Training and Development - Issues in the Indian Context

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Abstract

In the present era of globalisation, there is an imperative need for employee with extraordinary skills which adds potential to perform better. Human beings are naturally gifted with the potential to learn. It is up to us to leverage this inherent potential and achieve what we are destined to. There has also been rapid transformation in organisation structure and work practices. These changes would definitely have a significant impact for training and development of the work place. As training occupies a top spot in the HR agenda for many organisations, but the impact on the bottom line does not fall in line with expectations. The answer lies in better structure, sharp vision on the end goals and a tighter focus on the cardinal rules of the game. This paper deals with the present scenario and issues in the Indian context. It analyses how these issues if resolved can lead to better productivity.

Keywords: Training Need Identification, Organisational transformation, Evaluation, Development, Assessment.

1. Introduction

Since 1990’s the economy has been characterised by intense global competition and rapid technological advance. Due to rapid changes in economy and constant restructuring activities taking place in organisations, this brings forth significant transformation in organisational structure and work practices. Due to these changes,
there is a great demand for new job skills, greater level of workforce skills to match the changing organisational structures and job profiles. This level of changes would have a significant implication for training and development of the work force. Organisations must make a continuous effort to upgrade the size and skill competition of the work force. This is where the training and development aspect plays an important role. Due to the competitive pressures, technological advancement and changes in organisational and work structure, there is a need for expanded skills and continuous skill up gradation to prevent obsolescence.

In the dynamic and contemporary business environment, organisations are faced with several types of challenges in the environment caused by business dynamics, new technologies, new competitors, fluctuating productivity, changing nature of jobs, employee turnover. In order to manage these changes and developments, the managers must make the right choice that they have the right type of human resources by hiring people with the required skills and competencies.

2. Present scenario
Currently in India, there are only few organisations who are emphasizing on training and development. Training is a planned and systematic attempt to alter or develop knowledge, skill, attitude through learning experience so as to achieve effective performance in an activity or a range of activities.

According to Flippo, training is the act of increasing the knowledge and skill of an employee for doing a particular job. It is an opportunity to learn and depend on several factors such as design and execution of training, the inspiration and learning style of the trainees and also the environment for learning in the organisation. The importance of corporate training should be visualized in the context of paradigm shift that is taking place in Indian industry. The role of knowledge worker is increasing. The pace of change is fast and the skills have to be enhanced. So training is one of the tools at CEO’s disposal to achieve this end. The compelling need for training is also because of three factors. The first is liberalization which has dismantled barriers and made the entry easier for both domestic and overseas companies. The second is the demand and supply of professional talent which has made employee retention a concern for CEO’s. The third reason is growing expectation of employees regarding their professional and personal development.

Most organisations in India have been allocating resources to training as an act of faith for professionalism and strategic thinking. There are several kinds of training methods used by trainers in organisations. The designer of training program needs to be capable of matching the best method with the training objectives. In the Indian corporate scenario, some renowned companies have used modern training techniques and have made outstanding progress in terms of their training initiative resulting in greater competition particularly resulting from the liberal entry of MNC’s in India. The emerging scenario necessitates review of the existing skills and training system.
Devising and innovative approach to training and skill development should be the focus of management.

Since 2003, American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) has recognised the training initiatives taken by organisations and preferred to honour them. Indian organisations are achieving excellence in training and skill development have been awarded by ASTD.

It is a pride for the nation that Indian organisations are participating and are awarded every year by ASTD for achieving excellence in training function. In the year 2008, four organisations from India were able to get entry in the winner list of 40 best organisations. These organisations were: Reliance Industries Ltd., Nagothane Manufacturing division having strength of 2,157 employees, Infosys Technologies Limited having 79,016 employees, Wipro Limited having 60,000 employee strength, and ICICI Bank Limited with employee strength of 40,880. This is an encouraging trend to note that Indian organisations operating in India are serious about their learning and development initiatives. They are giving priority to this area and are able to integrate it with their organisational goals. In fact, the top management is taking interest in mentoring and leadership. For example, NarayanaMurthy of Infosys is now acting as a chairman of the board as well as chief Mentor. In this way, they prepare the next generation leads for the company. Let us interview briefly the training structure of some more companies including a bank.

3. Adithya Birla Group
The group is driven by performance ethics pegged on the value Creation for its multiple stakeholders. Its core values are integrity, leading change, excellence, respect for individual learning and sharing. To increase the knowledge and skills of employees. This group has established a centre in Navi Mumbai known by the name Gyanodaya. Gyanodaya has been envisioned as a hub, the group’s competitive edge.

Infosys
Infosys Technologies Ltd. headquartered in Bangalore, provides Information Technology (IT) consulting and software services to clients globally as partners to conceptualize and realize technology driven business transformation initiatives. It is very essential for the company to upgrade its workforce regularly to compete in the global market.

To overcome this challenge, Infosys provides training and development opportunities to its employees right from the start. The company has bagged many awards from ASTD as the world’s best company for providing best training and development opportunities to the employees. The company is known best for its global business foundation school which runs the program for all fresh engineering graduates who join Infosys and prepare them for the technical and environmental opportunities present in the market.
Syndicate Bank
Training is one of the most important interventions for developing Human resources. For this Syndicate banks first step is to analyse the training need of the employees. For the analysis of training needs they adopt scientific methods. The second step is to make a tailored training program for senior officials of the bank. The two institutes play a major role i.e Syndicate Institute of Bank Management and The Apex Training Institute of the Bank at Manipal.

Essar Corporate University(ECU)
Essar is a prestigious and renowned group, awarded by ISTD in 2000 for its innovative training practices. It is famous for its ECU, which is virtual learning organisation and takes various steps for the training and development of employees. The main goals of the programme are to emphasise in teams to develop networking bonding, develop trust and explore risk taking. The company has also established Essar Learning centre at Hazira which organises around 400 formal training programmes per year on subjects ranging from industrialised operations, general management and logistics management. E-modules are provided by Learning Management Systems regarding technical and management aspects to employees to make them aware about latest management and technical skills.

Accenture
Continual learning organisation process is essential for an organisation for its survival in the present era of liberalisation, privatisation, globalisation. knowledge is the core competence of organisations for copying with changes. With this the above philosophy some institutional learning centres and divisions have introduced programme “Leaders teaching Leaders” Under this programme, leaders share their past experiences for the betterment of the working styles of present employees. Its education programmes have been well known and appreciative around the business world.

IBM
IBM is a company that gives value to learning and development of employees since 1915. It has a separate and distinct IBM education department which was established to train and develop employees. IBM is known for the use of E-learning programmes to address its learning solutions. The learning approaches used in IBM programmes are learning from simulation or games, collaborative learning etc. IBM is also well known for its programme “IBM connections.

4. Issues in Training and development
Though training is considered to be mandatory, but the very importance of it is being misunderstood in term as a routine activity rather than providing it in a justified manner. The issues are:
Trainers often neglect the content of the programme which needs to be well structured into segments or sections. Most of the training programmes have been inclusive of stories and management games and other videos on fish tossing fish onto then fellow workers amusing and stirring but fails to grab the attention of the participants for long as most of the content is found to be irrelevant to the core job. Though many firms follow the training needs based on the Training Need Identification Process, but the content of the programme has almost no connection relevance to the job and their nominations were based on training need identification process(TNI).

Trainers should understand the basic need of their end customers. It is often felt that training is a ritual conducted as a part of curriculum of the employees or it is only to bring a change in the mood by breaking the monotony of the routine work. Starting a programme without thinking that it can lead to a failure. Treating it as an event or celebration can delineate from the strategic agenda. According to Eduardo Salas, a professor of organisational psychology of the University of Central Florida and programme director at the Institute of Simulation and Training, who has studied corporate training programme for more than 2 decades, says that company do not analyse well regarding the training needs and after the programme there is no follow up.

Most of the training imparted is based without judging the calibre and customising the delivery mechanism to suit best so that the learning objective is the most important skill of the trainer. Often trainers conduct training programmes in an unstimulating learning environment by not considering certain facts like people who are being trained and who are not well versed with the process. Trainers do not focus on fact, data and behavioural indications of the participant. Employees have a self centred way of accomplishment when going to training programme which is a destructive mindset.

Training sessions should not be solely focussed on lectures and texts in a classroom environment rather they should have casual gatherings with refreshments and discussions on the issues is far better. The pre-packaged programmes always are structured ones which might not go well with all the participants. Therefore, the one-size-fits-all solution can become a major misfit in a training environment.

Most of the trainers still prefer to adopt the same power point presentation or gyan sessions which would fail to work. In contemporary world where mobiles, tablets and the internet, learning has progressed to E-learning and M-learning modules to stay in tune with the present needs.

Training is considered as a short term initiative and there is often no effective management tool to judge the effectiveness of training imparted to the participant. The trainer should be an expert who can successfully deliver. It is always better to entrust the responsibility of the programme to a trainer. Often trainers overtake regarding checking validity of the programme.
• Transfer of training: Though training has become more prevalent, it is not always effective. Many organisations spend significant amount of time money on training, still it is only 10% of learning transfers to job performance. Transfer of training is most important aspect of measuring the effectiveness of training programme. As Kirkpatrick(1967) has also confirmed that the transfer of training to the job is one of the key criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of any formal training program. Keeping this in view of the issues invited, Fig.1 displays a typical cycle for training & development.

![The training and development cycle.](image)

**Fig 1:** The Training and Development Cycle

Need for change.

As leadership is taking the centre stage of organisational transformation, the importance of the training and development becomes one of the essential priorities for business survival and sustenance of the momentum for building continued excellence. Training may be incorrectly used as a solution to a performance problem when the solution should deal with employee motivation, job design or a better communication of performance expectations. Organisations must always consider the bigger picture to address the situation or need appropriately. This is possible by improving performance, going beyond training. By analysis of performance done from a holistic view, it is assumed that training based on customised needs is not the only solution to bridge the performance gap but it should also ensure the highest level of performance possible. The content of the programs also needs to be customer-oriented or recipient-oriented. It is also better to avoid creating experience which do not connect to real life situation and work challenges.

Once the gap is determined, there has to be a good instructional design framework to proceed. It’s suggested by the ASTD’s Human Performance Improvement (HPI) Certificate Program Services, the performance gaps need to be diagnosed properly. An
integration of essential E-learning components needs to be done which comprises of motivation, learner interface, content structure and sequencing, navigation and instructional interactivity. Though engaging an effective e-learning take significant effort but is well worth it. It is also important to adopt a model for developing a training session or model which is easy to apply.

The five step training model involves:

- Rationale
- Objective
- Activity
- Evaluation
- Feedback

It would prove to be a systematic and simple way to deliver training.

This also ensures that the training imparted is high in terms of consistency, engagement and meets the highest standards of professionalism. Increased training effectiveness would lead to better performance outcomes.

The model is highly imperative and critical part of the training and development process. It helps in tracking the progress and measurement success. As a learning professional, one needs to be proactive showing results which are reliable.

Though there are several ways benefitted by using the best practices, but the important thing is there has to be awareness of the role of every function as it helps to not only maximise human talent but optimally utilising the potential. Also by having a holistic view, the work team can identify and solve performance gaps which can save the organisation a considerable amount of time and money. Then Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation (ADDIE) is described by American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) which is the most widely known and used instructional design framework helping the professional to design and deliver the most effective training solutions.

The e-learning design components of learning also play an important role in reaching a wide audience and developing new training quickly and cost effectively as it saves time on travel, time out of office etc. Organisations need to take decisions to analyze where the effort and energy will have significant impact and implement such a strategy that ensures effective training. Globalisation, demographic changes, new technologies and economic changes are several of the forces that influence all aspects of our lives like how we learn, communicate and what we value in our lives and on the job. These are forces which are affecting individuals, communities, business and society. In order to sustain, companies need to address these forces with training playing an important role. Today, more and more companies are interested in intangible assets and human capital as a way to gain an advantage over competitors. Training and development plays a major role in contributing to companies, competitiveness by directly increasing their value through contributing intangible assets. For example IBM has adopted an on demand business strategy that requires the company to quickly respond to customer’s needs and help them do the same for their
clients. IBM had to transform itself to be competitive and convince potential clients that its technology would make their business more successful. IBM requires its training to be more personalized, collaborative, work based and integrated.

5. Suggestions

- It is essential that the management philosophy should include, inter alia, the importance of training and development on a continual basis in its vision. It is not possible to achieve the benefit of training and development without a serious attention of the management.

- The management should set out its goal towards improving the productivity, efficiency of its workforce with ease and contentment based on the rules of the management. The training and development program should be structured with clarity and lucid interpretations. The components of the training and development program should be listed in the flow chart model and each component should be described with its details and assigning the individual responsibility to the trainers team.

- The employees undergoing the T & D program should be sensitized for a serious effort to learn. The job for efficient performance and delivering the output with enhanced productivity and efficiency should be set out at the initial stage of the program.

- The employees should be made clear the purpose of the program and the output expected from them which could be quantified for the betterment and education of their status.

- At the end of the programme, the assessment and evaluation of the individual employees is essential to gauge the depth of learning and desire to apply at their normal workplace.

- The process of evaluation and assessment should continue to confirm the effectiveness of the programme. A feedback from the workforce and the management should be placed in a structured form for further improvement of the design and delivery of the programme. The trainers should design the feedback which could eventually quantify the benefits of the programme and the contribution of the employees who have undergone training.

**References**


