In fact, the employees feel that it is only a burden to them as they have to perform different jobs frequently for no benefit.

SUGGESTIONS

Having the findings of the study in mind, the management of the organisation may take some steps to improve the HRD climate in the organisation. What steps the management may take are given below in the form of suggestions.

- ***Removing the fear of losing jobs:*** The management must take steps to totally remove from the minds of the employees the fear of their being sent out due to closure or privatization of the company. This will create a confidence in the minds of the employees about the continuance of their service in the organisation and hence will increase their involvement in their work.
- ***Out-placement:*** If the compulsory closure or privatization of the unit is inevitable, the management must take steps for the 'Out-placement' of the disturbed employees instead of sending them out with some money. (Out-placement refers to the placement of the disturbed employees in other organizations by the managements of the parent organization so that their services will be in continuation). This is very much essential because every one wants a permanent job to get regular income for his livelihood. Hence, if this confidence is created in the minds of the employees, they will perform their task efficiently.
- ***Gearing HRD activities:*** A satisfactory HRD climate is essential in every organisation for its successful functioning. As the HRD climate in the unit is not that much satisfactory, the management must gear - up the HRD activities to create a favourable HRD climate in the organisation.
- ***Policy improvement:*** The organizational policies in general, and the personnel policies, in particular, must be improved so that the employees feel that they have opportunities for the personal development, their services are recognized, their efficiencies are given due weightage , etc. This will motivate the employees for higher performance.
- ***Imparting new knowledge :*** Due to R&D, new techniques, systems, concepts, etc are being developed continuously. The employees must be made aware of these developments and improvements. For this purpose, the organisation must arrange for training programmes, guest lectures , seminars, etc to impart new knowledge to the employees. Also the management may subscribe for technical and commercial journals and magazines and they may be placed in the library. Such activities will make the employees to be aware of new things and it will increase their efficiency, behaviour, morale, etc.

- **Welfare facilities** : The existing welfare facilities may be improved. Facilities such as subsidised canteen, productivity linked annual bonus, etc. may be improved. The employees feel that their wages have not been revised as per the agreement. The management must take steps to revise the wage structure as per the agreement. Though these facilities will lead to additional expenditure to the organisation, it can be made good by improving production and productivity. Production and productivity will increase if the employees have job satisfaction; job satisfaction can be brought in by the provision of good welfare facilities.
- **Employee participation in management activities** : The employees must be given opportunities to put forth their reactions, opinions, etc., on the functioning of the management and the organisation. The participation of employees in management activities must be encouraged by providing Worker Director, Works Committee, Joint Management Council (JMC), etc. This will help the management to get more new ideas, solutions for problems, etc from the employees. It will make the employees to adjust with the management.
- **Motivational Measures**: People are becoming more knowledgeable day-by-day. This helps them to develop their skills and talents continuously. They search for opportunities to utilize this skills and talents. So, if the organisation provides them opportunities to use their skills and talents, both will be benefited; the employees will get mental satisfaction and feel happy and the organisation can reap the fruits of such knowledge. To achieve this twin objectives, it is suggested that the organisation introduces measures such as 'Suggestions scheme' 'Quality circles', etc. Also, the management may conduct competitions to the employees on some important occasions such as Independence day, Republic Day, Deepavali, Pongal, etc, and during the celebrations of organizational functions such as Safety week / month, Quality week / month etc. These measures will bring out the skills and inner talents of the employees which will give benefits to both the employees and the organisation.
- **Introducing Performance Appraisal System**: Employees feel that their efficiency is not respected. It is suggested that Performance Appraisal system may be introduced. On the basis of the results of the performance appraisal of each employee, the employee whose performance is significant, may be given some

benefit such as promotion or additional responsibility with requisite authority, etc. This will induce other employees also to increase their performance.

- **Autonomous Status** : The organisation is a Government of Tamilnadu undertaking . So, for anything and everything, the management of the company has to get advice and instructions from the State government. This not only delays action but also fails to achieve efficiency. Hence, it is suggested that the Government of Tamilnadu grants autonomous status to the company by fixing responsibility and accountability to the management in terms of target production and pre-determined profits. This will make the management to work hard very sincerely to achieve the objective of the organisation. Because, they know clearly that if they fail to achieve the objective, they will be held accountable under the autonomous status situation.

CONCLUSION

The success or failure of an organisation depends, apart from other factors, primarily on the efficiency of its human resources. Hence, the human resources of the organisation must be better developed and utilized for the success of the organisation. In other words, there must be a favourable HRD climate in every organisation for its success. For this purpose, the management must take some steps to create a favourable HRD climate in the organisation. It is strongly believed that when the suggestions put forth are implemented in real spirit the HRD climate in the organization will certainly be satisfactory and hence the organization will be successful.

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