

A Study on the Training and Development Practices of the Sick Public Sector Industrial Units in Kerala

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Abstract

The efficient management of human resources is one of the keys to the excellent performance of an organisation. Unfortunately, this proven fact is often entirely neglected or played down in the management of public sector undertakings in our country, especially in Kerala. The overall performance of the public sector enterprises has not measured up to the expectations of the Government, policy makers and of course the people. Out of 39 public enterprises under Industries Department, 14 are running on huge accumulated losses. The present study was aimed at assessing the effectiveness of training and development practices prevailing in the sick industrial public enterprises in Kerala and to suggest reasonable solutions. A total of 618 respondents; 436 workers and 182 managers were selected and a questionnaire was applied to obtain the responses. The study showed that there exist a significant difference between the opinions of both of these categories and that a system for measuring the effectiveness of the training programmes is almost absent in these units.

Key words

Public Enterprises, Kerala State, Industrial sickness, Human Resource Management, Training, Development, Infrastructure

Introduction

Even though India is the second fastest and the fourth largest economy in the world, we are unable to meet the burgeoning demand and supply of basic, social and economic infrastructure services. Infrastructure shortage is a constraining factor in sustaining and expanding India's economic growth. The government of India is now raising the limit of investments in infrastructure so that we can experience an exponential growth in this sector. The infrastructure sector in India is largely dominated by public sector undertakings and department-owned enterprises. But the overall performance of the public sector enterprises (P.Es) has not measured up to the expectations of the Government, policy makers and of course the people. Managing the human resources has become a dynamic and challenging task of industrial organizations, all the more so in the case of sick public sector units. It is often debated whether poor management of human resources is the root cause of the ailing public sector undertakings in India especially in Kerala. Out of 39 public enterprises under the Industries Department, 14 are running on huge accumulated losses. Poor training and development practices are one of the major reasons for this sickness. The present study aimed at assessing the effectiveness of training and development practices

prevailing in the sick industrial public enterprises in Kerala and to suggest reasonable solutions.

In the present era of privatization and internationalization, the business can compete only when the employee performance is at par with the best in the industry. In order to do so, corporate houses conduct training programmes for their employees to update their skills and enhance their efficiency and working performance. The purpose of training is basically to bridge the gap between job requirements and current competence for an employee. Training is also aimed at improving the behavior and performance of a person. The need for training and development is determined by the employee's performance, deficiency, computed as follows:

$$\text{Training and development need} = \text{Standard performance} - \text{Actual performance.}$$

Training is no doubt expensive, but the benefits often exceed the cost. But if the quality of training is poor it practically serves no purpose.

Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of the study is to assess the effectiveness of training and development practices existing in the sick public sector units under the Department of Industries, Kerala. On the basis of the theoretical perspectives, the following specific objectives were developed.

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- 1) To study the present training and development practices of sick public sector industrial units in Kerala.
- 2) To understand and analyse the views of the personnel at different levels on the existing training and development practices, of these sick public sector industrial units in Kerala.
- 3) To give suggestions on the basis of the findings and conclusions of the study.

Hypotheses

Based on the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were formulated.

- 1) There is no significant difference between the opinions of the two categories of employees regarding the training programmes followed in the sick public sector units in Kerala.
- 2) A system for measuring the effectiveness of training programmes is almost absent in the sick P.Es.

Variables used for the Study

- 1) Attendance in training.
- 2) Usefulness of training.
- 3) Evaluation of training.
- 4) Type of training demanded by employees.
- 5) The Presence of cross training.

Methodology

This study was based on descriptive research, which is aimed at assessing the effectiveness of training and development practices prevailing in the sick industrial public enterprises in Kerala. Both primary and secondary data were collected for the study. The primary data was collected using a questionnaire.

Selection of Sample

There are 14 sick public sector industrial units in Kerala as per the review of public enterprises published by the Bureau of Public Enterprises in Kerala (BPE) (2010). Out of these, seven units were considered for the study. Convenience sampling method is applied in selecting the sample. The population comprises of 2180 workers and 455 managers. From this, 436 workers (20% of the total) and 182 managers (40% of the total managers) were selected. Thus, 618 respondents were selected.

Tools applied for Analysis

For the purpose of analysis, statistical tools such as averages, percentages and chi-square test, were used. The chi-square test was applied to examine the significance of variation in the opinion of different categories of employees in the P.Es.

Views of employees on different aspects of training and development policy

Training Received

Training and development is essential to workers, supervisors, managers and executives in order to enhance their efficiency and acquire maturity of thoughts and action. No organisation can make technological breakthroughs without well-trained personnel. So a well planned and well executed training programme is essential. Table 1 clearly shows that there exists a significant difference of opinion between workers and managers regarding the training they had received. The chi-square result also supports it.

Table 1: Training Received: Category-wise Analysis

Opinion Status Category of Employees	Training Received		Training not Received		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Workers	338	77.5	98.	22.5	436	100
Managers	154	84.6	28	15.4	182	100
Total	492	79.6	126	20.4	618	100

Source: Primary data. Chi-Square (df=1) = 3.979, p-value = 0.046, Significant at 5% level

Usefulness of Training

Almost all companies provide training to employees. It is very much essential that the training should be useful to them and to fill the gap between the efficiency needed and efficiency possessed by the employees. P.Es in Kerala also provides training to employees in order to increase their efficiency. A category-wise, cross tabulation is made on the opinions of workers and managers regarding the usefulness of training they had received. Table 2 reveals a significant difference between their

opinions, even though the majority of both categories support the usefulness of training they had received. It is also important to note that, 15.6 per cent of the workers and 17.6 per cent of the managers have 'no opinion' about the usefulness of the training received. So, the hypothesis that 'there is no significant difference between the opinions of the two categories of employees regarding the training programmes followed in the P.Es.' is rejected.

Table 2: Usefulness of Training: Category- wise Analysis

Opinion Status	Very useful		Useful		Not useful		Not at all useful		No opinion		Total	
Category of Employee	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Worker	98	22.5	232	53.2	24	5.5	14	3.2	68	15.6	436	100
Manager	58	31.9	88	48.4	4	2.2	0	0	32	17.6	182	100
Total	156	25.2	320	51.8	28	4.5	14	2.3	100	16.2	618	100

Source: Primary data. Chi-Square ($df=3$) = 8.275, p -value = 0.041, Significant at 5% level

Evaluation of Training Programme

Organizations regularly notice a gap between the skills employees learn through training and their ability to demonstrate them. In order to reduce this gap to the lowest level, every training programme needs to be evaluated periodically. Therefore, it is the duty of the management to make a comparative study of the actual results obtained with that of the pre fixed standard. Here, an attempt is made to know whether there is any system in operation to evaluate the training

programme in public sector enterprises. The category wise analysis as per table 3 shows a significant difference of opinion regarding the evaluation of training programme even though the majority (83.9% of workers and 66.5% of managers) of both categories support that there is no system to evaluate training in P.Es in Kerala. Hence the hypothesis that a system for measuring the effectiveness of training programmes is almost absent in the sick public enterprises in Kerala, is accepted.

Table 3: Evaluation of Training Programme: Category-wise Analysis

Opinion Status	System for Measuring Effectiveness of Training				No knowledge		Total	
	Present		Not Present					
Category of Employee	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Workers	12	2.8	366	83.9	58	13.3	436	100
Managers	41	22.5	121	66.5	20	11.0	182	100
Total	53	8.6	487	78.8	78	12.6	618	100

Source: Primary data, Chi-Square ($df=2$) =64.062, p -value = 0.001, Significant at 5% level

Type of training demanded by employees

The success of an organisation depends largely on a sound training strategy. In the face of continuous technological innovations, higher level of knowledge, skill and its application are crucial resources that can be mobilized only by training. The attitude and aptitude of employees are changing day-by-day because of the changes in the society. So the type of training they need is also fast changing. Therefore the company should always be ready to provide the training needed by the

employees and which also ultimately benefits the organisation. As Table 4 shows, the priority preferences of the workers and the managers are different. Half of the workers demanded training on interpersonal relations. They gave a second preference to training on safety measures. But 61.5 per cent of the managers demanded training on the latest development in management. This shows a significant difference between the opinions of these two categories of employees.

Table 4: Type of Training demanded by the Employees: Category wise Analysis

Opinion Status	Use of safety measures		Training on interpersonal relationship		Training on latest development in mgt.		Any other		Not applicable		Total	
Category of Employee	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Worker	106	24.3	216	49.5	52	11.9	18	4.1	44	10.1	436	100
Manager	4	2.2	46	25.3	112	61.5	8	4.4	12	6.6	182	100
Total	110	17.8	262	42.4	164	26.5	26	4.2	56	9.1	618	100

Source: Primary data. Chi-Square ($df=4$) = 173.962, p -value = 0.00, Significant at 5% level

Cross-Training

Cross-training equips both the employer and the employee with the skills necessary to be able to cover up for the other's absence. Cross-training and

job rotation provide employees with an opportunity to rediscover their interests and abilities and explore options. It also improves job security because, during layoffs, employers would spare those who

can work in different roles according to the situation. It is an occasion to beat monotony, think differently, gain new perspectives and reinvigorate their enthusiasm in work. It helps the employee understand how his role is linked with the other functions. They will also understand what is expected of them and how their contribution adds up

to the company's effort to attain its goals. So, cross-training is essential for almost all companies. Table 5 shows that there exist a significant difference between the opinions of the managers and the workers on cross-training. 87.6 per cent of the workers and 64.3 per cent of the managers supports that there is no cross-training in their organisation.

Table 5: Cross-Training: Category wise Analysis

Opinion Status	Presence of Cross-Training				No knowledge		Total	
	Present		Not Present					
Category of Employee	No:	%	No:	%	No:	%	No:	%
Workers	28	6.4	382	87.6	26	6.0	436	100
Managers	33	18.1	117	64.3	32	17.6	182	100
Total	61	9.9	499	80.7	58	9.4	618	100

Source: Primary data, Chi-Square (df=2) =44.962, p-value = 0.001, Significant at 5% level.

Major findings of the study

As far as managers were concerned, 85 percent of them received training from the Company. Fifteen percent did not receive any type of training. Even though majority of both the categories support that the training is useful, there exist a significant difference in their opinions. It is important that, 15.6 percent of the workers and 17.6 percent of the managers are having 'no opinion' about the usefulness of the training. Regarding the evaluation of the training programmes, most of the workers (84%) opined that an effective and systematic evaluation of training is absent in P.Es in Kerala. Similar to the opinion of the workers, majority of the managers also support that there is no system for evaluating the training programmes.

Public Enterprises in Kerala provide outdated and stereo typed methods of training to its employees. So a number of other types of training like, training in interpersonal relationships, use of safety measures, use of computers and yoga practices etc. are demanded by the workers. The workers gave first preference to training on interpersonal relationship. Similar to workers, managers also demanded certain types of training for improving their efficiency. They assigned first preference to training on the latest development in management and then to training on interpersonal relations. Category wise analysis shows a significant difference in their opinions. The responses of both the categories revealed that a system of cross-training is not followed in the public enterprises in Kerala.

Suggestions

Management should give more attention for continuous training and its evaluation. Conduct exit interviews from people who quit the unit to find reasons why people leave the unit. The management of P.Es should change its traditional approach towards training. They should take their own initiatives in this

area rather than simply following the guideline of BPE. There is a need to arrange programmes of diverse nature like interpersonal relationships, health and environment, technical skills, computer training, counseling etc. to suit the requirements of employees. Employees should be duly kept informed of the latest developments in the tools and techniques of the management. Cross-training should be introduced in all the P.Es at the earliest, as the majority of the youth is multi talented and have the capacity to learn any type of job. Adequate provision for executive development and training should be made. Consider training as an investment rather than a cost.

Conclusion

It is evident from the analysis that the P.Es provides outdated and stereo typed methods of training to its employees. Training is imparted routinely and also for the fulfillment of the fancy figures, without proper assessment of its impact on the organization. It is quite common that training activities of the selected units are largely evaluated on the basis of the number of training programmes conducted per year or the number of training programmes per employee per annum, which does not reflect quality of the training programmes. In addition to quantity, quality needs are to be taken as a measure of evaluating training activities of any organization. To investigate the effectiveness of training programmes, proper evaluation of training is essential. Unfortunately, an effective and systematic evaluation of training is absent in the state level public enterprises. It is also noticed that the management follows a traditional approach towards the methods of training. Employees demanded training on different areas like use of safety measures, health and environment, technical skills, computer training, counseling, training on interpersonal relationship, training on the latest development in management etc.

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