

# Contemporary Developments in Human Resource Management: An Emerging Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

HRM in the present scenario has to face ever-changing and emerging challenges and the role of HR manager therefore, must parallel the needs of the changing organizations. Successful organizations are becoming more adaptable, resilient, quick to change directions, and customer –centered as a consequence to the changing business scenarios affected by globalization, technological advances and changes in political and legal environment. Within this developing environment, the HR professional must learn how to manage effectively through planning, organizing, leading and controlling the human resource and be knowledgeable of emerging trends in training and professional development of its employees. This has led to a paradigm shift in the roles of professional personnel. The great challenge of HRM is to attract, retain and nurture talented employees. This paper analyses the various developments which are emerging in the field of HRM with the aim to theoretically analyze and suggest ways to overcome these challenges and turn them into strategic advantage.

**Keywords:** Resilient organizations, Strategic advantage, Professional development, globalization, technological advances, HR manager

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Present era of transparent knowledge, digitalization and development with enormous opportunities also creates enormous pressure for the organizations to improve the productivity of the people and treat them as strategic assets for increasing productivity and prosperity of a firm. In the last decades the organizations have started using of technology in various functions and in various departments due to effect of globalization and competitive environment in order to gain speed and accuracy (Tanya & Chris, 2016). Human resources management is one of the departments that mostly use the technology called as management information systems and human resource information system. Human Resource management being the process of bringing together people and organizations so that goals of each other are met in a conducive environment for achieving goals, the role of HR manager is shifting from that of a protector and screener in past to that of a planner and a change agent in contemporary business environment (Nasir, 2017). Change indeed is constant and imperative especially when so much is happening in the world. There are new trends new trends happening in the sphere of HRM that it is extremely important for the stakeholders to be familiar about such issues in current circumstances (Kriti, 2013). Under such circumstances, so significant is the business environment, businesses seek to stabilize the position by carefully looking at the emerging trends relating to the area of HRM and framing the strategies for prosperous development of future (Pillai J. M., 2015). Consequently HRM has been seen in developing its reach into succession planning, workforce diversity, labor relations, some aspects of mergers and acquisitions, employee involvement, contingent work force and re-engineering amid growing interference of technological innovations. There are many studies which investigate new trends and issues in HRM with an aim of gaining competitive strength. The paper elucidates the experiences and initiatives taken by the organizations in context to the emerging developments affecting the HR at a local and global level.

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## II. EMERGING DEVELOPMENTS EFFECTING HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

### Globalization

21st century is the age of globalization where entire world is thought to be a global village having no national boundaries. Globalization refers to an extension beyond national borders of the same market forces that have operated for centuries at all levels of human economic activity (village markets, urban industries, or financial centers). It means that world trade and financial markets are becoming more integrated. Growing internationalization of business has its impact on HRM in terms of problems of unfamiliar laws, languages, practices, competitions, attitudes, management styles, work ethics etc. (Zagelmayer, 2012). Companies like Apple, Netflix, Google, Dell and Microsoft, Toyota are more productive than the average companies because they have substantially inducted globalized human capital. HR managers have a challenge to deal with more functions, more heterogeneous functions and more involvement in employee's personal life. To overcome this issue, an organization needs to ensure proper mix of people in terms of knowledge; skills and cultural adaptability to handle global assignments. HRM must be flexible in its practice to train employees by recognizing their differences.

### Workforce Diversity

Dimensions of workplace diversity include, but are not limited to: age, ethnicity, ancestry, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race, sexual orientation, educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, military experience, religious beliefs, parental status, and work experience. Diversity not only involves how people perceive themselves, but how they perceive others, thus effects the interactions in the organization. For a wide assortment of employees to function effectively as an organization, human resource professionals need to deal effectively with issues such as communication, adaptability and change (Beer et al, 2015). Diversity will increase significantly in the coming years. Successful organizations recognize the need for immediate action and are ready and willing to spend resources on managing diversity in the workplace now. This is especially true for multinational companies (MNCs) who have operations on a global scale and employ people of different countries, ethical and cultural backgrounds. Thus, a HR manager needs to be mindful and may employ a Think Global, Act Local approach in most circumstances (Ulrich, 2012). To create inclusive environment, Johnson & Johnson make use of employee resource groups, mentoring and Diversity University which is a dynamic website that helps employees to understand the benefits of working collaboratively. With a population of only four million people and the nations strive towards high technology and knowledge-based economy; foreign talents are lured to share their expertise in these areas. Thus, many local HR managers have to undergo cultural-based Human Resource Management training to further their abilities to motivate a group of professional that are highly qualified but culturally diverse. Furthermore, the HR professional must assure the local professionals that these foreign talents are not a threat to their career advancement.

### Technological Innovations:

Scientific innovations have given new shape to businesses, altering its every aspect. There is a challenging task of adapting workplace to rapid technological changes which influence the nature of work and generate obsolescence. Robotics and artificial intelligence though useful creates many challenge (Miller et al., 2000). In its 2015 report in collaboration with Globoforce, the Society for Human Resource Management has identified 92% of the recruiters turn to social media to validate the candidate's. Microsoft Corporation is preparing the launch of the Hololens headset which will likely be embraced by human resource professionals in the not-so- distant future. Advanced technology has tended to reduce the number of jobs that require little skill and to increase the number of jobs that require considerable skill, a shift we refer to as moving from touch labor to knowledge work (Zorlu, 2009). There is new-new working technology. In this situation organizations have to change it technology. New technology creates unemployment and in other hand, there comes scarcity of skilled manpower. Organizations need to train the employees the confidentiality of information in the wake of internet revolution.

### Political and Legal Environment Complexities

Political and legal framework of a region has drastic implications for human resource management. Changes in political and legal environment means changes in political parties and rules regulation due to which new laws come and you have to follow all laws while doing business. Many changes taking place in the legal and political framework within which the industrial relation system in the country is now functioning. With the war engulfing the world, political ideologies of parties differing substantially and countries imposing restrictions on entry like USA emigration Laws and several others making laws relating to workmen's compensation like that of minimum wages in India, it is extremely important for organizations to shift their policies and make them flexible. Recent economic slowdown has compelled the organizations to downsize the workforce, creating a challenge in aligning the HR policies with that of its bottom-line. Recently Wal-Mart decided to close its Sam's Club locations resulting in layoff of around 100,000 employees. It

is the duty of human resource and industrial relations executives to fully examine the implication, of these changes and brings about necessary adjustment within the organization so that later utilization of human resource can be achieved (Tsui & Milkovich, 1987). It is the responsibility of Human Resource manager to anticipate the changes and prepare organization to face them without any breakdown in its normal functioning for well and smooth functioning of organization.

### **Employee Involvement to Employee Experience**

Employee involvement is a philosophy to give the employees' stake in decisions of an organization that directly affect their jobs while employee empowerment is a corporate structure that allows non- managerial employees to make autonomous decisions. 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 (Gonzales M.,2009).Southwest Airlines is a company revered for their engagement practices leading to enthusiastic and committed people passionate about companies' vision. Such practices though creating better environment has created challenges for the others as well. HRM has a significant role to play in employee involvement focusing on developing the employee experience-an ecosystem that integrates three core dimensions: engagement, culture and performance management. What is needed, is the demonstrated leadership as well as supportive management to enhance morale, healthier coworker relationship and creative thinking for more productivity

### **Talent Management**

In adverse conditions, many organizations feel the need to cut expenses. Corporate downsizing is often resorted in such circumstances. Downsizing may also occur during a merger between two organizations, or an acquisition of the company by another. This poses a grave challenge to optimize the performance of each employee and the organization. Talent management is the science of using strategic human resource planning to improve business value and to make it possible for organizations to reach their goals. It is the growing challenge for the organizations to recruit, retain, develop, reward and make people perform strategically (Collings & Mellahi, 2009).companies like General electric, Microsoft and Wal-Mart are notorious about keeping their best practices a secret as they have enriched talent management strategies with focus on game changers. A talent management strategy of an organization should link to business strategy to function more appropriately for gaining competitive advantage (Uren, L., 2007). Google is thought to be leader in talent management and excelled in the turbulent times because of the practice of valuing the intellectual talent it has got.

### **Gig Economy and contingent Work force**

Gig economy is fairly a new economic concept in which a labor market is characterized by the prevalence of short term contracts or freelance work, as oppose to permanent job. It is offers flexibility but raise concern of exploitation with little workplace protection. A very substantial part of the modern day workforce is the contingent workers. A survey of over 1,000 American workers noted that about 60% received 25% or more of their income from freelance work. Intuit estimates that gig workers represent 34 percent and will grow to be 43 percent by 2020. Contingent workers are individuals who are typically hired for shorter periods of time. The gig economy is a mixed bag; it represents massive potential, but at the same time more difficult opportunities (Stewart, Stanford, 2017). 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. It is the 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.

### **Work- Life Balance:**

There is substantial research showing that workers have difficulty in balancing between the needs of organizations and that of family. This is challenging the prospects of every type of business. Work life balance is the concept of prioritizing between personal and professional activities in an individual's life and to relate the job activities with that of at home (Kossek et al, 1998) .Glassdoor.com, a social jobs and careers website where employees anonymously review companies and their management, in one of its studies found that workers of a particular nationality are willing to move across globe and quit their present jobs to find a proper environment of balancing their life with that of job.

To overcome such an issue, organizations could make use of mobile technology, cloud- based software and the proliferation of internet. 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 (Mariana& Emilia, 2015). SAS Institute, an American multinational developer of analytical software has set the bench mark in addressing the issues of work life balance by investing hugely in employee benefits. 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

### **Health and Safety Issues:**

Health, safety and welfare has always been challenging to the organizations. With the passage of time, these issues take new colors. Occupational health and safety management for achieving affective and normative commitment has challenged the way management pursue its HR policies. Mac Donald's workers in 19 cities in 2015 sued the company over workplace hazards citing lack of gloves for handling hot equipment and other workplace hazards. These result in rift between management and workers. Failure to provide a safe place to work can result in major fines and even criminal conviction for managers (Tawiah & Mensah, 2016). On the other hand there are changing legislations governing the dealings of organizations with respect to welfare measures. In order to manage health and safety in the organizations, the management must implement adequate preventive and protective measures for the workplace along with training management and employees with regarding to ensuring both their own safety and the safety of others. With the emergence of the wellness clubs and fitness centers 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 with all their zeal and zest for the organization.

### **Compliance with Evolving Laws**

There are numerous laws and regulations governing the employment relationship that HR professionals must understand and navigate in order to help ensure their organizations avoid costly fines and other penalties, including the potential harm to the organizations reputation (Richman, 2015). ADHAAR and Companies Act, 2013 in India can be taken as citing examples of evolving laws and affects it unleashed on the HR policies of the organizations. Many organizations have successfully managed their compliance with federal and state employment laws for decades. However, complex legislation that affects the HR function poses a challenge for some companies (Williams, 2003). It requires that HR continually maintain its expertise and knowledge of emerging issues related to legal compliance. This includes constantly evolving laws about discrimination, sexual harassment and medical privacy.

### **Ethical Issues:**

A string of ugly scandals in recent years has hit companies like Zenefits, wells Fargo, Toshiba and others have been attributed in one way other, to a toxic work culture where unethical work behaviors were encouraged. A combined Columbia and Duke University study found that emphasis on figures over people can encourage unethical behavior. Modern day HRM is devoid of morality as all HR practices have ethical foundation and HR deals with the practical consequence of human behavior (Johnson, 2003). Ethical conduct though of prime importance, has yet to be specific. According to the some researchers like Kurt Decker states that, the employers should take the responsibility to protect the employee's rights, privacy and dealings with the outside environment. There is no specific ethical code which could guide the conduct of workforce at a particular organization. Various research recommendations suggest varied ways to deal with such an issue.

## **III. CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD**

In conclusion, still there is a strong contention and race of struggle to take the lead in the academic and professional field but obviously only time will fill which of these and other possible rival scenarios will offer more accurate description of the reality in future. The new technological change, downsizing, right sizing and privatization management can also play role for future developments/trends.

After studying all the facts it can be said that it is now universally accepted that a firm can create a competitive edge from Human Resources and their proper management practices in the current scenario and the HR Management has to have priorities in mind and the strategic impact of the HRM Innovations all the time. The role of the HR Management is not to minimize the costs for the time being, but to make the organization stronger and ready for the future growth to be more competent for better survival and profitability of the organization. Managing Human Resources (HR) in a difficult economic environment is even more demanding than working in times of rapid growth. Therefore the task of HR is very important to maintain equilibrium throughout the hierarchy. For this purpose some recommendations are as follows:

- The management should know the contingency plan to counter the growing trends.
- Brainstorming session with the top management can contribute in their strategic planning.
- A complete or partial job freeze, however, communicate to the workforce that the company many continue to recruit key individuals even in difficult times
- Performance evaluations to determine the key people that company cannot afford to lose should be done at regular intervals.
- The information and ideas flow should be from top to down that will help in making conducive atmosphere within the organization to overcome resistance to change.
- Mobile app approach could be used to turn the rigid system in flexible one for effective work life balance.



- Artificial intelligence can be a game changer in evolving new ways for future development.
- Indulge in continuous quality improvement through TQM and HR contributions like training, development, counseling, etc
- Utilize people with distinctive capabilities in diverse cultures.
- Decentralize operations and rely on self -managed teams to deliver goods in difficult times e.g. Motorola is famous for short product development cycles. It has quickly commercialized ideas from its research labs.
- Lay off workers in a smooth way explaining facts to unions, workers and other affected groups.

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