TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FUNCTIONS PRACTICED BY BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS: A STUDY IN EASTERN INDIA

J. K. Das*
R. K. Chaudhuri**

[Quality of training and development (T&D) endeavors in organizations is determined and measured by the efficacy of its several attributes such as: needs analysis, policy, plans, methods, and evaluation, besides the sustenance from management. This study appreciates on some of the deficiencies in the T&D efforts in the areas of needs analysis, implementation and evaluation at Indian businesses and compares the persistence of the infirmities in the public sector undertakings (PSUs) and private enterprises. The findings present a poor state of affairs in the PSUs as regards T&D. The study suggests some changes in the organizational processes to enhance the quality of T&D initiatives in businesses in India.

***Keywords:** India, Neoliberalism, Informalisation, Primitive Accumulation, Precarious Work, Deproletarianisation.]*

Introduction

Human Resources (HR) are crucial for growth and survival of an organization (Craig, 1967). An organization may fail to attain goal if its HR are not effective due to a gap between existing skills, attitude or knowledge and desired level of skills, attitude or knowledge for effective working.

It is required to tune the people to match the need. Planned training and development (T&D) programs aim to bridge this gap. Training is the systematic development of the attitude, knowledge, skill and behavior pattern required by an individual in order to perform adequately a given task or job (Slowman, 1994). Training is essential necessity for the development of human resources to learn new skills and knowledge, which would lead to higher effectiveness at work (Anderson, 1993). Planning for T&D addresses some organizational variables such as number of employees, training policy, training budget, identification of training needs, program design, methods of imparting training, evaluation of training programs, number of employees to be trained, expected benefit**s** of training, and pre-training evaluation. As regards participants, few of the variables are like participants' age, education, experience, need of training, programs attended, awareness of the need for training, Usefulness of training programs,

* Professor, Department of Commerce, University of Calcutta, E-mail: jadabkdas@gmail.com
** Management Consultant, E-mail: rkchau@rediffmail.com

benefits derived from training programs. Organizations are thus concerned with the changes in the overall shape of the enterprise on the basis of its present and likely future resources and opportunities that may be available to it. It is, therefore, necessary to monitor activities of the organization on a continuous basis and make decisions systematically and measure the actual results against expectations through organized feedback.

Conceptual Framework

The indispensability of sustained development of the organization is to face with the today's challenges. Business organizations operate in a dynamic and uncertain business environment. Therefore efforts are required to be made to attain stable operating condition in such situations and reduce the risk involved in ever increasing competition. This calls for developing and training of their employees. In competitive and ever changing situations, effective T&D programs are must for success of any organization (Jashapara, 1993; Johnson, 1992; Donnelly, 1987; Banham et al., 1987; Bristow and Scarth, 1980; etc.).

Measures of training needs identification are based on three factors:

(a) Organization Analysis: A systematic effort to understand exactly where the training is needed. It involves study of organizational structure, objectives, human resources and future plans to identify the deficiency to be rectified.

(b) Task Analysis: An examination of a task and its components, for indication of skills, knowledge and attitude, and training required to attain acceptable standard.

(c) Man Analysis: A focus on individual employee, his abilities, and inputs required for performance and career planning to identify training needed.

Traditional approach to a system of training tends to thrust on the following four phases: (i) Training needs analysis, where *training needs* is defined as the gap between actual and required human performance at work. The gap could be in areas like knowledge, skill, technique, attitude and judgment. (Buckley and Caple, 2005). *Training needs analysis* refers to the process of identification of such needs for the individuals proposed to undergo training with an objective to improve upon existing level of knowledge and skill, or to attain change in attitude in work situations (Boydell and Leary, 1996). (ii) Design and development stage, (iii) Implementation stage and (iv) Evaluation of the outcomes of the program and the extent of attainment of the objectives upon completion of the training programs. Systematic methods ensure that randomness is reduced and that learning and behavioral change occurs in a structured format. This leads to hierarchy of training outcomes. Phillips (1987) and Kirkpatrick (2002) suggested that in order to monitor in-house program, an evaluator examines all following phases in program planning and implementation: Assessment of *training needs*, formulation of *training objectives*, allocation of resources to the program, and preparation of training sessions.

The general benefits that are expected to be derived from training programs may be described as follows: High job satisfaction, higher level of employee motivation, efficiency in performance resulting in financial gain, right capacity to adopt new technologies and methods, adoption of innovation in strategies and products, lower employee turnover, enhancement of corporate image, and appropriate handling of risk situations.

Other benefits expected from training programs are to keep the employees motivated and acquainted with emerging industry trends that are essential to achieve organizational goals and competitive success. Employees do benefit by learning new skills and become valued assets (Dave, 1970). Effective T&D practices are likely to enable the HR to overcome weaknesses, exploit opportunities, and meet threats in acute competition.

Training is concerned with acquisition of knowledge, skill and attitude to enable individuals to make effective contribution in attainment of goals of the organizations. Training and development function in an organization occupies a unique role in integrated business operation. It is related to the business plan and the organizational structure of the enterprise. This determines the desired competencies of the HR. It is then matched with the availability of the internal human resource.

The gap between demand and availability is filled up by acquisition. The transfer and promotion is then considered to fill in the positions resulting in increased need of HR.

The acquisition of employees with potential competencies, by way of recruitment or promotion or transfer, is followed by performance appraisal and review of the situation is made to ascertain the degree of attainment of the objectives of the business organization. When an individual is inducted, transferred or promoted, the employee is expected to a process of training for appropriate match to the job on placement.

The steps that are required to be followed for effective T&D functions in chronological order are: development of objectives of T&D, design of T&D programs, selection of methods of training, design of methods evaluation, conduct of training programs, and measurements of results.

This study has a sample of 19 organizations, of which 9 are PSUs. The business areas of the organizations are advertising, banking, higher education & vocational training, accounting & auditing, consultancy services, engineering procurement & construction, defence hardware, print & television media, insurance agency, multi-product company, oil exploration & refining, manufacturing industry, social security, and software development.

Objective and Methodology

To ascertain if the training programs drawn and conducted by different organizations considered for study satisfy the training needs of individuals as well as of the organizations. In the process it

is necessary to assess the quantum of benefits that are derived from the training programs by both the individuals and the enterprises.

More specifically the study attempts to find:

- The process of identifying the corporate training needs in functional and behavioral aspects in respect of its employees

- The process of designing of training programs by management

- How the trainees are selected for a particular program

- The methodology of imparting training programs and

- Evaluation of training programs in relation to training objectives and effectiveness of programs

The present study is an empirical and exploratory in nature. The stratified sampling technique has been used in this study with size of organizations by employees' strength as the parameter of stratification. Again quota sampling within stratum provide representative miniature population. In this study total number of sample organizations considered is 19, 668 sample trainees are selected from 266 training programs. Male and female trainees are respectively 554 and 114. The study period is 2014-15.

Data Analysis and Findings

The study reveals that in various business organizations training programs are conducted during the calendar year, in general, are drawn at the annual meeting of the apex body with the representatives of Regional Advisory Committee. Thereon, the decisions at the respective training centers are taken on different programs. The study finds that the schedule of the T&D programs is forwarded to all heads of departments to nominate few participants for the different programs designed to be conducted by the respective training units. Besides, annual programs are drawn providing slots (number of participants) for different units in various programs. If slots are under-utilized, then explanations are sought from the respective heads of departments. This forces the head of department to nominate candidates even if there is no need for the candidate to undergo such training.

The following table describes the number of sample organizations that have been considered in the study.

Table 1: Size of Organizations by Employees Strength

Size of Organization (Employees Strength)	Number of Organizations	%
Small size (less than 500)	6	31.6
Medium size (500 to 2500)	6	31.6
Large size (more than 2500)	7	36.8
Total	**19**	**100.0**

As regards the training needs and selection of participants, the study is shows that there are no well-defined and rigid criteria for selection of the trainees. Training needs identification methods that are being practiced as observed in the study are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Methods Adopted for Training Programs by the Organizations

Training Methods	Number of Programs	%
Performance appraisal	76	28.58
On- the-Job observation	38	14.28
Reports from superiors	26	9.77
Interviews and discussion	126	47.37
Total	**266**	**100.00**

The study shows that in general the method of selection of trainees is found to be largely arbitrary at the discretion of the head of the department and not based on training needs of employees. Training need analysis is the beginning of training function. Trainees responded that, in almost 50 % of cases, their needs were ascertained by interviews and discussions is actually discretion of HOD and is apparently not based on any scientific method. However, a considerable numbers of trainees are selected on the basis of shortcomings observed in their performance appraisal. It is estimated that only few trainees were selected on the basis of reports from their supervisors.

The different methods of imparting T&D program that are practiced by the various organizations are illustrated in the Table 3 below.

Table 3: Methods of Delivery of Programs

Delivery Methods	Number of Programs	%
Lecture method	165	62.03
On-the-Job training	38	14.28
Workshop method	19	7.14
Case study method	34	12.78
Role play	10	3.77
Total	**266**	**100.00**

The above table reveals that in lecture method, which can be organized easily, reach maximum number of participants in a program, at the least cost of implementation, is adopted on most occasions.

The educational profiles of the participants of different training programs being attended by them are shown in following table.

Table 4: Educational Background of Trainees

Educational Background	Male	Female	Total	%
Higher Secondary	48	6	54	8.08
Graduate	294	52	346	51.80
Post Graduate	84	26	110	16.46
Professional Degree	128	30	158	33.66
Total	**554**	**114**	**668**	**100.00**

The age distribution of the participants of different training programs is shown in following table below:

Table 5: Age Distribution of Trainees

Age Group (Yrs)	No. of Trainees	%
20 – 25	39	5.8
25 – 30	77	11.6
30 – 35	97	14.5
35 – 40	93	14.0
40 – 45	114	17.1
45 – 50	106	15.9
Above 50	149	21.1
Total	**668**	**100.0**

Table 6 below shows the distribution of job experience (in years) of trainees:

Table 6: Working Experience of Trainees

Experience(in Yrs)	No. of Trainees	%
1 - 5	91	13.6
5 - 10	110	16.5
10 - 15	119	17.8
15 - 20	106	15.9
20 - 25	105	15.7
25 - 30	76	11.4
Above 30	61	9.1
Total	**668**	**100**

The Table 6 reveals that trainees were drawn across all categories of experience; the proportion of senior employees with not less than 25 years of experience is insignificant. This is logically consistent as these groups are less likely to need training.

Table 7: Awareness about Needs of Training by Participants

Awareness	No. of Trainees	%
Aware	94	14.1
Not Aware	574	85.9
Total	**668**	**100.0**

The above table shows that the overwhelming majority of the trainees were not aware why they had been selected to undergo the training program.

Table 8 below gives the degree of usefulness as perceived by the trainees furnished by them in their feedback at the end of program at the respective training centers.

Table 8: Trainees' Perception of Degree of Usefulness of Programs

Perception	No. of Trainees	%
Highly Useful	281	42.1
Somewhat Useful	285	42.6
Little Useful	77	11.5
Not Useful at all	25	3.8
Total	**668**	**100.0**

The above response appears to be implusive and is considered to be higher than actual as the time spent at the training centers the participants feel comfortable, which is away from their usual stressful environment at the work place. The time they spend at the training centers are treated as paid holidays.

Post training evaluation of training programs at the respective departments on resumption of duty by respective participants is shown in the following table:

Table 9: Post Training Evaluation of Training Programs

Method of Evaluation	No. of Organizations	%
Observations on the job	9	47.4
Job performance reports	2	10.5
No evaluation at all	8	42.1
Total	**19**	**100.0**

Table 9 reveals that there is a substantive lackadaisical attitude towards evaluation of T&D process.

There are only a few in-house faculty members to teach on respective management functions. Usually visiting faculty members are invited to educate specialized areas of management in behavioral aspects or computer literacy. To effectively evaluate any T&D program, it requires ascertaining to what extent trainee's needs and objectives have been fulfilled, and how successful were the trainees in implementing their plans back at work. In this study we found that organizations fail to evaluate the outcome of the training.

Chi-square test for goodness of fit is applied to examine the usefulness of training program across age groups of trainees. The individual score 1 to 4 denotes responses for perceptions of usefulness with n_1 trainees responded not useful (1), n_2 responded little useful (2), n_3 responded somewhat useful (3) and n_4 responded highly useful (4) respectively for a particular age group. Then the *usefulness of training* for that particular age group is defined by the formula

$$(4n_4 + 3n_3 + 2n_2 + 1n_1) / (n_4 + n_3 + n_2 + n_1).$$

Table 10: Usefulness of T&D Programs as perceived across Age Groups

Age Group (in Yrs)	Usefulness	
	Observed Value	Expected Value
20 – 25	3.04	4
25 – 30	3.31	4
30 – 35	2.95	4
35 – 40	3.44	4
40 – 45	3.41	4
45 – 50	3.03	4
Above 50	3.26	4

The scale used for determination of usefulness of training programs is a continuum from highly useful rated at 4 through to not useful at all rated at 1. Hence the expected value of usefulness is taken as 4 for all the age groups. Computed chi-square = 1.14 (< 12.6 = table value with 5% level and 6 d.f.) implies that usefulness of training is indifferent across age groups.

The study reveals that seldom there exists any activity to ascertain the status of the proposed trainees in respect of their needs by way of pre-evaluation of the participants of different programs so that it becomes possible to determine the extent of benefit that is obtained from the program. The study reveals that that there is a considerable difference in the approach to T&D of employees between the sample organizations and remainder of them.

Issues and Concerns of Study

The study strongly emphasizes on the upper echelons of the management to exercise foresight to plan the objectives their organization with flexibility, initiate strategy and set programs to survive and grow. The training system covers: Organizational acceptance of training, organizational commitment to training, resources allocated, and the value attributed to training. Formulation of training plan and strategy is to determine 'how' and 'when' a particular training requirement would be met along with assessment and mobilization of resources needed. According to Blanchard and Thacker (1998) and Anjali (2007), training methods that are usually adopted by various organizations are predominantly based on lectures that address large numbers of participants. This method lacks in involvement of trainees. The other methods that are practiced are *group discussions,* on a particular topic, a group of trainees exchange opinion and enrich themselves. *Brain storming* – to draw out new ideas from participants having diverse experience. *Role play* method is a simulation of a real life situation. Here the

trainees are expected to experience real life situations, In c*ase study* method there is a scope to explore possible solutions for apparently real s*ensitivity training* is a way to learn the effects of behavior of other people on the participant and vice-versa. A m*anagement games* is suitable method to provide the trainees with management problems. This is also close to real life events; *On-the-job – learning* takes place centering while performing tasks on the job. The trainee carries out task under supervision. In w*orkshop method* a small group carries out exchange of ideas on a given issue and in a s*eminar* the experts participate to discuss a given theme.

The responsibility of employee development, as far as private sector organizations are concerned, is vested with the respective supervisors, who instruct them by on the job method and employees have to learn by themselves for their survival. It is thus found that the process considers respective employees needs. The public sector organizations are having their own training and development centers, equipped with modern gadgets to conduct their training programs. On an average there are 50 to 60 programs during a year that concern both functional and behavioral aspects including computer literacy. There are number of training centers located at suitable places. Some of these are local centers while others are zonal or regional centers for different levels of employees. On being employed as trainees in the organizations, the recruits undergo induction training. Their performances are then monitored and employees are

sent for specific programs, if needed, to develop their respective skills in areas of weaknesses. Individual employees are selected on the basis of their performance to attend training programs conducted by different training agencies in areas of specialized functions. The process usually comprises two stages. Initially at the induction stage there is provision of 100% orientation and job requirements training. Departments concerned impart the instructions. *The green staff* is actually attached to some specific assignments.

Analysis of Interview revealed that supervisors are not inclined to relieve some employees who are interested to overcome their deficiencies by undergoing exposure in training programs if the former perceives the latter as reliable and believes that latter's absence may compromise with productivity. Instead those are found to be less effective are usually sent to attend training programs; despite that employees are expected to be hardly benefitted. There are instances of employees in the age group of 30 to 35 years have so far attended average 20 programs. Within an age group, there are some who have attended only 1 or 2 programs. Again, it was found that in the age group of 35 to 40 years some employees have attended 25 programs as against only 1 or 2 by some employees of the identical age group of the same organization.

In most cases, the participants appeared to appreciate the comforts of food and lodging, and pleasures of retail purchase and entertainment opportunities in the vicinity of the premises of the T&D

institution, more than the process of T&D. They usually provide a favorable feedback in the lure of such pleasures in the future. It is revealed from the study that as high as 85.9 % of the participants are not aware as to why they have been nominated to programs. Besides, feedback forms are at times not filled up by the participants at the end of programs properly. Apparently they are in hurry to leave in view of some personal needs. It is strange to find that some of them copy options in feedback form from other participants.

Concluding Remark

Corporate HR policy and practices are becoming more significant in view of acute competition. In today's competitive and ever changing environment, effective training and development programs occupies a very significant position in any organization. As regards this study, the feedback provided by attendees at T&D programs rather appears to be only a formality and not used to initiate any discernible action at the training centers. These are not sent to the departmental heads who nominated the participants to the programs. The training department maintains records of number of employees trained but most of the organizations surveyed have miniscule assessment of the propitious outcomes from the training programs. We are of the opinion that the success of the T&D programs may be determined and measured by the yardstick of objectives of the H.R Development initiatives, and thereafter adopt measures to derive maximum benefit from these programs.

An aspect that has stood out in the course of study that is the objects the several training programs are not identical. For instance, "In-house" T&Ds intend to posit as incentives whereas those at other organizations provide motivation to employees. Offshore T&D are considered as form of rewards.

In respect of evaluation of training programs conducted by different organizations, it is found that there is no systematic process to arrive at an effective measure. At present training programs thrust on computer literacy through hands on computer. Usually, these programs educate almost all levels of employees. Feed back that are provided by the respective participants at the end of training program are not used by respective units in proper order and that there is almost no review of such responses either in at the training center or at the concerned department. Some problems that are associated with training functions may be taken as the lack of clear objectives in organizations about training; inappropriate method of determining training needs; lack of suitable trainers as effective change agents; bias among some participants; passive and reluctant participants; inadequate micro-lab session at the start of program; stereotype design of the training programs; random decisions about durations of different sessions; need for course content updating; and lack of research activity (Kirkpatrick, 2002; Phillips,1987).

The executives at corporate level need to exercise foresight and plan the organization's objectives with flexibility,

initiate strategy and devise programs to survive and grow (Banham et al., 1987). The design of the training program needs to be contextual and customized to achieve specific effects. The methodology of imparting training has to be aligned with the requirements of *training needs*. It is quite possible that there could be a gap between the needs and the programs that are drawn by the organizations, and unless adequate precautions are taken at the time of both ascertaining the needs as well as designing of the program (Boydell and Leary, 1996). Therefore training programs should address to the aspects like responsiveness, commitment, awareness or accountability. It is the HR of the organization that would attain the goals (Jashapara, 1993; Johnson, 1992; Donelly, 1987). Thus we find that the human resources are required to be trained and developed properly to meet the challenges of the time.

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