
UNIT 9 HRD FOR WORKERS

Objectives

After completion of the unit, you should be to:

- 1 to understand the rationale and objectives behind HRD for workers;
- 1 to develop awareness about the challenges in managing HRD for Workers;
- 1 to learn about the various concepts and mechanisms related to HRD for workers;
- 1 to appreciate the role of unions in HRD for workers; and
- 1 to understand the implementation process of HRD for workers.

Structure

- 9.1 Rationale Underlying HRD for Workers
- 9.2 HRD for Workers: An Introduction
- 9.3 Managing Generations of Workers
- 9.4 Empowerment
- 9.5 Cross Functional Teams
- 9.6 Reorganisation of Work
- 9.7 Training
- 9.8 Counselling
- 9.9 Role of Trade Unions
- 9.10 Operationalising HRD for Workers
- 9.11 Summary
- 9.12 Self Assessment Questions
- 9.13 Further Readings

9.1 RATIONALE UNDERLYING HRD FOR WORKERS

People wrangle for rationality, but rationality does not connote the meaning of 'wrangling'.

The HR professionals, imbued with the values of HRD, in most of the public and private sector organisations have initiated HRD interventions to prepare the managers for meeting the needs and challenges of the competitive world. In recent years, many research findings, case studies and practical experiences have emphasized the need to focus on Human Resource Development for Workers –*an obscured call for years*. They show a positive attitude towards the development of workers. Several HRD mechanisms like Performance Appraisal, potential appraisal, Training, Work climate etc. are being used by some organisations. HRD for Workers is being increasingly in the focus. It is required for the simple reason that workers constitute 70-80% of the work force in any organisation; their contribution is the soul of the organisation and if the organization succeeds in directing and unleashing the latent potential in them, the organisation will bloom with energy. While a need for focusing on HRD for workers has been felt and expressed both by professionals as well as academicians, the efforts in this direction have not been commensurate. HRD for workers has been attempted

only in a limited way and that too only recently. Some of the reasons for such a trend could be the following:

- 1 An assumption that development of managers will automatically result in the development of workers.
- 1 The trend of keeping HRD as a non-bargainable area.
- 1 Prevailing Government's laws.
- 1 Lack of integration between HRD and IR in many organizations.
- 1 A belief that workers are mainly or only interested in money and/or are not interested in development or do not have potential for development.
- 1 The convention of minimizing the input of Unions and workers in Decision-making process based on the traditional mindset that Management's job is to 'think' and Workers' job is to 'do'.
- 1 Prevailing IR climate in the organisation.
- 1 Inability to manage diversity.

Despite the above assumptions and beliefs, it is now increasingly realised that workers constitute a major resource in any organisation and therefore any neglect to develop and nurture this resource is likely to produce counter-productive results. It is also felt that for long, workers have been treated as the property of trade unions and in the process they are alienated from management. Research has revealed that the workers feel equally alienated from trade unions, which over the years, have developed into oligarchic and bureaucratic institutions. Unions have in general concentrated on their role as a protest organisation and have done pretty little in the area of development of workers. Many managements feel overwhelmed by the existing labour laws and contend themselves by fulfilling their obligations under labour laws and are not willing to examine the possibilities of going beyond statutory requirements and allocate resources for growth and development of workers.

Any developmental effort directed on particular groups of employees would be inadequate and their impact on the organisational growth and development will be marginal unless the developmental efforts are directed to cover all sections of employees. Even the most developed managers would find it difficult to achieve corporate objectives in the company of stagnant, alienated and demotivated work force. If competent and qualified managers could alone run the organisation, workers would not have been needed.

In many organisations, especially service organisations like banking, 80% of first level officers come from the ranks. In several other organisations, 40-50% of their first line executives come from workmen category. Thus, development of workers assumes critical significance both for the present as well as the future. Several developments having long-term consequences are taking place, which require increasing attention to develop the workers. Some such developments are discussed below.

Emerging Public Sector

In a developing country like ours, public sector has come into being as a major instrument of economic and social transformation. Public sector seeks to achieve the commanding heights of our national economy. A major challenge to HRD in public sector is the heterogeneous composition of the work force in so far as their education, exposure and work attitudes are concerned. The 'population mix' of workers category comprises workmen from socially disadvantaged groups, woman and other categories like physically handicapped and representations from religious minority groups. This makes use of HRD much more imperative as each group has its own assumptions about the other and biases and prejudices based on consideration of caste, sex,

language and religion calling for a much more concentrated effort to create cohesion in the work force.

Technological Change

The technological changes are forcing organisations to adopt new structures and to adapt to the new environment. Obsolescence of certain jobs due to technological up gradation will make it imperative for organisations to prepare workers with new skills and attitudes to cope with changes. Recent spurt in computerisation calls for training, retraining and job shifting for workers. They also need confidence to adjust to the technological revolution in view of confused talks about workers future in a new technological context.

Apart from this, organisations must find ways to involve the whole person in the job so that work and life are related more meaningfully. In this context, it should be recognised that money alone is an insufficient motivator and work must be viewed with a sense of satisfaction. Therefore, the rationale and need for HRD for workers hardly need more emphasis.

Changing Profile of Working Class

The modern worker is no more a dumb entity. Today he is more articulate, demanding and knowledgeable. If the potential of modern worker is allowed to be developed, he is capable of graduating to new positions requiring better application of his knowledge and skills. Conversely if he is neglected and alienated, he can prove to be a big social liability.

Modern industrial worker is today much better compensated than perhaps, his counterparts in other sectors. But his needs are now changing. Together with this, the new worker has desire to have a say in organisational matters. The continued political pressure for workers' participation in management is an additional factor which should make an organisation to focus on developing all round capabilities in workers to enable them to participate meaningfully in the matters concerning them. (See section on Managing generations of workers for more detailed discussion).

9.2 HRD FOR WORKERS : AN INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Development for Workers is a planned process to help the workers in leading a productive work life as well as a good personal life. It is a deliberate action to:

- 1 make the workers realize their own potential
- 1 make the workers aware about the available resources in the environment
- 1 give recognition to the workers in various possible ways
- 1 empower the workers to enhance productivity
- 1 develop occupational competencies compatible with present requirements
- 1 develop achievement-orientation and self-management skills
- 1 develop psychological, social and cultural aspects

The central purpose of HRD for workers is to bring the human being into focus and develop the collective personality and power of workers by creating confidence to influence the course of action. One result of developmental efforts should be to realise the potential of people and help them to recognize the various resources they have at their command - resources of individual strengths as well as resources in the environment.

The concept of *HRD for workers* views workers as people interested and capable of development. It aims at discovering synergy amongst all the concerned and creating *winning-models* to beat the rampant of this competitive age for which a **collegial cooperation** between top-management, unions and workers is required. HRD for workers is quite different in content and processes than perhaps HRD for managerial staff. For example, some basic education and training has is taken for granted in any HRD effort for managers but the same may not be the case when attempting to do HRD for workers. The focus, content and mechanisms of HRD for Workers may have to be different from HRD for Managerial staff because, there are differences in job requirements, level of knowledge and competence, size of groups to be covered etc. In addition, it would be difficult to propose workers as a group that has common needs for development because the focus and process of HRD for Workers will be different from organisation to organisation and even plant to plant.

HRD for Workers is a very complex process. Providing education and training only to the workers cannot minimize the complexity. It requires changing the orientations of managers, unions and workers and jointly moving towards development. One of the objectives of HRD is to make human resources competitive. Being competitive means keeping the best employees motivated and ready to meet new challenges. To stay firm and get the optimum level of output, HRD professionals have to take care of the existing diversities. They can be easily seen everywhere: in knowledge area (Highly educated and less educated), skill area (skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers), age (young, middle and old), language (local and foreign), sex etc. It is also necessary to keep in mind the diversities that lie in work-sectors (Manufacturing, BPO, NGO, Agriculture, mining etc.) because their work meanings and contents are different from each other. Therefore, keeping in mind the importance of workers and the challenging issues, **HRD programmes and mechanisms** have to be designed and implemented in such a way that they leverage the *differences* and motivate workers.

HRD Mechanisms For Workers: There are many mechanisms of HRD for workers. To mention some of the mechanisms herewith: Training, Quality of Work life, Quality circles, Grievance management, Counselling, Workers' participation, Welfare schemes etc. The following carry most of the essence of the stated and unstated mechanisms and their effective implementation will result in effective HRD for Workers.

- 1 Managing generations of workers
- 1 Empowerment
- 1 Cross functional teams
- 1 Reorganisation of Work

9.3 MANAGING GENERATIONS OF WORKERS

The history of workers is as old as the history of civilization and it would be an unending effort to list the movements of workers that took place so far. Internationally and nationally, there were/are many labour organisations, confederations and unions, to encourage workers' welfare and development. The workers' revolution had started with a significant rise since pre first world war. Every year, the 1st of May is celebrated as the *International Labor Day*. It came into existence as a result of the resolution and slogans asserted by masses of workers in the fight for *an eight hour work a day*. Gradually, many other issues on wage, compensation, work place, participation etc. were voiced. It is a day of worldwide solidarity, a time to remember past struggles and demonstrate their hope for a better future. It would be advantageous to briefly understand the shifts that took place and also about the moves in progress.

Earlier, *Workers* (rarely used the term ‘employees’) were considered as naked and defenseless. They were docile, replica of dumb. They had experienced exploitation. Decisions taken by seniors flowed downwards for action. Information-sharing on how the decisions were made and strategy behind it were least considered. There have been multiple generations working in organizations before also, but they were usually separated from each other by virtue of their job descriptions and levels of hierarchy in their organisation. Gender discrimination was prominent. Males mostly held senior positions.

Today, workers are considered rationally. They are knowledgeable, articulate and demanding. Organisations have Information-sharing systems. Now, social and physical separations are minimized to remove barriers to generational mixing. In this *info-centered work world*, as younger workers bring professional and technological skills that some seniors may not possess, they may find themselves supervising older employees. Never before in the history, in today’s workplace of shrinking upward opportunity, there are many different age groups working together under a single roof. **World war generation, Baby Boomers’ Generation, Generation X and Generation Y** (also known as *Nexters or Generation Net*) are the four popular groups. They are working shoulder to shoulder. Now, as organizations flatten out, there is less separation by job description. These generations carry different perspectives and philosophies when asked to work together. They have differences in values, ways of thinking, working, and even dressing. This can cause misunderstanding of each other’s perspective and set people in opposition to one another creating *intergenerational conflicts or ‘us’ and ‘them’*. Unfortunately, very limited work has been done on this topic in India.

A brief discussion on the four generations that are working together is as follows:

1) **World war generation workers** (born between 1922 and 1943) also called as **Veterans**. This cohort’s earliest experiences are associated with that depressive world event. They have the tendency to learn new skills to become more effective in their current job, and they prefer to work with strong leaders as they favour a top-down approach to management – *Command and control*. They view information as something that should be provided on a need-to-know basis.

2) **Baby Boomers’ Generation** (born between 1943 and 1960). These people were raised up in an era of optimism, opportunity, and progress – *post war era*. They have been brought up in work environments that respect authority and hierarchy. They represent more than two-third of the workers. On the job, they value loyalty and, generally wait their turn for advancement and promotion. However, things have been changing around the world and they have too. They respect empowerment, challenge and growth. They achieved success by creating open lines of communication. They have learned to question their superiors on the job, rather than blindly accepting that what is good for the company should also be good for them. They have been eager to discard the command-and-control style of veterans. Boomers are now turning to coaching for their own personal and professional development.

A study conducted by the Executives of **Life stage Matrix Marketing** came up with the differences in values that Boomers hold dearly, and the values that their parents hold dearly:

Table 1: Boomers and Baby Boomers

	Boomers' parents' values	Baby Boomers' values
1	Institutional leadership	Participation in decision making
1	Accepting authority	Questioning
1	Formality, structure	Informality, unconventionality
1	Puritanism, denial	Sensuality
1	Institutions, teams	Individualism
1	Solve problems	Pursue causes
1	Social order	Social equality
1	Work for work's sake	Work for self-expression
1	Stability	Change, experimentation
1	Materialism	Experiences

Source: *Boomers won't go gently into 'Old age*, Employment Digest, July 29, 2003 Archives

3) **Generation X workers** (born between 1960 and 1980), also known as **GenXers**. They grew up in a rapidly changing social climate and economy, in the dawning of high-tech and information technology age. On the job, they are independent and want fast feedback and recognition (through job title, promotion and pay). They tend to be more skeptical than the members of early generations. Many of GenXers were latchkey kids and grew up in a time of political and corporate scandals. As a result, they often distrust institutions and prize individualism. One of the signs of development is that they tend to want a more collaborative work environment, with an opportunity to share in developing goals and even in strategic planning. (E.g., the growing concept of Workers' participation). They want opportunity, flexibility and acknowledge training. GenXers also have the tendency to focus on immediate tasks rather than strategic goals. They have little respect for the uninformed and those unwilling to learn. It is believed that as they have entered into the world of unstable work force, the period of rapidly shifting work force and corporate restructuring, they have little loyalty to employers and are interested to make lateral moves to add to their bio-data. They are the pioneers of 'free-agent work force' and they want a life outside of work.

4) **Generation Y** (born between 1980 and 2000) also called as **Generation Nexters**. They are from advanced hi-tech and IT world. Even if they are the youngest, the world of work knows they are the most technologically adept cohort. They are fast learners and tend to demand immediacy. Gen Y'ers have high expectations of personal and financial growth and seek meaningful work that affects their world. They do not like being treated as the new kid on the arena. Again, many of them are latchkey kids. They go with a conviction that not only will they change employers throughout their career, but also the style of work they do. However the Nexters, the children of Boomers and older GenXers, may well thrive in a workplace that resembles what has been rejected. Some researchers speculated that Nexters would resemble the veterans in many ways. They tend to believe in collective action, optimism about the future, and a trust in centralized authority. Even though they are the freshers, they have a strong will to get work done with great zeal.

In a web poll taken by the Fast Company magazine, 69% of respondents answered "yes" to the question, "**Does your workplace suffer from a generation rift?**" *The generation gap and rift has an impact at all levels and roles in the organization including workers.* Workers today are much more aware about the need to build a meaningful work life. They also want a better quality of life. Therefore, the role of HR professionals is very crucial. They have to understand the needs of the workers and at the same time make them competent in aligning to the processes of the Organisation.

Cooperation and collaboration between the generations must intensify to meet the interdependent nature of work. This will result in a fruitful working condition.

Different people bring in different thoughts and ideas to problem-solving. So, if an organisation succeeds in using the differences as opportunity, then it can definitely see the miracle of ‘**synergy**’. Actions should be taken up to bridge generation gap and develop a “**Generations Friendly**” work environment where juniors learn from seniors, and seniors learn from their juniors.

Learning to accept and appreciate another’s perspective helps in understanding what that person is all about and even about where s/he is heading. HR specialists need to design workplaces that not only reflect the preferences of top-management but also the sensibilities of multiple generations. Moreover, it would be well again if the organisation succeeds in getting and managing a mix of generations, sexes and ethnicities under a project/workplace. Informal sitting, talking and discussing with an open mind may result in valuable inputs. **Generation friendliness** in an organisation can be measured with the help of questionnaire or interview method and, HR professionals can feed it back to the sources. Coaching services to workers would be an added advantage and, these all may serve as an impetus to HRD for Workers.

9.4 EMPOWERMENT

Taking the practice of dominant relationship into notice and its disadvantages, the concept of Empowerment has become a rage and, most professionals want to go for it. **Empowerment** doesn’t mean to give over power but it is all about bringing **balance-of-power**. It is about distributing power, providing knowledge and resources to individuals. The concept of empowerment itself is so broad that may even incorporate most part of this chapter. However, it would be discussed briefly. It is defined as a process of inclusion that enhances work motivation by bringing meaningfulness and high competency to it. HRD for Workers gives more emphasis on giving psychological empowerment. It is associated with the perception of encouragement. The rationale behind empowerment is that powerlessness gives rise to low self-efficacy and motivation that incapacitates productivity.

Empowerment enables workers to bring their creativity into use and to feel responsible. Many attempts are made to bring a **congenial industrial relationship** between Employers and Workers. Workers’ participation is a major area. It incorporates the essence of consultation, joint decision-making, self-management and even delegation of decision rights to workers. There are many other mechanisms like TQM (Total Quality Management), Quality circles, Workers’ Director on the Board, Shop floor committees, Plant level committees, Functional committees (production, safety, cultural, recreational) collective bargaining, Suggestion schemes (suggestion box, horizontal communication) etc. that more or less carry the same value. Nevertheless, incongruity between empowerment’s goal, work culture and organisational atmosphere may lead to unintended results. Ideally, distribution of power or exercise of autonomy is different from organisation to organisation. It depends upon the actual work process an organisation engages with. Therefore, conscious decision about the extent to which an organisation wants to empower its workers is necessary. Management needs to assess all the possible pros and cons of empowerment. That is why despite the rhetoric about empowerment, many companies do not fully practice it.

Barriers to Empowerment

- 1 Incongruence between organisation’s goals and its culture.
- 1 Fear of managers regarding distribution of power.

- 1 Established feeling of workers, “No respect and recognition of our work”.
- 1 Negligence and lack of top-management participation.
- 1 Problems from grass root work-level are not being heard by the top-management.
- 1 Incompatible legal sanctions.

The two roads

1) **Information sharing** serves as a key to empowerment by fading away most of the barriers. When the top management and the senior managers start sharing valuable information about the organisation (like market share, competitors’ standpoint, benchmarking results, growth opportunities to the workers), and the workers share sensitive information about the workplace to the seniors, then empowerment will grow. It is required because to let doers know about their contribution, and the differences it makes to overall performance is very instrumental. It makes them feel responsible and begets trust in the organisation.

2) **Restructuring** influences empowerment. Value-based introduction to new systems and training programs gets the workers aware about the advantages of the mechanisms towards empowerment. Managers may empower workers to own and operate performance planning (goal setting, adopting appropriate leadership style, scheduling work and finding other methods to perform better). After mutual discussion with management group and as soon as the workers understand where they are supposed to reach, the workers tend to bring up those processes and trends that hinder them to perform better in the eyes of the management. Then they come out with new ideas, suggestions and proposals. It even may leads to the culture of self-management. Replacing hierarchy with teams (e.g. Cross-functional teams) is one good example.

Workers’ Participation in Management (WPM)

It refers to the processes in which employees involve themselves and contribute towards the positive functioning of the organization serving as the members who influence the managerial decisions that shape their work. Formal schemes of WPM have been the focus of considerable interest and at the same time a controversial issue all over the world. There are many models of WPM, which have the potential to bring changes in structural arrangements, functional arrangement and even statutory control. The form of participation differs from country to country: Yugoslavia Workers’ Directors, Germany’s Codetermination, Works Committee, Work Councils, Joint decision-making etc. Some people prefer to call this concept as Industrial Democracy, Self-management, Workers’ involvement etc.

The coming up of unions brought the first challenge to managerial mindset of unilateralism.

This is a call to integrate Industrial Relations and HRD. There are many international and national confederations, federations and unions of workers. BPO sector has been away from any kind of unionism. However, it is now fast catching it. Trade unionism is entering the IT world. The Global Union Network International has launched a new organisation that targets workers in Indian back-offices. The most often agenda of the unions are job security, healthy work place, healthy work hours, increase in salary etc. For workers’ welfare and development there are training, counseling, guidance, career development and grievance handling divisions in the HRD system. These provide as an indirect aid to empowerment. Suggestion schemes, suggestion box, horizontal communication, quality circles, shop floor committees, works committees, plant level committees, functional committees which look at production, safety, cultural, recreational etc. are some widely used mechanisms with the purpose to bring

Box 1: Case Study

Democracy at the Work place — Steel Tubes of India's Experience

Steel Tubes of India Ltd. set up in 1959 as an entrepreneur took a small-scale company in 1967 when it was a sick unit. He shifted operations to industrially backward area of Dewas and set up a modern Precision Steel Tube Manufacturing Plant in 1975, which is today the largest manufacturer of such tubes in India. Steel Tubes India group's turnover is close to Rs. 100/- crores.

For an Indian entrepreneur, the steps taken by the Chairman and Managing Director of Steel Tubes of India Ltd. (STI) are radical and path finding. They reflect an attitude of genuine concern and regard for the views, criticism and good faith of the employees who have given their best to the fast growing company. The Joint Committee and Janasabha are two participative institutions, which have facilitated a free, flow of information and engendered a great degree of involvement. The HRD Department itself partakes all the processes. The Manager Human Resources at STI is chosen by the elected representatives of the workers in the Joint Committee from among managers with more than 3 years service in the company. Such a nomination from the Joint Committee is binding on the management and the person gets a three years' term as Manager (Human Resources).

The Joint Committee: A Joint Committee has 6 representatives of management and 6 workers' representatives from different grades. The later are elected not by member of separate grades, but by the entire work force. The Joint Committee meets on the 28th of every month. Labour demands, problem of technology, innovations, in fact, every aspect of work is discussed. A manager of the level of General Manager chairs the Joint Committee and the Vice-Chairman is from workers' side.

Janasabha : The institution of Janasabha is more broad-based and is like a house of representatives. Its membership embraces of the elected members of the Joint Committee, nominated members of the 4 joint departmental councils and the company workers who have been declared best workers of the year for the last 7 years, people who have 20 years of service in the company, senior managers, departmental heads and directors of the company.

Janasabha meets twice a year. The Chairman gives an assessment of the company's internal situation and external environment and the Janasabha members put across their views and thrash out problems. Janasabha's decisions are binding on both workers and management. Even an ordinary worker can take on the Chairman and his criticism is taken in good faith.

The free access and responsiveness built into the company's ethos through democratic forums, perhaps explains the indifference of the work force to the overtures of external trade union leaders.

Quality circles by their own meaning and principle support the empowerment of workers. It is a group dynamics technique. Quality circle is a small group that performs quality control activities in their workshop voluntarily. It is based on the fundamentals of collaboration, empowerment and involvement. In India, it was launched for the first time by BHEL (Ramachandrapuram Unit in 1980). HRD has to facilitate the culture of work in the form of Quality Circles and/or Cross-functional teams/Suggestion schemes and such others innovative employee involvement schemes for TQM activity.

Total Quality Management (TQM) is long-term continuous process of organisation improvement centered on quality, based on participation of all individuals (from CEO to lowest paid workers), and aimed at customer satisfaction. Most of the quality management and participative activities are claimed as its elements. Kaizen, again a Japanese concept, gives the message that improvement never ends. It is a customer-driven strategy, which involves everyone in the organisation and makes improvement without huge investment. It focuses on generating problem awareness culture. It is considered as a very important element in TQM process.

The following Exhibit-1 is an excerpt from a paper presented in the RTC on “HRD for Workers and Support staff”(Jain, Pareek and Jomon, 1996).

Exhibit 1: Total Grass root Level Employee Involvement at Pfizer

Pfizer (India) Limited in 1989 realized that:

- 1 Work force today has much higher democratic aspirations and greater employment opportunities in liberalized economy where companies have to strive to retain their best people
- 1 Work force today is changing their profile from manual operations to a knowledge worker who take crucial shop-floor decisions
- 1 Managers have to act as facilitators more and help realize the creative and human potential of its wealth creators i.e. the workers
- 1 TQM presupposes Total Employee Involvement, and the real competitive advantage must increasingly come not from technology / product quality but from the quality of service that surrounds a product.

These led to evolve proactive HRD approaches at empowering the shop-floor workers as a part of a ‘holistic strategic initiative’ at Pfizer. The Thane plant in 1989 was one of the least productive of the Pfizer operations worldwide. The plant was a prime candidate to closure.

The interventions were broadly categorized as follows:

Phase I: Odyssey (approximately one year)

Eliciting support and commitment of the top and middle management by sensitizing them to their role as internal agents for change undertaking a benchmarking survey to assess the competitiveness of the plant and set challenging goals.

Phase II: Seeding (Two and half years)

Empowering the entire work force (2000 approx.) through a specially designed Enhancing Quality of Life program, which aimed at transcending corporate responsibility by adding value to the person not only in terms of his role as worker but as total person. An Attitudinal Change Program was preceded by an Organisation Diagnosis Research Survey to evolve an organisational SWOT and bring to surface certain latent development issues. Another intent was to create a learning organisation responsive to change and total quality.

Phase III: Harvesting (Two years)

Launching and partly institutionalizing the TQM movement. A company wide four day “TQM in the Indian Ethos’ program, one day of ‘Workplace Housekeeping’/ 5S, and two days of Kaizen exposure was carried out at Pfizer.

The impact

- 1 Greater level of trust and transparency between management and union wherein the management decided to share its unstable financial position with workers (periodically).
- 1 Greater levels of belongingness to the organisation and resultant higher productivity.
- 1 The output earlier achieved by about 480 workers could now be achieved with 300.
- 1 Higher levels of motivation on shop floor leading to minor modifications that led to benefits. For instance, no. of cartoons packed per shift went up from 6500 to 7000.
- 1 With the trimming of the workforce through natural attrition and voluntary retirement scheme shop-floor efficiency necessitated redeployment.
- 1 Another direct spin off of the increase in productivity is that Pfizer, Bombay plans to reduce subcontracting to zero from 20%. Now, Pfizer manufactures the same product at the subcontractor's price.

After five years of empowering the shop-floor operatives in terms of both behavioural skills and technical skills of TQM, the same work force has helped achieve over twenty percent increase in productivity without any additional investment.

Some points to take note of

- 1 The Industrial Disputes Act of 1947 has provided for the setting up of Works Committees in all undertakings employing 100 and above workers with an objective to remove causes of friction between employers and workers.
- 1 A press release (10th April, 2003) from the *Ministry of Labor and Empowerment, Government of India* said that Government is committed to workers' participation in the management but this would take shape with consensus among industrialists, workers' organisations and the government, it added.
- 1 EFI (Employers Federation of India) and PHDCCI have opposed the proposed Workers Participation in Management Bill (which is pending in Rajya Sabha since 1990) saying it would cause serious impediment in expanding the industrial base.

9.5 CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TEAMS

Team is a small group of interdependent members focusing on deciding means and carrying them out into action inspired by certain goals, commitment & accountability.

Team building is an essential element to improve the awareness and effectiveness of small task forces. It is a key part of organisation development process to be functionally outstanding. In current times there is a need to be not only functionally excellent but cross functionally excellent. Cross Functional Teams improve not only individual and team productivity but also increase the effectiveness of the organisation as a whole. However, for any team, the degree of genuine empowerment can be the key to accomplishing its objective. Here, more emphasis is given on *self-directed Cross-functional teams*. It can be considered as a form of empowerment.

Cross-functional teams

As the name implies, *Cross-functional team* is a small group of individuals with different functional expertise working together towards commonly accepted goals. Generally, the members are from different work units and levels of hierarchy of the organisation but sometimes members may be from outside also – suppliers, consultants and even customers. The team members engage in exchanging information, coordinating activities, supporting each other, exploring strengths and weaknesses of the team while considering the needs of individual members. Besides recommending actions, the team also implements them. Briefly, it is a unit of performance.

In this competitive world, organisations require many divisions and departments to work collaboratively on teams. Expertise, knowledge and competency of workers varies from one functional division to other. Simply, it is about working across different functions within an organisation (like R&D, Production, Marketing, Sales and Customer care working and operating closely to create variety solutions). The easiest example is Military operation in War area where Intelligence group, Army, Navy and Air force work together. To stand firm in this competitive age, companies should adopt the spirit of **working together** across functions.

Why and When Cross-functional teams?

In today's fast-moving business environment, incorporation of a wide range of skills and perspectives is required to confront with many complex challenges. Successful organisations are those that have the ability to make their divisions/departments work collaboratively on teams and make their knowledge and technological development compatible to gain success. The level of expertise to bring up such ability can be derived from *Cross-functional teams*.

Cross-functional teams come up when the organisation:

- 1 struggles with a problem that impacts many parts of the organisation.
- 1 needs to improve a work process that requires coordination from more than one department and one level of hierarchy –*crossing the boundaries*.
- 1 requires simultaneous application of manifold skills, experience and judgment to accomplish some goals.

In these situations, generally, cross-functional teams get better results by providing quality decisions and effective performance. Cross-functional teams may use Action learning as a process of problem solving.

Building & Managing Cross-Functional Teams

The Concept of Cross-functional team is about developing the ability to see a bigger picture across sections in the organisation jointly and to celebrate on its outcome i.e. SUCCESS. Shortly, it is about bidding goodbye to “**us & them**” and welcoming the feeling of “**we**” backed by collective knowledge and multiple skills. Very similar to the *Tuckman's Stages of group development* (1977), Cross-functional team members undergo phases of Forming (commitment to goals and accepting dependency), Storming (clarification about goals and belongingness), Norming (involvement in open and informal communication), Performing (productivity and achievement stage), and Adjourning (feeling of recognition and satisfaction followed by termination). It is the responsibility of the HR Department and team leader to make the team members aware about the phases, the attributes of the task(s) and their responsibilities.

The objectives of Cross-functional teams can be classified into two levels: the first is at the collective level (what the entire team has to achieve) and the second one at the

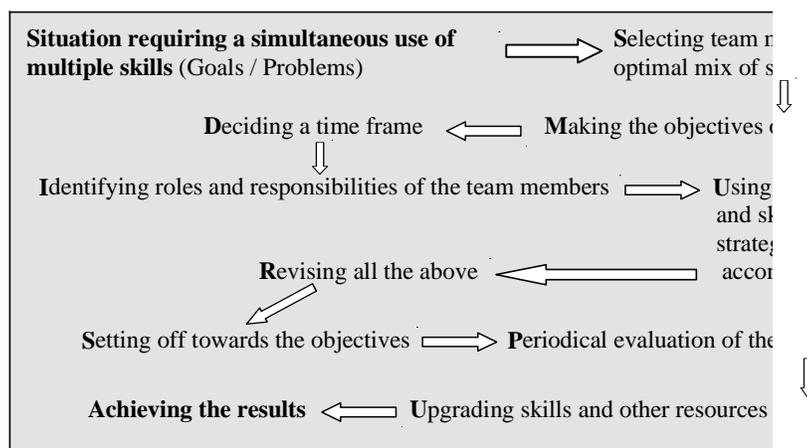


Figure 1: Building and Managing Cross-Functional Teams

individual level (defining team members' roles and responsibilities individually). Although, Cross-functional teams depend on team members, the importance of the organisation and team leaders should also take into account. Collectively, effectiveness depends on skills and capabilities of the members, leaders and Organisation. To create good teams, selection of people with the right character is necessary. Leaders should act mainly as facilitators. Team requires upgrading leadership and team-member skills. It also demands that organizational culture become more interactive and less bureaucratic. Therefore, the degree of genuine empowerment can be the key to accomplishing their objective.

Building a capable Cross-functional team is not an easy task. Its cumulative strength is the result of the following three main parties:

- 1) **Organisation** stimulated with systematic processes for forming, managing, measuring and dissolving Cross-functional teams. It should be very clear about the time for Cross-functional team, required functions, rational process of selecting team members and leader, deploying the members and evaluating performance. Otherwise, it will sound like a serendipitous event. Moreover, organisation should provide learning, supportive and interactive culture. Team members cannot achieve success on their own if organisation has strict bureaucratic structure, system and practices.
- 2) **Team leaders** should have operational knowledge as well as functional knowledge with ability to knit different kinds of expertise guided by pragmatic vision that s/he communicates to the team members and makes sure that everyone is heard. S/he should be agile enough to decide when to step back and let the experts (team members) from different functional areas perform and lead. Team leaders should act as good facilitators.
- 3) **Team members** from different divisions play a crucial role. The strength of Cross-functional team depends on them. They should understand the organisation's vision, team goals and their objectives otherwise their efforts would be squandering their own energy. They should be committed to common compelling goals. Members must own the skills of listening, asking questions, seeking clarification, seeking consensus, brainstorming inspired with their functional expertise. They should respect each other's contribution by learning why and how the members from other divisions think and do differently with an effort to work on the same track. Moreover, there should be a trusting and open relationship. The members share responsibility for team processes, development and outcomes.

Team should hold regular meetings to rebuild and maintain a sense of trust and progressive development, and to reconsider the objectives and implementation strategy in relation to their resources. Apart from the advantages and results of Cross-functional teams that have been discussed so far, there are two more gifts from Cross-functional teams:

- 1 **System integration:** Cross-functional teams draw information from all functional divisions and make a wide range of information accessible through a single interface. This enhances the decision making of all types (strategic, operational etc.).
- 1 **Reducing jargon:** As the name itself implies, cross-functional teams consist of professionals from different departments. It is no longer the case that HR people feel hard to use documents of engineers / accountants or vice-versa. Information is presented in a way that all the professionals from different backgrounds understand and use. In this advanced world audio-visual systems, data visualisation systems and likes may serve as an aid to increasing effectiveness and efficiency.

Achieving the results by Cross functional teams is not a matter of chance. It is possible if the following criteria are there:

- 1 top management support
- 1 Selection of the right team leader and members
- 1 An understanding between the team members and the management executives about the outcomes to be achieved
- 1 Effective mission statement, communication and social bonding.

In search of competitive advantages, today, many firms are orienting towards a less structured, more interactive information system and flexible organisational systems. This created an opportunity to form Cross-functional teams which have members from across functions as well as across cultures. Generally, Cross Functional Teams are engaged in time-sensitive undertaking. The team members return to their functional base once their undertaking is accomplished but leaving the feeling of involvement, understanding, cooperation, collaboration, effectiveness and psychological motivation in them.

9.6 REORGANISATION OF WORK

Q. What is the time now? Ans: - Time to Reorganise!

Employers, managers, and employees face increasing business and personal pressures putting their work life and personal life into difficulty. However, research evidence shows that these two life's realms can be set complementary to bring an "odd-free" life. There are many interventions, which look after work performance as well as individuals' needs. Mention may be made: - Work-life programs, Motivation design, Job redesign, Work reorganization etc. The growing understanding is that if work is poorly organized, then it can be dangerous to the health of the workers and it has an impact on overall business of the organisation. With the realization that Organisation of Work can lead to improved health and the World of Work keeps on changing, **Reorganisation of Work** is considered necessary.

In order to sustain competitiveness and meet the new demand of knowledge Work has to be reorganised. Cross-sectional job design research highlights a trade off between motivational and mechanistic work design. Longitudinal research works however, suggests that the tradeoff could be minimized if both the motivational and mechanistic approaches are duly considered while work is designed and if their respective

outcomes are also given due importance when work is reorganised. **Reorganisation of work** is a broad and comprehensive concept with no strict definition. It refers to the changes in different aspects of work place, and aims at lowering costs while increasing quality of work life and productivity. Most preferably, work reorganization process should not be a top-down one. It influences the organisation culture. However, the degree of effectiveness of such an intervention depends on manager's willingness to act promptly on employee feedback after making sense out of the employees' efforts. **Involvement of employees in Reorganisation of Work** improves retention, productivity, absenteeism and customer service on one hand and it also increases flexibility and personal time, thereby reducing stress-causing factors. **Reorganisation of Work** considers the issues of job design, organisational communication, time, interpersonal relationship, management style, corporate culture, individual developments etc. Resolution to any problem in the above issues requires people who do the job (workers) to have a greater say because they know the real experience and requirements. Organisation should allow their workers and give the opportunity to discuss organisational problems and design strategies for solutions. The management, especially the HRD group must facilitate the process of change by providing psychological support and all the required resources. At the same time, the managers should monitor that the moves of the workers are not out of track. It should not be totally technique-oriented nor totally people-oriented. Reorganisation of Work carries the essence of, **"Changes are exciting when done by us and threatening when done to us"** (Rosabeth Moss, Professor, Harvard School of Business). Consequently, this provides workers with a measure to control their work life and leave organisation power relationships unchanged.

Why Reorganisation of Work? The Reorganisation of Work is driven by the changes in the preferences of customers, employees and employers, and the changes in physical capital, Information technologies, nature of work, human capital generated by Education systems and training programs, and obviously, the rise in business complexities.

HR practitioners and Workers are engaging in the processes of Reorganisation:

- 1 To keep technologies, processes, and structure of the organisation compatible to each other and to the environment.
- 1 To develop complementarity between organisational change and skills change.
- 1 To consider health of the workers and their requirements.
- 1 To adopt the concept of working without limit.
- 1 To improve quality of work life.
- 1 To create innovation-driven growth rather input-driven growth.
- 1 To become creative to get the desired outcome.
- 1 To increase effectiveness and as well as efficiency.
- 1 To play a key role in coping with future challenges through greater Cooperation.

Through improving **Organisation Structure** (Decentralization, flat structure, minimal tiers etc.), **Systems** (time schedules, allowing unofficial projects, special incentives and rewards for innovation etc.), and **Culture** (openness in communication, minimal status differences, 'freedom to fail', trust etc.). Johnson & Johnson's famous phrase on Decentralization is **"growing big by staying small"**. Most of the corporate giants follow the same ideology. Use of latest information technologies is an added advantage in bringing effectiveness to Work Reorganisation. It helps to overcome problems of information indigestion. A review system should be made according to the interval of time to measure the success or desirable outcomes. This concept, if successfully implemented, will not only enrich the life of workers and returns on capital of the

Company but it will help the nation to build a knowledge economy. Workers will get the opportunity to explore and develop their skills and potential thereby maintaining job satisfaction and increasing productivity.

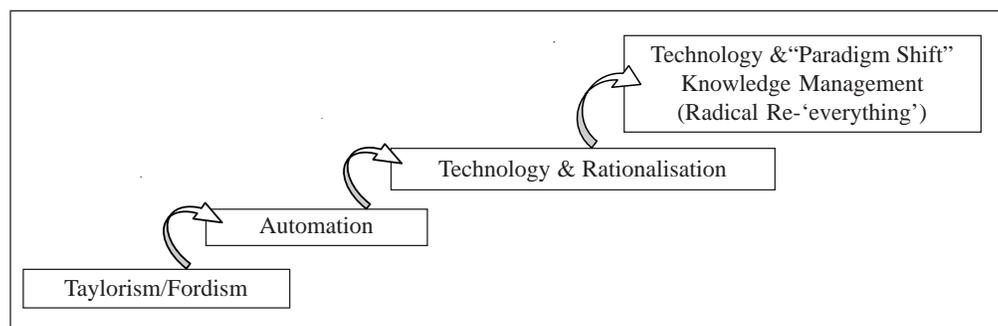
Depending on the required solution, emphasis of **Reorganisation of Work** can differ from one situation to another. Work can be reorganised for enrichment, decentralization, multi-tasking, rotation, flexibility and in many more ways. However, flexibility definitely has been a hit and rigidity is now superseded. The **Fordism** is in crisis while the **Flexism** is coming up as an alternative. Flexible Work includes flexibility in terms of work-hour, work-location, flexi-time work, teleworking etc. The turns that the world of work is going through can be seen at a glance, it also tells about the orientation of Work Reorganisation:

Table 2: Fordism and Hexism

Old Business Model		Modern Business Model	
<i>Taylorism - Fordism</i>		<i>Post-Taylorism / Fordism</i>	
1	Rigidity	1	Flexibility
1	Specific specialization	1	Flexible specialization
1	Uniform products	1	Differentiated products
1	Time-based training, and overly controlled process of training design and delivery	1	Knowledge & competency-based training, and stream-lined process for design, content and delivery
1	Individualistic orientation	1	Team orientation
1	Lack of accountability	1	Full accountability for all participants
1	Give more focus on input	1	Give more focus on output
1	Focus on existing competencies	1	Give more focus on new competencies
1	Closed information	1	Open information
1	Employees are seen as expense and Financial capital as the scarce resource	1	Employees are seen as investment and the most precious resource
1	Credentials provided on the outcome	1	Credentials provided on the process of acquiring competency
1	Controlling	1	Empowering and Coaching
1	Emphasis on Stability and Standardization of Work	1	Emphasis on Change and Customization of Work
1	Top-down integration (Effective in stable environment)	1	Top-down + Bottom-up integration (Effective in new and unstable environment)
1	Mechanics and technologists were considered as the drivers of business	1	Synergy formed by management & workers / Cross-functional teams is consider as the driver of business

The above table is not enough to portray a holistic view, the phases between the **Taylorism** and the **Post-Taylorism** and the **Modern Business model** go unnoticed. The following table is a brief attempt to bring it to light comprehend and compensate it.

The effort to restructure work and union-management relations has not been a temporary fad. Work reorganization incorporates interventions like workers / employees involvement, participatory management, quality programs, job restructuring, integration of tasks, featuring learning across tasks and work teams with a motive to gain structure and skills to meet the requirements of employers as well as workers. Work reorganization, when successfully implemented can result in many benefits to the Workers and to the Organisation. Management as well as



Figur 2: Process of Business

Workers must be prepared to initiate and actively participate in Reorganisation of Work. In brief, in any attempt to reorganize or restructure the work, the following points must be taken care of:

- i) Reorganisation of Work is based on collective agreement between management and Unions / Workers on rational issues.
- ii) It should help in developing a more cost-effective company. It must be designed to provide workers greater influence over day-to-day operations and management of their work place. This effort can lessen down redundant levels of supervision. It should encourage *Inter-task learning* rather than Intra-task learning.
- iii) One objective of Work Reorganisation is to create **“Positive health & Safety culture”** in the organisation and it requires full involvement of workers. Providing Competence building programs, autonomy with soft control & supervision, feedback to Workers enhance the culture by making a meaningful and responsible work.
- iv) Work Reorganisation should aim at creating a **discrimination free environment** and open communication system.
- v) The management and workers can reschedule their timetables and redesign their process for achieving the set goals through negotiation.
- vi) Reorganisation of Work creates better jobs through higher skills by providing training and greater opportunity and responsibility to Workers equitably. It **increases job security**.

‘No-No’ in Reorganisation of Work:

- 1 Work reorganization must not lead to de-skilled jobs and eliminate higher skill jobs.
- 1 Non-negotiated decisions should not be brought up for implementation.
- 1 Work Reorganisation should not result in direct layoff. Alternatives should be explored.
- 1 Work Reorganisation must not result in the development of structures that replicate outdated phenomenon.

Reorganisation of Work is a strong mechanism for all round development of workers and the organisation. TQM is a good mechanism of Work Reorganisation. It is a continuous process of using new ideas and information for innovation.

Some of the common HRD mechanisms viz. Training, performance appraisals, career planning etc. have also been tried in organizations with considerable success. In the national round table conference on the theme of HRD for Workers and support staff, 25 papers were presented on various kinds of interventions taking place in organisations in India viz. Personal Growth training, HRD Systems, Quality related HRD etc. for providing development opportunities to workers (Jain, Pareek and Jomon, 1996). Some examples and experiences are shared below.

9.7 TRAINING

Training is an important mechanism for workers' development. For overall development and growth of workers, the direction of training efforts need to be focused not only on job skills, but inter-personal skills, collaborative skills and team building skills. Besides this, skills in problem-solving and self-management are also required. Routine training programmes for upgrading only technical competence of workers have limited value for overall growth and personality development of the workers.

The effort in training has to be basically an institutional effort, depending upon the actual training needs of workers in the technological context of a particular industry. More often it is presumed that technical training by itself will create all round competence amongst workers but that would be taking a narrow view of the situation. Behavioural training is equally important to develop inter-personal skills and also skills to help them in improving quality of their life in general. Some Indian companies have done work in this area and found it quite rewarding contrary to the common belief that workers cannot respond to training not directly connected to their jobs and learn.

Exhibit 2

Creating Co-ownership and Empowerment: The ATE Experience*

This is based on two manufacturing companies of ATE Enterprise Limited, Ahmedabad. The company manufactures textile machinery of international repute through joint ventures with companies in Germany, USA and Netherlands.

The time span in providing developmental inputs to workers and supervisors was from 1985 to 1995. In 1985, a Socio-Economic Survey of workers and supervisors was conducted. The following programs were initiated based on the report submitted:

1. Multiple technical skill building
2. Communication skills
3. Secretarial skills
4. Receptionist skills / Telephone operating
5. Quality circles

A four-day residential lab for Supervisors/Workers on Quality of Work Life was held. It focused on:

1. Issues of ownership at the family level as well as organisational level and shifting from single ownership identity to a co-ownership concept and reality.
1. Empowerment to get committed to create "My realities and my space", and providing space to the other members at home and also in the work life to co-own and build up mutuality.
1. Working on one's own life goals and values for making life worth living for oneself and others.
1. Examine the issues of gender discrimination.

The program was conducted at a very religious place and it had a great impact on the results. It covered series of 12 labs (25 persons in a batch). Besides overall change in term of Quality of work life and work of the workers, some other new realities created by workers and supervisors are:

1. Forming their own internal union and saying goodbye to the external militant union leaders with whom ATE had three consecutive settlements during their nine years of leadership, the workers came back to work with an internal union.
1. The unit of external union was also very graceful without any "win-lose" feeling
1. The development inputs for the workers were continued before and after the strike.

- 1 The workers accepted disciplinary action taken against some mischievous elements.
- 1 The new settlement of demands was made for four years instead of the normal conventional three-year period.
- 1 Workers who were on contractual jobs were regularized before strike and this had a very positive impact on the workers.

Location shifts by the management:

- 1 Respecting the choice of workers to decide their union without playing any role.
- 1 Making the workers and supervisors feel 'co-owners' through openness of communication including financial results and realities as well as transparency in behaviour.
- 1 Owing up mistakes by the management.
- 1 Creating meaningfulness in work and in relationship

* Excerpted from the papers presented in the Round Table Conference on "HRD for Workers and Support staff", 1996, organized by Academy of Human Resource Development (Jain, Pareek and Jomon, 1996. For more examples, refer to the book).

9.8 COUNSELLING

Counselling is an important mechanism to provide timely guidance to workers and help them learn from their own mistakes. The counselling effort needs to be well meaning and serious and it is preferable if it is supported by by trained counsellors. Timely counselling can help avoid many conflict situations and eventually help workers both in their personal and job life. Many Indian companies have trained counsellors, who work full-time and extend counselling services to workers. Larsen and Toubro, and Voltas are two companies in the private sector who have taken significant initiative in this direction.

Counselling services may be extended to the personal and family life of workers. Counselling to help a worker to plan the careers of his own children can have high motivational value.

Box 2. Case Study

Handling Alcoholic Employees — The Voltas Experience

Voltas is one of the largest corporations, in the private sector in India. The Voltas management believes that alcoholism amongst employees is to be viewed in a broader perspective and any management should be concerned about it. The Voltas believe that alcoholism amongst the employees is a management problem.

The Company conducted an experiment in one of the manufacturing plants situated in the industrial belt in Thane to tackle the problems of alcoholism amongst employees.

A survey undertaken in the year 1980-81 on 160 chronic absentees shed light on the various reasons for absenteeism. Alcoholism related issues caused 94 out of the 160 absenteeism cases.

With the increasing realisation that alcoholism is an illness and not a moral problem—that alcoholism can be treated and as such is worth treating; together with the revealing figures that approximately 60% of absentees are alcoholics, it was felt essential to look at alcoholic employees in the light of the new knowledge. Accordingly a recovery and rehabilitation programme in Thane plant was introduced.

In-company Programme for Rehabilitation: The programme introduced by the Company had three important aspects

- 1) An individual approach or counselling of the individual alcoholic.

- 2) A group approach or a meeting of the alcoholic employees held once a week.
- 3) Educating the rest of the working population regarding the alcoholism.

Besides, active involvement of alcoholic family was sought. Help was taken from voluntary organisations like Alcoholic Anonymous (AA).

Recovery Programme: The programme conducted has been effective. Its acceptance, the response given and the positive results in next few years have given an indication of its success and source of encouragement. The following figures show response to counselling and the recovery programme by the 94 detected employees with drinking problems:

Improved in Sobriety and attendance-	Improved in Sobriety—Showed good attendance— then deteriorated	Not improve	Total
34	9	51	94

The company feels that this approach of rehabilitation of alcoholism on the job itself is an element of wisdom and has served a number of purposes.

9.9 ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS

Traditionally unions have played a role as protest organisations on behalf of workers. Unions in India have mainly confined their activities to monetary issues like wages and service conditions and have generally ignored the issues relating to development of workers making them ‘grievance-oriented’ rather than development-oriented.

The recent initiative taken by many employers/corporate HRD executives in the HRD for workers are received with cautious skepticism. The fears and anxiety of trade unions seems to be on account of the following:

- 1 Sincere and genuine HRD efforts for workers is likely to create a contented, satisfied, self-dependent and assertive worker, perhaps capable of looking after his interests. Unions, which have generally thrived on dissatisfaction, dependence and weaknesses of the workers, are likely to be out of business of unionism. Once management is able to directly communicate with the workers, it is further likely that the trade unions’ impact will be diluted.
- 1 Workers’ development may lead to his need to assert and participate in the union affairs. This itself may not be in the interest of the union leadership who want to hang-on to positions of power and authority.
- 1 Involvement in HRD programmes may require their becoming an active collaborator with the management in problem solving on such themes like work ethic, productivity improvement, introduction of new technology and its implications, training and development etc. Too much identification with the management itself may invite criticism from the rank and file. It may also reduce their bargaining power with the management while discussing “Bread and Butter” issues. .
- 1 Experiences from USA where many companies use progressive personnel policies and HRD to keep unions out from the companies, itself contribute to the anxiety and fears of the union about possible shift of workers loyalty from unions to management.

In any HRD effort for workers, it is very necessary to deal with the above fears, anxieties and dilemmas of the trade unions. Continuous interaction with trade unions at the HRD planning stage itself is required. It is necessary that some basic minimum trust should exist between trade unions and employers before trade unions accept

HRD and willingly participate in any HRD programme and policies for workers. They need to be given the confidence that HRD initiatives for workers do not aim at destabilising union movement.

Today trade union movement in the country is undergoing metamorphic changes. An important but less visible challenge to trade unions lies in the need to respond to the diverse sets of expectations and aspirations of workers. They are trapped between the factors calling for change and forces opposing the change. Unions can play important roles in setting the stage, designing and participating in HRD programmes. Over a period, these efforts are likely to build higher involvement of the employees, create more satisfaction and give expression to workers' aspirations. Some of the developmental roles that unions can play are mentioned below:

Initiation of HRD

Unions should focus attention on the workers' development. In fact unions should be HRD Departments for the workers and the union leader as HRD Manager. When developmental climate prevails in a company, unions can play an effective role by becoming a partner in such an endeavour. Where developmental climate does not exist or management is apathetic to workers' development, unions should take up HRD issues relating to workers with the management. It is not necessary that initiative should always come from management.

Unions can play a proactive role and be a partner with HRD in communicating with workers about the organisation's mission, goals etc., in counseling workers about personal and work issues, in education and training, family and vocational guidance and welfare activities.

Textile Labour Association (TLA), Ahmedabad is an excellent example amongst Indian trade unions to start many innovative schemes like workers co-operatives, workers bank, nursery schools for the children of workers, vocational skills to the children of workers etc., which help in the overall development of workers.

In order to play the above roles effectively, trade unions will need to professionalise. This will mean HRD within the unions. Traditionally unions have been focusing on the economic well-being of the workers and have built certain roles to achieve that. The new developmental role will require several new skills in the union leadership to enable them to play these roles. These roles are depicted as under:

Table 3: Role of Trade Unions (Traditional & Development)

Traditional Role Focus: Economic Well-being	Developmental Role Focus: Psychological & Social Well-being
Bargainer	Explorer
Negotiator	Trainer
Fire fighter	Educator
Agitator	Counsellor
Grievance Handler	Collaborator
Game-player	Motivator
Black-mailer	Facilitator
Crisis dealer	Communicator

The following box provides details of developmental role played by Textile Labour Association (TLA), Ahmedabad. The TLA's case is one of professionalisation of a trade union and developing internal competences to deal with workers developmental problems.

HRD Role by Union -TLA's Experience

The Textile Labour Association (TLA), Ahmedabad, was founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920. It has been nurtured by eminent freedom fighters and trade-unionists like Khandubhai Desai, Gulzari Lal Nanda and S.R. Vasavada. The overall objectives of TLA is to cultivate internal strength among workers by improving quality of life by getting adequate wages while serving the industry to the best of one capacity.

In an interview Mr. Naveen Chand Barot, President, TLA explained the philosophy of TLA and various activities undertaken by TLA for "Workers overall development" or as he puts it "Developing Man in the Worker" According to him.

TLA is not merely a trade union but a Social Organisation. We believe in peace and harmony at any cost. TLA undertakes A to Z activities aimed at workers- educational, vocational, social and psychological development. TLA's 200 full-time employees and equal number of part time workers help in conducting number of activities for workers. Some of the TLA's activities are:

1) Education and Training

TLA runs 35 Nursery classes in labour areas and also maintains 60 Libraries and 40 Reading rooms. It has its own printing press. The Vasavada Labour Institute conducts number of training programmes for Trade Union leaders and Activists. A need to educate Women and Children was felt as early as in 1920s.

Female teachers are trained to set-up nursery schools in their areas. Apart from this, TLA runs classes in knitting, sewing, and TV/Radio repair. Interestingly a Worker's son teaches TV repairing. So far, about 250 of workers' sons and daughters have become Engineers/Doctors with the effort of TLA in one way or the other. TLA also runs the Girl's Hostel to accommodate over 100 girls of SC/ST community.

2) Health and Welfare of Women

TLA runs a maternity home. About 150 patients are attended everyday. In the area of family welfare, recently TLA initiated a project funded by UNFPA through International Labour Organisation on family welfare, status of women, health of children etc. Seminars and Workshops on problems of menstruation, children care, fertility, menopause etc. are arranged to educate women.

In TLA, there are 3000 shop stewards but only 74 women shop stewards representing 3000 women members. Considering the need of these women members, TLA has set-up a special section to settle grievances of women workers. Mrs. Ela Bhatt organised self-employed women and formed self-employed women's association known as SEW A, Women's cooperative Bank called SEW A Bank and Mahila Seva Trust.

Apart from the above, the TLA runs a co-operative Bank with a paid up capital of about 15 lakhs.

9.10 OPERATIONALISING HRD FOR WORKERS

In the national round table conference on the theme of HRD for Workers and support staff held in November 1995, Syndicate groups came up with the following recommendations for operationalising HRD for workers effectively (Jain, Pareek and Jomon, 1996)

- 1 Top Management commitment
- 1 Middle Management involvement
- 1 Training Needs Assessment
- 1 Written down policy

- 1 Open communication
- 1 Periodic review, monitoring, feedback and evaluation
- 1 Continuous education and follow up strategies
- 1 Extension of training programs to families.

On the basis of the above discussions, it is proposed that the following initiatives need to be taken by management for initiating HRD for workers:

- 1) Creating a developmental climate.
- 2) Developing developmental style of leadership amongst all the managers.
- 3) Legitimising the role of unions in traditionally ‘non bargainable’ issues.
- 4) Continuous interaction and dialogue with unions in identifying and prioritising areas of HRD for workers.
- 5) Developing consensus on HRD goals.
- 6) Widely communicating HRD action areas and seeking involvement of larger group of people.
- 7) Institutionalising HRD intention by creating appropriate machinery.

9.11 SUMMARY

“It is not the strongest nor most intelligent of the species that survive; it is the one most adaptable to change”- Charles Darwin.

HRD in an organisation has its two prominent foci: HRD for workers and HRD for managers. HR interventions made for one is likely to influence the another. There needs to be a pre-consideration about the possible effects on each other before implementing any action program. Though the above concepts and mechanisms have a wide coverage, they are not comprehensive. Many other mechanisms and interventions are also available which are: Quality of work life, Guidance and Counselling, Education and Training, Grievance handling, Welfare schemes (schools for the children of workers, workers’ cooperative banks, medical aids and services etc. The power-sharing mechanisms and techniques, integration of IR and HRD, and the practice of cross-functional teams are a presage to a miracle to come –SYNERGY.

HRD is a way of life for any organization. ***To imagine business without workers will be a preposterous thought. In addition, to imagine workers working together without HRD will be more or less again preposterous.*** HRD for Workers is a dimension of new business model that makes workers to feel recognized and grow, in a culture of open interaction and learning.

9.12 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

- 1) “HRD for Workers was an obscured topic in the past”. Discuss.
- 2) Explore the importance of presenting HRD for Workers as a separate concept.
- 3) What beliefs and values will support HRD for workers in organisations.
- 4) Discuss the rationale behind incorporating Cross-functional teams in HRD for Workers.
- 5) “Differences are opportunities” Explain in the context of HRD for Workers.
- 6) Discuss how Reorganisation of work contributes to HRD for Workers.

9.13 FURTHER READINGS

1. Hackman J Richard & Oldham R Greg, Work Redesign, Addison Wesley Longman, Bound in India by Thompson Press, 1998.
2. Huber P George & Glick H, Organisational Change and Redesign, Oxford University Press, New York, 1995.
3. Jain Uma, Pareek Udai and M.G Jomon; Road to Empowerment: HRD Experiences with Workers and Support staff, Academy of Human Resources Development, Ahmedabad, 1996.
5. Pareek Udai and Sisodia V, HRD in the New Millennium, Tata McGraw-Hill publishing Ltd., New Delhi, 1999.
6. Sadler Philip, Designing Organizations, The Foundation for Excellence, Kogan Page India Private Limited, New Delhi-110002
7. Stoner F James, Freeman Edward and JR. Gilbert A Daniel; Management, Prentice-Hall of India Private limited, New Delhi, 1996
8. Electronic sources:
 - 1 Generations at Work: Boomers, GenXers & Nexters, www.leadershipadvantage.com
 - 1 Bellinger Robert, The Multi-Generational Workforce: Can You Foretell How You'll Fare in the Changing Economy by Your Age?, <http://www.generations.com/>
 - 1 Lynne C. Lancaster and David Stillman, www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m3495/is_6_47/ai_87461026
 - 1 Archieves, 2003-2004, Employment Digest, www.employmentdigest.com
 - 1 What is Cross-functional team, www.humtech.com/opm/grtl/ols/ols3.cfm
 - 1 Cross functional teams, www.1000ventures.com/business_guide/
 - 1 Cross functional team, www.fact-index.com/c/cr/cross_functional_team.html
 - 1 Michael Maccoby, Building Cross-Functional Capability: What It Really Takes www.maccoby.com/Articles/BuildingCrossFunctional.html
 - 1 Asser Linbeck & Dennis J Snower, Multi-task learning and Reorganization of Work, April 1999, Germany, <http://ideas.repec.org/a/ucp/jlabec/v18y2000i3p353-76.html>
 - 1 Work Redesign, www.workforceone.org.sg/workredesign/html
 - 1 Jose Ignacio Gil, "Reorganizing Work or Decentralizing production. Flexibilization of working Conditions –or deterioration?", Metal workers' Federation, CCOO, Spain, 2000.