



MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT & LEARNING ORGANISATIONS IN COMPLIMENTARY ROLES

Dr. Aisha M Sheriff*

K.V. Deepak**

Abstract: *There is a paradigm shift from traditional organisations focusing on need based training to modern learning organisations focusing on continuous development. Recent research has emphasised the need for management development which highlights the systematic process of growth & development by which managers develop abilities to manage. The paper emphasizes the role of management development in learning organisation which creates opportunities for its present & potential managers. Management Development aims to bring new ideas, debate issues, introduce innovative methods and offer practical case studies to managers worldwide.*

*Professor, Bahadur Institute of Management Sciences, DOSBA, Manasagangotri, University of Mysore.

**Research Scholar, Bahadur Institute of Management Sciences, DOSBA, Manasagangotri University of Mysore.



INTRODUCTION:

Learning organisations refers to a company that facilitates the learning of its managers and continuously transforms itself from playing the role of vocational training to learning organisations. This is a characteristic of an adaptive organization, i.e., an organization that is able to sense changes from its environment (both internal and external) and adapt accordingly. Management Development is about acquiring new knowledge, behaviours, skills, values or preferences. It may involve processing different types of information "The essence of management development is the organisation's ability to use the amazing mental aptitude of all its managers & executives to create the kind of processes that will improve its own." Management development facilitates Organisational learning where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continuously learning to learn together" The process of management development actively creates, captures, transfers, and mobilizes knowledge to enable it to adapt to the changing environment. The basic rationale for organizations is that in situations of rapid change only those that are flexible, adaptive and productive will excel. For this to happen, it is argued, organizations need to 'discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels.

LEARNING:

Human learning may occur as part of education or personal development. Organizations must be aware that learning is necessary before they can develop into a learning organization. Learning by individuals in an organizational context in the traditional domain of human resources, includes activities such as training, increasing skills, work experience, and formal education based on job requirement. It is an established fact that the success of an organization is based on knowledge of the people who work for it and their commitment. However, individual learning is only a prerequisite to learning organization. Others take it farther with continuous learning. Continuous learning throughout one's career has become essential to remain relevant at the workplace. Effective learning must also consider individuals potential i.e. natural abilities often hidden or suppressed, individual learning styles, and wholesome development of the member. In other words learning must take place at all levels & more importantly at the management level. Learning



seeks to develop people rather than merely being focused on a specific qualification or skill. Development requires a flexible approach on an individual basis rather than following a traditional, authoritarian, method that prescribes design, delivery and testing.

LEARNING ORGANIZATION

A learning organization actively promotes creating or acquiring knowledge, facilitates, and rewards collective learning. The key aspect of learning organization is the interaction that takes place among individuals. It is a social process, involving interactions among many individuals leading to well-informed decision making. Thus, a culture that learns and adapts as part of everyday working practices is essential. Learning organisations are those that have systems, mechanisms & processes in place and are used to continually enhance employee capabilities to achieve sustainable objectives - for themselves and the communities in which they participate. Learning organisations requires trust, consistency, attitude of inquest, high levels of communication, concern for interdependencies & interrelationships.

It's Need

Creation of a learning organisation is a an important philosophy in modern companies. Large multinationals to small ventures have emphasized the need for learning organizations. Considering the present macro environment it is becoming imperative that the survival of the organisation depends on how well the organisation is able to quickly learn & then innovate & transform into their work practices to perform better in a constantly changing environment. The need for learning organisation is felt when the company performs badly & it becomes obvious i.e., when the employees of the organisation are de-motivated & lack the required skills & knowledge to adjust to the new jobs and are unable to perform in accordance with the expectations. Learning organizations are required when idea generation is centralised only at the top management & the workforce simply follow orders which hinders the growth of the organization. Another major reason as to why learning organisation are imperative is when the communication system in the organisation is ineffective & identical problems occur over & over again.

Characteristics

Adopting a *learning approach* strategy is one of the characteristics of a learning organisation. This involves developing a policy for continuous learning through management development which includes review & research. *Participative policy* making helps the



organisation in generating ideas gained through management development programmes. This helps organisations to be more competitive as to face the external challenges. *MDPs* in learning organisations enhance the management information system creating value, self responsibility, resourcing & appraisal. Roles & *flexible matrix structures* are evolved in the learning climate of the organisation. Company to company learning & *intercompany learning* with collaborative working promotes the learning ethos & offer source of knowledge. This may include joint training, exchange, benchmarking & participative learning. Self development & improvement is possible when organisations transform themselves into learning organisations.

Management development initiatives Management development programmes play a vital role in development of a learning organisation. Positions of higher responsibilities call for a different attitudinal perspective and hence methodologies have to be developed which build this attitudinal perspective. In the fast changing world such a process will strengthen the organization further and makes the organization competitive. In the modern era, as globalization and competition increase learning systems have to change focus. With the knowledge economy enveloping the world, there is a paradigm shift from traditional training departments to flexible learning organizational structures. Work pressures are on the increase due to the increasing stresses and strains. Organizations now work with flexible teams and an employee is a member of different teams simultaneously. Managers' expectations in terms of responsibility as well as rewards have changed dramatically. Rewards come when the organizations starts identifying the relationship between the learning and bottom line performance. To prove this, the American Society For Training and Development Study reveals that 25% of the companies invested in training and development got back 24% of the higher profit margins, 50% enjoyed the Total Shareholder Return i.e. 86% higher than bottom half. When the company's spent \$680 per employee to get suitable training fetched 6% increase in Total Shareholders Return.

MDPs have gained impetus for their contributory role in individual as well as organizational learning. Management Development Programmes facilitate self-enrichment and survival in response to the chaos of the current workplace. Managers are realizing that the knowledge and skills they acquired in college are insufficient sometimes obsolete, and they need to constantly stay flexible, marketable, and competitive. Companies are as committed as ever



to management development; and skill development with the objective of achieving organizational growth while providing for personal growth. Management Development Programmes should be focused towards enabling a manager to perform his/her current job effectively and efficiently and its evaluation should be based on its contribution to current strategic goals. Management development programme involves identification of training needs & aligning the managers with the business needs of the organisation.

Monitoring and review of MDPs provides for systematic collection and analysis of information as the development programs progress. Monitoring helps to keep the MDP on track, and review helps management know when things are going wrong. Accuracy of actual task performances is measured and is compared with quality-benchmark. This creates awareness of the need and value of MDP to the organization. Reviewing the progress of learning implementation and success assessment necessitates the involvement of the senior management in meetings where decisions are made about future changes.

HRs facilitative role

Create a congenial environment: One of the first steps in creating a learning organization is to create the right environment in the organization. It is necessary for management to take on a new philosophy; to encourage openness, reflectivity and accept error and uncertainty. A more flexible, natural structure must be formed. By natural, it means a flatter structure which encourages innovations. The flatter structure should promote transfer of information between managers so as to create a more informed work force. The process of learning in the organisation should be accepted as self –discipline& management development in the company should be a planned process of learning & growth designed to bring behavioral changes among managers. Management development programmes must be structured for all round development covering needs of individual, team, organisation & society.

Inculcate Initiative & Leadership: Another important component for a learning organization is to inculcate initiative among the managers of the organization. Initiative is to set in motion, readiness to embark on bold new ventures & the first of a series of actions. Initiative is doing the right thing without being told. MDPs provide the right platform in creating awareness to equip oneself with required knowledge & skills.

According to The Center for Management and Organizational Effectiveness, the true meaning of leadership is "nothing more than the ability to anticipate, prepare, and get



positioned for the future. It is the ability to mobilize and focus resources and energy on things that make a difference in the future." Effective strategic leadership focuses on development that is long term rather than short term. Business today is a war of ideas and that power is no longer about position or personality. It's about who has the best ideas, something no one can monopolize. Because good ideas can be promoted by anyone, leadership can come from anywhere in the organization. This is more so in a learning organization where more emphasis is levied on management development. The success of any organization is based on the knowledge that their work forces develop & the competencies that they update from time to time.

Empower Managers: With key actions that help the organization to achieve an objective, the locus of control shifts to managers. This is where the term empowerment is introduced. The managers become responsible for their actions and do not lose their involvement. They need to encourage, enthuse and co-ordinate the workers. Equal participation must be allowed at all levels so that members can learn from each other simultaneously. This is unlike traditional learning that involves a top-down structure (classroom-type example) which is time consuming. Simulation techniques like in-basket exercise, case study & management games are a part of management development programmes which helps in understanding real-life situations & develops judgemental & decision making skills.

Illustrative Organisations

A list of companies frequently cited as learning organizations confirms the fact that learning is a long-term activity that will build competitive advantage over time and that it requires effort, sustained management attention and commitment. These companies include Motorola, Wal-Mart, British Petroleum (BP), Xerox, Shell, Analog Devices, GE, 3M, Honda, Sony, Nortel, Harley-Davidson, Corning, Kodak, and Chaparral Steel. Not only have these organizations maximized their competitive positions in good times, they have been carefully nurtured in turbulent times. As a result, these companies are envied by their competitors (de Geus, 1988; McGill, Slocum & Lei, 1993; Leonard-Barton, 1992).

The R&D wing of ONGC Academy is continuously engaged in updating strategic HRD plans to improve productivity, efficiency and effectiveness of ONGC executives.

The Infosys Global Education Centre (IGEC) at Mysore, the largest IT training centre in the world, hones the technological and managerial skills of prospective employees, thereby



creating cohesive multicultural teams. According to the data given to rediff.com by Infosys, the company today employs 52,700 employees, of which about 49,500 are technology professionals. It is the first Indian company inducted into the Global Most Admired Knowledge Enterprise (MAKE).

Wipro, whose revenue hit \$3.4 billion last year, has perhaps the most ambitious training program. In Wipro University most employees are enrolled in mandatory development training. For example, when a Japanese client calls, the education department can produce a few dozen hand-groomed engineers in a matter of months who are well versed in both Japanese and the C++ programming language. Formal alliances with reputed organizations and Institutions have helped the Institute to provide quality dissemination of knowledge.

CONCLUSION:

Thus, in a clear sign that corporate management is striving to compete successfully in today's worldwide marketplace, a majority of large organizations have implemented or plan to implement global learning development initiatives. In the present scenario of globalization, knowledge has become the prime factor of production for competitive advantage. This calls for acquisition and utilization of knowledge for innovation and technical change on a constant basis, which is only possible in a 'learning organisation.'

Top management is pressed to find ways to improve performance. To do so with greater consistency and effectiveness they rely on MDPs. This means that upcoming managers need to have a broader skill set, one that equips them to think and act globally.

REFERENCES:

1. Peter Senge (1994), *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of learning Organisations*, Doubleday.
2. Harward Business Review (2006), *How to create high impact from learning interventions*
3. ASTI, *Journal of Training & development* (Association of state training institutions in India.(Assessment of training impact)
4. *Human Resource Development – Beyond training interventions/7th Edition/ Magrart Anne Reid & Mary Brown/Pinnacle Publication.*
5. ASTI, *Journal of Training & development* (Association of state training institutions in India. (Assessment of training impact)



6. Robert Katz (1956), Human Relation Skills Can be Sharpened. Harward Business Review, July-August.
7. Suzi Donford (2005), Heal Thyself, Journal of Training and Development Pg35
8. Aimee George Leary (2006), Holistic Approaches to Learning, T&D Oct Pg 29
9. Krishnaswamy Ramkumar (2006), *Becoming a Global Player*, T&D Oct Pg 41
10. Carter Mc Namara, *Basic terms in Learning and Development* copyright 1997-2008
11. Management and organizational (2006) /Approaches to scale development in Chinese Management Research /November Review 2 /Page301-318