

Training Policy for Management of Human Resources as Fulcrum of Organisational Growth, Productivity and Development

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Abstract

This paper examines the importance and needs of training in both public and private organisations. The paper also identified eight determinants of training in organisations and the need for training policies. In attempting to further stress the long term benefits to human resource management in organisations, it was discovered that the enunciation of training policy in organisations in the public and private sectors will not only be the panacea to the growth of organisations but will also enhance on the long run, the productivity and development. The paper employed the historical and content analysis methodology in this research. It revealed that historically, training has been part of man and his activities, professionally and occupationally hence he cannot do without it, else he will retrogress. The paper discovered many benefits of training to both organisations and individual employees. It was further revealed that in the private sector which is largely profit-driven, organisations that institute training policy will not only have long term growth and productivity, but will also have competitive edge in their various industries; while in the public service, the bureaucracy, training policy will enhance quality output in terms of service delivery to members of the public including boosting the morale of workers. Possible benefits of training policy in organisations include improved job performance and productivity, improved quality product, introduction of new technology, while the benefits to individual employees include increase personal repertoire of skills, job satisfaction and value of employees in the labour market. The paper recommends that organisations must see training as investment, and training policy must be indirectly embedded in their mission statement.

Keywords: Knowledge, Organisational growth, Policy, Training

Introduction

From the middle ages, training has been recognised by man as a very important aspect of his activities, especially if he wants to progress in his occupational activities. As humanity progressed, man has not neglected this aspect of his economic and social or even political activities. Training as part of man's social, economic, and political life, has been infused deliberately into other man's larger activities which comprised group of people who came together to engage in economic and social activities called organisations. This body of man or group of people, that is, organisations, is where man earns his daily bread for survival purposes.

Organisations, in this case, a body corporate, an establishment, or company, the world over, have come to realise the importance of training. Training, therefore, is part and parcel of organisations. Both cannot be separated from each other. Though an organisation is bigger than training; or in other words organisations beget training as mothers beget or give birth to children. Organisations cannot do or survive in the long term without training. Due to undue negligence given to training, many organisations have gone into oblivion while many are struggling to survive in the face of competitions because of less importance given to training.

Many organisations which have gone into oblivion are mainly found in the private sector of the economy; while those that are struggling to survive are found both in the private and public sectors of the economy. Even among the bodies of organisations in the public service which are struggling to survive are in the ministries which are the core bureaucracy of government organs, while the others are those which belong to the group known as public commercial enterprises.

No wonder, therefore, the public service of the country cannot perform to optimum because they neglect training as one of their cardinal policies. It is one of the reasons they (organisations) cannot flow with the economic, social, and political currents of the country and the world at large. In terms of productivity and competitiveness they are nowhere to be found on the comity of firms in their industries. In the public sector or bureaucracy, most of the ministries and parastatals are almost moribund and cannot perform to the satisfaction of government and the public due to lack of training of the officials.

Training should be one of the ingredients of human resource development or management that organisations should be embedded in their policies. The absence or complete negligence of training policy is capable of drowning the organisations. Training enhances productivity in any organisations, be it private or public. For any organisation to survive with or without competition, it must imbibe the culture of training. Therefore the need for training policy to be imbibed by organisations in both public and private sectors will

ensure their long term survival and enhancement of their service delivery to the people in society.

Brief History of Training

Training has been a very familiar feature of the military profession right from the ancient times. For example, the training of craftsmen through apprenticeship dates back to the middle ages. After the industrial revolution as the machines grew more and more intricate thereby demanding more and greater skill to operate them, the need arose for careful training and it became more and more manifest (Sharma, Sadana, and Kaur, 2012).

However, conscious training of employees began in modern times in the sphere of private business and industry. Its value in the increment of production and profits in industry was easily noticeable. In the spheres of government or public service, on the other hand being monopolistic and having no accurate standards to measure training, like profit or quantity of output to measure the results of experiments in improvement, was not conscious of the need to engage its employees for training. Not until recently some branches of government organs where a specialised technique were needed, hence the desire for training had to be learnt. Beside this, the public service or government were left to pick up things through the rudimentary process of trial and error on the job. This is known as the “hard way of learning” (Sharma, Sadana, and Kaur, 2012).

Due to the stress of fast changing social, economic and political conditions, the tasks of administration and management, both in public and private sectors, also grew in leaps and bounds and complexity. The activities of government which were previously confined largely to the maintenance of law and order, expanded quickly to the new fields of health, education, business, and industrial aspect, private companies later discover that majority of the employees were no longer productive as they used to be and this greatly affected their profits. They further discovered that they could not compete in their various industries, both at their internal and external environment. As a result, they rediscover themselves and embraced training. Some embedded it into their policies and strategic plans to enhance industrial growth and development.

Conceptual Framework

Training: There is a plethora of definitions on training and all point to the same direction and meaning, as a result, the word means the same thing to many people in similar fields. And when talking of training in terms of organisation and its human resources, the word means the same. Training is instruction and discipline in a particular art, profession, occupation or activity. In management or administrative parlance, training is a conscious effort made to improve or increase an employee’s skill, power and intelligence in order to develop his attitude and schemes of values in a desired and particular direction.

However, it is appropriate to stress that training is different from education. Training is narrower and more specific in scope than education. Education is broader than training. Both are important and often times they go together. Education includes the complete upbringing of the individual personality from childhood, the formation of character, habits, manner, mental and physical aptitude. Closely related and similar to training and education is ‘development’. This is any learning activity which is directed towards future needs rather than present needs, and which is concerned more with career growth than immediate performance. The main focus of development is targeted primarily on an organisation’s future manpower requirements, and on the growth needs of individuals in the workplace (Cole, 2002).

Training is “the process of developing skills, habits, knowledge and attitudes in employees for the purpose of increasing the effectiveness of employees in their present ... positions” (Torpey, 1959). Cole (2002) sees training as the activity which is directed towards the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills for the purposes of an occupation or task”. According to the British Manpower Services Commission (1981), training is “a planned process to modify attitude, knowledge or skill behaviour through learning experience to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities. Its purpose, in the work situation, is to develop the abilities of the individuals and to satisfy the current and future needs of the organisation”.

For any organisation to benefit maximally from training there is need for it to institute a policy in this regard. The long term benefits, in case of private sector organisations, will lead to long term profit, ability to compete in its industry, and long term survival in its life span and products. In case of public service like the bureaucracy and ministries, they will enjoy a large reservoir of manpower and flexibility in their official conduct of government businesses in terms of their services to the people. The institution of training policy in organisations will enthrone organisational culture and mission.

Policy: The word ‘policy’ means the same thing, either in public or private organisations. But when it comes to policy in public affairs there is dire necessity to narrow it down to government affairs only, and it will become public policy. Policies in private business organisations are deliberately narrowed towards profit-oriented organisations. A policy is a proposed course of action either by government or private sector which is profit-oriented. It is a process, or an historical series of intentions, actions, and behaviours of many participants (Palumbo, 1988). It is a broad concept of ideals and objectives which provide the framework, guidelines, for detailed plans for action (Reilly, 1979). Policies are primarily concerned with goals, plans, with how to reach

them. In the private sector, policies enunciated by business organisations are called business policies. A business policy, according to Christensen (1982), is “the study of the function and responsibilities of senior management, the crucial problems that affect success in the total enterprise, and the decisions that determine the direction of the organisation and shape its future”.

A policy is a guide to action or decisions of people. Policies are directives which are issued from higher authority; and it provides a continuous framework for the conduct of individuals in an organisation (Appleby, 1981). Policies are typical of planning. In government bureaucracies, it is public policy. When narrowed down to government parastatals, whether commercial or non commercial enterprises, it becomes organisational policies which can move the organisation or institution forward; in terms of attitude, behaviour and forth; like it obtains in business or profit-oriented organisations. Appleby (1981), asserts thus: “policies are expressions of a company’s official attitude towards types of behaviour within which it will permit, or desire, employees to act.” Policies express the means by which the company’s agreed objectives are to be achieved and usually take the form of policy statements which tell members of the organisation how they should act in specific situations. Policies reflect management thinking on basic matters and inform those interested in the activities of the organisations about its intentions regarding them. In the administration of business one of the most relevant responsibilities of management is the formulation of policy. The work of planning and the determination of company objectives become effective when properly expressed in policy form.

Training Policy: For training policy to be well articulated and received with audacious modicum of any organisation and in the overall benefit of both organisation and individual employees, it must be well embedded in personnel or human resource development or management policy framework. Human resource development, or human resource management, is the latest management philosophy. It is the recognition, in recent times, of the fact that the human beings are the most important element in the organisation. It is by developing the efficiency, integrity, and intelligence of its manpower that organisations can grow into living and dynamic enterprises (Sharma, Sadana, and Kaur, 2012). In organisational context, human resource development is a process by which the employees of any organisation are assisted, in a continuous basis, to acquire or sharpen their capabilities required to perform various functions associated with their present or expected future roles; to develop their own inner potentials for their own and/or organisational development purposes; to develop the organisational culture in which supervisor-subordinate relationships, team-work, and collaboration among the sub-units are strong enough to contribute to the professional well-being, motivation and pride of employees (Rastogi, 1995).

Human resource policy involves various methods of training, education, pension schemes, incentive plans, management succession and development, benefits, union or industrial relations. In the human resource policy, there should be a clear cut emphasis on training. The training policy of an organisation must be included in a range of policies that deal with human resources. The policy statement must set out what the organisation is prepared to do in terms of the development of its employees. However, it is necessary to state that a procedure is different from a policy. The latter subsumes the former in the sense that procedures reflect policy and provide a standard method by which work is performed. A procedure provides a *check* when events or activities do not occur. Procedures are subordinate to policy and are a very useful aid and assistance to training (Appleby, 1981).

Determinants of Training

For training to be efficient and effective it is necessary to know the factors and training needs not only of the individual and the group but how their needs and factors fit the overall organisational objectives. Another important consideration is the reconciliation of the training and development needs of the individual to that of the organisation. Many factors, beside the above objective, determine and influence training in organisations. Cole (2002), asserts that the following are the factors and determinants of training in organisations:

- (a) Degree of change in the external environment, like technological change, and new laws or legislation.
- (b) Degree of internal change (new processes, new markets) in case of profit-oriented firms.
- (c) Availability of suitable skills within the existing workforce.
- (d) Adaptability of existing workforce.
- (e) The extent to which the organisation supports the idea of internal career development.
- (f) The commitment of senior management to training as an essential part of economic success.
- (g) The extent to which management see training as a motivating factor in work.
- (h) Knowledge and skills of those responsible for carrying out the training.

Why Organisations Need Training Policy

1. It *integrates the knowledge and experience* gained in various functional areas of the organisation, for example, human resources or personnel, production. It enables the learner to understand and make sense of the complex interaction that takes place between different functional areas.

2. It deals with the constraints and complexities of real-life businesses.
3. It helps to present the basic framework for understanding strategic decision-making while the individual-beneficiaries of the training are at the middle level of management. This type of framework, if combined with the practical experience gained while working in a specialised functional area, enables an employee to make preparations for handling general management responsibilities. This benefits the organisation in many ways.
4. Training policy can lead to an improvement in job performance.
5. Training policy, on personal development level, is beneficial for an executive to understand the impact of policy shifts on the stratus of one's department and on the position one occupies. For instance, many positions may become redundant due to policy shifts thereby making retrenchment inevitable. An understanding and entrenchment of training policy by management of organisations and their employees enable the workers to avail themselves of the opportunity to avoid the risk with regards to career planning and development.
6. A knowledge of the external and internal environment, and how it affects the functioning of an organisation is vital to an understanding of training policy. Through the tools and techniques of analysis and diagnosis a learner or trainee can understand the environment in which the organisation operates.
7. Through training, information about the environment helps in the determination of the mission, objectives, and strategies of an organisation. The trainee appreciates the manner in which strategy is formulated.

Types of Training

There are many types of training. Organisations can choose one or two types of training suitable for them and their employees. Some of the types of training are:

- (i) **Informal Training:**
This type of training is closely associated with experience by which the employee gradually acquires in the course of actual performance of work. Informal training takes place in the daily relationship of employees with their superiors. This usually happens in offices or factory floors, conferences and staff meeting, organisational publications, at meetings of professional associations and in the reading and study which employees undergo at their own volition or at their supervisor's opinion.
Informal training is training by doing the work, learning by trial and error, and by the acquisition of administrative or technical skill through practice.
- (ii) **Formal Training**
Formal training is a training that is carefully, and deliberately and consciously conceived, prearranged and conducted by experts in that area. There are four types of formal training, that is, pre-entry training, orientation training, in-service training, and post entry training.
- (iii) **On-the-job Training:** This type of training takes during work situation. It is a system of tutelage in which an employee is assigned a particular job or assignment in a normal working situation while a more experienced officer or supervisor oversees or supervises the employee or trainee activities, pointing out his or her mistakes, and instructing the employee on how to perform the job more effectively and efficiently.
- (iv) **Departmental Training:** This type of training includes on-the-job training, though it is often used to describe training that takes place within a department both on-the-job and in more formal classroom-type situations. It is done by a department for its own staff and officers as opposed to training in other institutions or organisations which usually cater for a number of different departments. The courses are usually shorter than run and offer by non-departmental training establishments.
- (v) **Career Development:** This is not, strictly speaking, training but is a process whereby a person or employee is transferred from one job to another in accordance with a carefully timed programme of sequences so that each of the different experiences makes a planned and constructive addition to the gradual development and growth of the individual employee's knowledge, skills, and approach to work. To work effectively career development needs a degree of continuity, control, and efficiency which are seldom found in any large organisations.

Objectives/Aims of Training

The main objectives of training are legion; but central to training is 'efficiency', which is the increment of the effectiveness of the work of the employees. There are two main relevance of efficiency. First is the technical efficiency in the current work of the employee or some higher work to be entrusted to him in future. Secondly, is the improvement of his morale. Morale is connected with the outlook and the attitude of the employee towards his work. If an employee succeeds in imbibing the main objective of training, which is centred on the purpose of the organisation, he serves it as a priceless gain to that organisation. Training is only one factor in the building

up of morale, but is a very important factor.

Bhagwan and Bhushan, (2005) enumerates other aims and objectives of training as follows:

- (a) Training helps the individual employee to perform his current job more effectively and efficiently. It also helps him for other duties within his organisation.
- (b) Training also helps in the development of the employee capacity for higher work and greater responsibilities.
- (c) It also pays substantial regard to the morale of staff because the employee needs to perform tasks of a routine character throughout his life.
- (d) Training helps the employees to become people-oriented and inculcates in them respect and regard for the general public.
- (e) It broadens the vision and widens the outlook of the employees.
- (f) Training improves the tone and adds to the quality of organisations. Since it enhances the efficiency of the employees and develops their capacities, the efficiency and prestige of the organisation goes up.
- (g) It fosters homogeneity of outlook and spirit de corps in the employees.

Advantages of Training

Training has a lot of benefits. The benefits accrue to both parties, that is, the organisation and the individual employees. The organisation benefits more from training of employees than the individual employees. To the organisation, the following are the benefits:

- (i) Maintenance of enough and suitable range of skills amongst employees.
- (ii) The development of knowledge and skills in the organisation's workforce.
- (iii) The harnessing of work experience and other forms of on-the-job development in a planned way.
- (iv) Achievement of improved job performance and productivity.
- (v) Improved product quality
- (vi) Improved service delivery to customers
- (vii) Increase in motivation amongst employees (Cole, 2002)

According to Appleby (1981), organisations benefit maximally from effective training programme through the following:

- (i) Improvement on efficiency and morale
- (ii) Introduction of new techniques
- (iii) Provision for succession, enabling qualified replacements to be available.
- (iv) It raises the standard of unskilled manpower, thereby helping to overcome shortages of labour.
- (v) Development of supervision and decrease in the amount of supervision required.
- (vi) Leading to a reduction in scraps rates and improvement in the utilisation of machine.

To the individual employee, the following are his benefits:

- (a) It increases in the personal repertoire of skills
- (b) It also increases in job satisfaction of the employee.
- (c) There will be increase in value of employee in the labour market.
- (d) It improves the prospects of internal promotion for the employee.

It is necessary to emphasise that all the above benefits/advantages accrue to both public and private (profit-oriented) sectors.

However, for organisations to benefit and enjoy the aforementioned benefits, it must put in place evaluation mechanism and methods so as to assess the training which the employees have undertaken. The evaluation would help the organisation know the quality of training it has invested in.

Conclusion

It is necessary to stress that an enlightened policy on training is a necessity to organisations, whether public or private or profit-driven. This is because further education of an employee, though of direct benefit to himself, will equally have its indirect value and positive spill over effect for the employee or organisation as a whole. Organisations must give due encouragement to, or at least, not put unnecessary obstacles in the way of such education.

Recommendations

In order for organisations to further benefit maximally from training policy, the following recommendations will suffice:

- (i) Organisations must subject their training policy to review at least every three years.
- (ii) Organisations should see training as investment not as expenditure.
- (iii) Training policy must be indirectly embedded in their mission statements.
- (iv) Organisations must see employees as asset at all times.

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