

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (HRD) – AN ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION IN INDIAN BANKS OF INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Banking being an important segment of the tertiary sector occupies a pivotal place in the organized sector of the Indian money market. It has been playing significant role in the achievement of economic development. It has been acting as both the repository of community's savings and purveyor of credit for economic activity. The commercial Banking system in India has a significant role to play in the rapid growth of economy through planned efforts. The dimensional importance of banking system as a dynamic force of development started increasing over the successive five-year plans, progressive met and served better the needs of our developing economy in conformity with national policies priorities & objectives. With the Nationalization of 14 Major Commercial banks in 1969 & 6 commercial Banks in 1980 & After financial reform in 1991. It can be evidenced from the date, that the Banks achieved remarkable progress during the post-reforms period facing several new challenges. The Banking Sector reforms in India were initiated in 1992. The objectives of reforms were to strengthen the Indian banks, make them internationally competitive and encourage them to play an effective role in accelerating the process of growth. The reforms process also initiated measures for improving the productivity, efficiency and profitability of the banking system. It was also recognized that the Indian banking system should be placed on par with international standards in respect of capital adequacy and other prudential norms. The operational rigidities in credit delivery system were to be removed to ensure allocation efficiency and achievement of social objectives. Human resources management as a strategic tool in organizational transformation of Indian banks are Building A Vision, Organization Development, Institution Building, Developing a Vision, Developing a Mission, Managing transformation in Indian banking through human resource development are Cultivating Leadership Traits, Creating as Organizational Vision, Building an Organizational Culture, Creating Conducive Work Environment, Identifying Talents, Administrative Structure, TEAM Concept, System of Reward and punishment, Recruitment and Staff Re-orientation Policy, Information Technology, HR Diversity, New Value Employees, Quality Concerns and Customer Expectations, The Strategic HRM aspects are Internal Customer Orientation, Shared Vision, Employee Empowerment, Team Working, Learning organization, Competency Identification Through EDC, Sustaining the Initiatives. The Khan working Group on universal Banking recently recommended the induction of HRD professionals in banks. Although bringing HR professionals from outside may be a good idea, the implications of this experiment has to be seriously considered. Are the banks in a position to offer competitive compensation packages to these professionals.

Keywords: Banking Sector Reforms; Nationalisation; Human Resource Management; Strategic Management; Employee Empowerment;

❖ INTRODUCTION

Banking being an important segment of the tertiary sector occupies a pivotal place in the organized sector of the Indian money market. It has been playing significant role in the achievement of economic development. Being the major source of institutional finance, it plays a predominant role in all-round development of the country by ensuring the greater mobility of resources to meet the emerging needs of the economy. It has been acting as both the repository of community's savings and purveyor of credit for economic activity.¹ By accepting the deposits and advancing loans of different types, banks are not only inculcating the saving habit, but are also facilitating the channelisation of surplus money into productive channels. The commercial banks by ensuring supply of right amount of credit to the small-scale industrial sector and agricultural sector have also been playing the role of prime mover in the process of India's economic development.² With the introduction of social control in 1967 enormous responsibilities are levied on the commercial banks. Nationalization of 14 major commercial banks in 1969 brought necessary changes in the profile of Indian Banking. Nationalization of commercial banks also brought a radical transformation in the lending policies pursued by the banks with a shift from security oriented lending to feasibility oriented lending. The success of the banker in the post-Nationalization era has been gauged not merely by the deposits mobilized and advances made by him, but on the basis of his contribution to country's economic development.³ These banks are further asked to open their gates to the millions of our people to improve their lot with the adequate credit support.⁷ Today, banks are required to achieve the twin objectives of achieving profit and contributing directly to the socio-economic development of the country by offering wide variety of services ranging from tribal development to export promotion and serving a wide spectrum of customers ranging from weaker sections to the corporate industrialists.⁴ The commercial banks in order to bring a sustained economic growth are asked to take up programs like credit authorization scheme, lead bank scheme, merchant banking, underwriting, investment consultancy, tax planning, mutual funds, lease finance, portfolio management, house finance, rehabilitation of sick industrial units and issue of credit cards, sponsoring Regional Rural Banks etc.⁵

❖ COMMERCIAL BANKING SYSTEM IN INDIA – A SCENARIO

The commercial Banking system in India has a significant role to play in the rapid growth of economy through planned efforts. The first five year plan emphasized the need that the banking system has to be fitted into the scheme of development to make the process of saving & their utilization economically productive and socially purposive. The dimensional importance of banking system as a dynamic force of development started increasing over the successive five-year plans, progressive met and served better the needs of our developing economy in conformity with national policies priorities & objectives. With the Nationalization of 14 Major Commercial banks in 1969 & 6 commercial Banks in 1980 & After financial reform in 1991. It can be evidenced from the date, that

the Banks achieved remarkable progress during the post-reforms period facing several new challenges.

The performance of commercial Banking system in respect of branch expansion, deposit mobilization, loans & advances, investments, profits, Manpower deployment, Non-performing Assets, lead bank scheme, sponsoring of regional rural banks., Population per office (in thousands), credit per office, deposits per office, advances to priority sectors, % of priority sector advances in total credit of commercial Banks, credit deposit ratio, investment deposit ratio, Cash deposit ratio etc., are significant.

BANKING SECTOR REFORMS IN INDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON BANKING SECTOR:

The Banking Sector reforms in India were initiated in 1992. The objectives of reforms were to strengthen the Indian banks, make them internationally competitive and encourage them to play an effective role in accelerating the process of growth. The reforms process also initiated measures for improving the productivity, efficiency and profitability of the banking system. It was also recognized that the Indian banking system should be placed on par with international standards in respect of capital adequacy and other prudential norms. The operational rigidities in credit delivery system were to be removed to ensure allocation efficiency and achievement of social objectives.

In a service oriented industry like banking, manpower is the key input and sharper focus has, therefore, to be given on human resource development so that the banking system can successfully meet the emerging challenges in the years to come. Banking industry which has undergone a structural transformation after nationalization cannot discharge its defined role unless its people are completely reoriented in new attitudes and skills¹². The degree of success of banks in the realization of objectives of development oriented banking set after nationalization is dependent upon how well the banks locates, develops and makes use of the talents for their people¹³. An urgent need has thus arisen to give importance for training and development of manpower in banks in order that the bank personnel are emotionally involved in and technically equipped for work.

❖ HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AS A STRATEGIC TOOL IN

ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION OF INDIAN BANKS

- **Building A Vision:** An important prerequisite for successful transformation of Indian Banks is the organization development and institute buildings.
- **Organization Development:** Is defined as a long-range effort to systematically change the culture of the organization through well-planned behavioral interaction intended to develop teamwork and problem solving skill with the help of an external consultant.
- **Institution Building:** Is systematic step-by-step method of providing a strong ideological base to the organization so as to enable it to respond to challenges faced by the society and to

play its role effectively. Both of these are demanding tasks, which require commitment of top management without which the attempt will not be successful.

Before such a process starts, there are some important steps that the organization must take to evolve themselves as an institution and not just an organization.

- I. Developing a Vision
 - II. Developing a Mission
 - III. Defining Objectives
 - IV. Defining Goals
 - V. Defining Purpose
- (I) Developing a Vision:**

Every leader must be a visionary. Leader must envision an organization or institution that he or she desires to build. Vision is nothing but a process of daydreaming where, keeping the realities in the background, a leader has a picture organization that he would like to build. Such a vision is necessary because it provides the directions for developing the organization. It is said that a sculptor in sculpting an idol envisions it first and thereafter removes the unwanted part of the stone. So clear must be a leader if he has to successfully lead an organization. It is needless to say that strong clear purposeful dynamic stimulating leadership is the bone of contention. Human resource development in Indian banks is nothing but developing such leaders at all levels of the system where ultimate results get delivered across the counter. No amount of rhetoric will help unless the message gets across all levels to the last person on the counter who will ultimately deliver the goals.

(II) Developing a Mission:

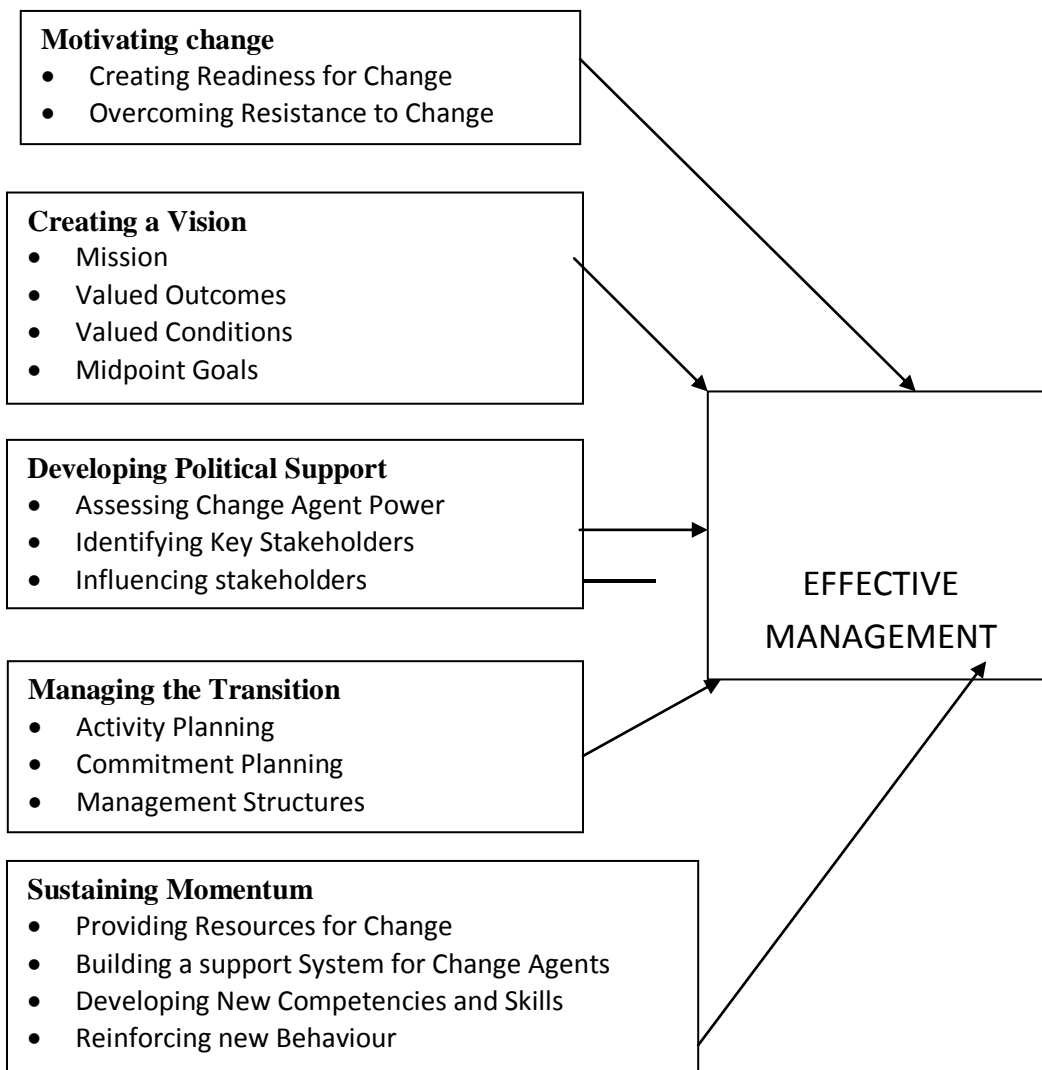
Organization and societal are inseparable entities. Every organization draws its existence in an societal context. Understanding society around and defining our role in the society is a must. Mission is nothing but a distinct way in which we have chosen to serve the society. It is a statement of how organization relates itself to the society. Developing a mission statement requires a keen understanding of society and its needs. Leader must have a keen grasp of social realities and carve for himself a clear role to help the society. A mission statement provides the much-needed sense of purpose to all the individuals in the organization. The HMT Ltd., once defined its mission as being **'TIME KEEPERS TO THE NATION'**. This statement encompasses several segments of customers and clearly tells you that your role is vital in country's achievement. In everything that country achieved, HMT had a role because, being monopoly, it had the role of providing accurate well-crafted watches that kept time to the precision.

(III) Defining Objectives: These are the loose-ended statements of what the organization should achieve in a broad sense to fulfill the chosen mission and move towards a vision. Here in no effort is made to quantify the parameters.

- (IV) **Defining Goals:** This is a close ended statement what organization should achieve in a time frame of three months, six months or one year so that we ultimately move towards achievement of the objectives mission and vision respectively.
- (V) **Defining Purpose:** Purpose is what organization continuously strives for. Some organization have excellence as a purpose i.e. the organization shall continuously strive hard to achieve excellence in whatever they do. It is a simple statement of what your continuous pursuit should be in the organization.

THE PROCESS OF ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT AND INSTITUTION BUILDING

Figure 2.Diagram



Adopting the Change

Managing in unstable times is a test of one's skills at maintaining dynamic stability i.e., the skill to move from one stable position to another. Banks should continuously benchmark their processes against the best in the industry without disturbing the balance. Continuous change must be adopted as a culture and appropriate institutional arrangements must be made to facilitate it. Forms of lending have changed from plain vanilla advances to exotic forms of disinter-mediation involving not only the products available on the shelf but also devising new products to suit the needs of individual customers.

Another area craving for change in the emerging scenario for banking is marketing. Marketing in Indian banking has been the most talked about but least understood concept. There is very little marketing orientation in Indian banks, particularly in the public sector banks. Marketing is mixed with other duties where the approach is mechanical, the routine is mostly ten to six office with emphasis on clearing one's paper work and a fair day's job is the basis of evaluation. Marketing is alien to this quagmire. Marketing has to be recognized as the epicenter of all activity. Marketing officers must be given clear business targets with adequate discretion and job responsibilities unambiguously profiled making a clear distinction between marketing an account and servicing it. Banks who realize this early will be the winners since marketing is going to make all the difference to the new age customer. Smaller Banks have the advantage here, since things move at a comparatively slow pace in larger organization.

With increasing private shareholding in the Indian Banks, pressure has increased to meet shareholder expectations and increase profitability of operations. In the recent period, the Government and the RBI have released an array of liberalization measures, giving greater freedom of operation to the banks. However, greater freedom brings in its wake greater responsibility, bigger challenges and the need for better strategies. Somewhat consoling fact is that the Indian banks are not alone facing challenges, Banking world over is set to change drastically. However, these challenges are not insurmountable. What is needed is the vision to look beyond the obvious, the ability and willingness to take the organization along and to set one's sight high on the horizon. For some banks, the transformation is going to be a battle for survival, while for a few large ones it will be a battle for dominance. Banks will be able to respond appropriately only if they know in which camp they are pitched.

❖ MANAGING TRANSFORMATION IN INDIAN BANKING THROUGH HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

In executing the said strategies. The following areas need to be given proper thrust in revitalizing the workforce to encounter the challenges and to bring about the desired improvements in the system.

1. Cultivating Leadership Traits:

Leaders are not born but made. The field functionaries, essentially the branch managers, need to act as leaders rather than care-takers more often the managers are designed for calmer waters.

Hence they get easily disturbed with the slightest of turbulence. Therefore a through orientation in their approach, attitude, risk-bearing capabilities and leadership styles should show be brought about. The top management should show all-round dynamism in leading the people to achieve corporate goals. Even the trade unions need to be highly proactive in their approach. Being the leaders in their own merits, they have to play a far greater constructive role in stimulating the workforce to deliver results.

2. Creating as Organizational Vision :

The management must have a clear perceptible organizational vision even under the fast changing environment. It should ensure that the transition phase is smooth and comfortable. Instead of simply writing the vision statements on corporate walls they should lead the people to share & propagate the vision once goal is clear, it is easy to chalk out the road map to reach it.

3. Building an Organizational Culture :

No organization can ever flourish without having a strong organizational culture, The work-ethics, corporate values, morale, discipline, code of conduct and loyalty to the institution must be strongly embedded into the minds of all employees. Every employee must realize his worth and try to contribute his best to the organization. It may be noted that the employees perform better not under “compulsion” but with “conviction”.

4. Creating Conductive Work Environment:

The organization must provide necessary and work-environment for the talents of the employees to flourish. The environment should be safe, secured and motivating. Any kind of insecurity in the minds of staff will have a destructive impact on the entire system. The system of transfer, posting and promotions must be transparent and free from any personal bias or vindictiveness.

5. Identifying Talents:

Talent is the intrinsic worth in a human being. It has its own way of manifestation, especially during challenging times. Talent could be in the form of knowledge, skill, competence or effectiveness. It is never very difficult to find talent among the workforce. But it depends upon the willingness and capability of an organization to identify, recognize, nourish, protect and promote the people who are bestowed with specific talents The banks need to shed their conventional approach and can take the help of B-schools, Management consultants to create a talented and motivated workforce in the organization.

6. Administrative Structure: The structure of administrative machinery should be such that they are competent enough to handle, monitor and control the units under their administration. The decision making process should also be fast. Any over-sizing would lead to lapses and mismanagement while under sizing may lead to wastage of administrative resources, The manpower planning of the banks should be qualitative. It should be ensured that the right man is placed at the right place in order to generate optimum productivity.

7. TEAM Concept:

The expansion of the term TEAM (Total Efforts by All Members) conveys all its significance and importance. It is the teamwork, which spells success for any organization. All great leaders in any organization have always advocated for a proper team-building exercise for achieving any big results. Banking as an organization has now to act as a team. A single customer now expects a variety of services, which the entire team at the branch has to render at one point or the other. Any dissatisfaction at any level may cost the bank heavily. Hence the personnel policies of the banks must emphasize on proper team-building exercises for better customer service and business growth.

8. System of Reward and punishment: The banks should have a sound system of performance appraisal for all its employees. The performances should not only be recognized, they should also be suitably rewarded. A competitive environment should be created within the organization in order to motivate the employees to excel in their respective fields. The organization, at the same time, should be careful about the people who stealthily make holes below the corporate ship. Banks being the dealers in money are more vulnerable to unscrupulous employees who often cause huge losses to the organization for their little personal gains. A system of exemplary punishment for such people should also be kept in store for any kind of malicious act.

9. Recruitment and Staff Re-orientation Policy:

The banks should, on an on going basis, review the quality of their staff in order to cope with the market conditions. Today's banking has become highly competitive and we need more and more marketing staff to sell the banks products and services to the customers. With the adoption of higher technologies, there has to be competent technical workforce in the organization. The recruitment policy should be job specific and more number of specialists should be recruited. The existing workforce must undergo complete re-orientation and extensive training's in order to update their knowledge and sharpening of their skills.

Information Technology:

The global emergence of Information Technology (IT) has now forced the Indian banks also to go for the same with greater intensity. For efficient internal management and better customer satisfaction computerization is becoming exigent. The bipartite agreement on computerization of October 23, 1993 prepared the ground work and now most of the banks are going ahead with the introduction of fully-computerized branches all over the country.

To effectively introduce mechanization and computerization, a substantial degree of organizational preparedness is a prerequisite. This would involve structural and systemic changes. Superimposing IT on traditional structures and systems will stand in the way of developing an IT culture within, without which technology will not be able to assist in organizational effectiveness. Banks do not seem to have done this preliminary homework. For example, bank employees, as per the earlier agreement, are expected to work for six and a half hours on a working day. The

introduction of computers has now reduced the work load. The daily balancing of books, which used to take hours after the normal customer time, now needs only the click of a key. As a result, on an average, the employees in the computerized branches finish their daily work in about two to two and a half hours earlier than usual.

HR Diversity:

Although human resource in banks is highly diverse in terms of its constitution such as gender, ethnicity, level of educational qualifications, social deprivation, etc., the industry has been taking a “strait-jacketed” approach in managing people. Standard rules and regulations emerging from industry and bank-level agreements may not provide sufficient motivation to get all the diverse groups to work cohesively and effectively. Besides,

Orientation of Trade Unions:

It is significant to note that the trade unions are changing their orientations all over the world including banks. Probably they are responding to the changing environment. The studies indicate that attitudinal changes are taking place in the orientation of bank union leadership. There could be various reasons for this change in the mindset of the leaders. Suffice it to say that certain signals of change in orientations are visible amongst the leadership of trade unions.

Quality Concerns and Customer Expectations:

The concern for quality is now revolution realizing organizations the world over. In a highly competitive market, the cutting edge comes from quality and customer satisfaction. Banks in India basically performed through a supplier-led approach. In the past, banking service and the internal support systems to deliver these services were primarily based on convenience and availability of skills within the banks. As a result of liberalization and the associated competition, banks, like other organizations, are forced to look at their activities *vis-à-vis* the competitor's capabilities. The increasing competition is offering better choices to the customers and their expectations are also on the increase. This state of affairs is forcing banks to study customer needs and design and deliver better quality banking services and products. These concerns have been instrumental in encouraging some of the banks to go for quality certifications like ISO 9000. This is yet another challenge before banks.

STRATEGIC HRM :

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) had carried out a study in several banking and insurance companies in five OECD countries⁴⁵. This study concluded : “Successful organizations are those which recognize human resource management as a key corporate strategic issue rather than simply as an outcome of a strategic decision.” In recent years, strategic management has evolved as an important dimension in organizational management. For effective performance, HR, management has to be directly linked to the strategic management of the organization and this strategic HRM, would then, be complementary to the business activities of the enterprise. The main difference between traditional HRM and strategic HRM is the extent to which human resource management is integrated with the strategic decision-making process that direct

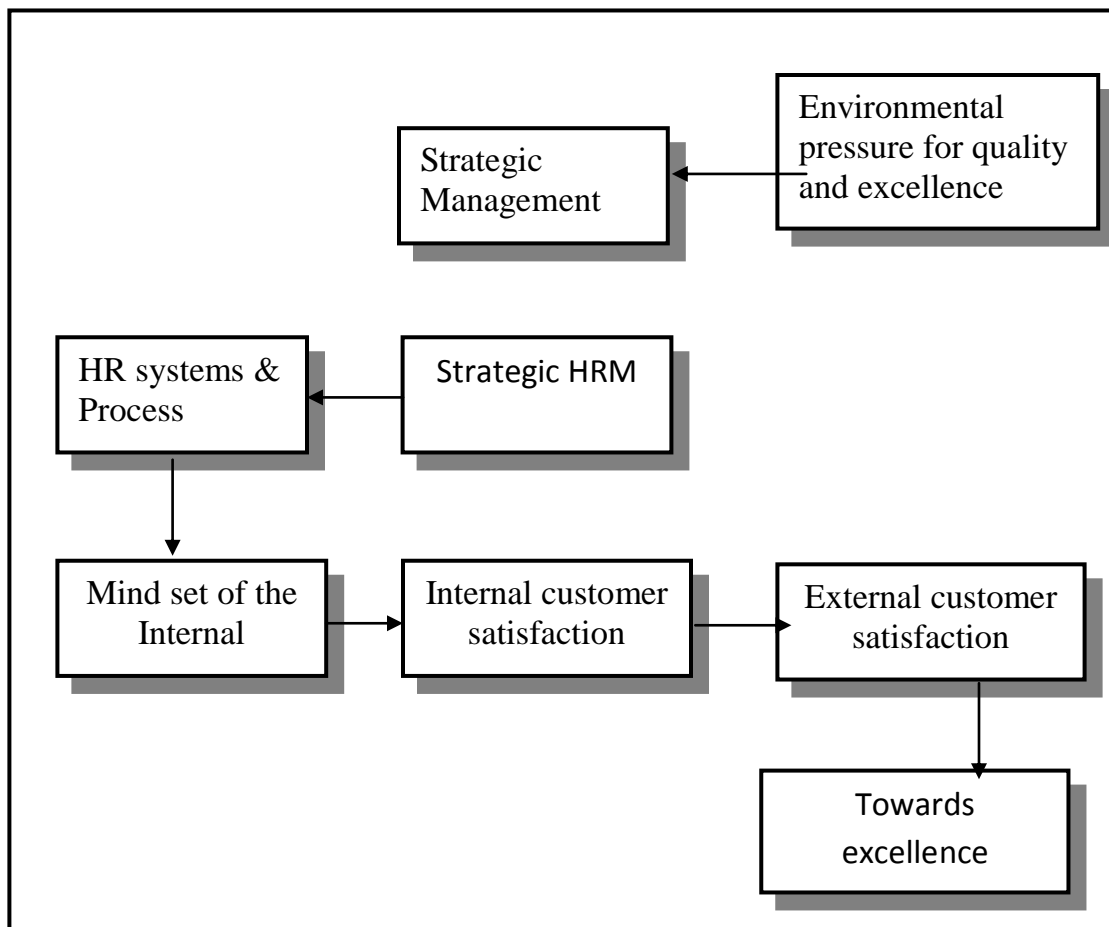
organizational efforts to cope with the environment. The strategic HRM perspective considers organizational employees as a strategic resource. Strategic HRM primarily deals with developing HR systems and practices, which will be in consonance with the changing business realities.

Strategic HRM gives meaning to the various HR activities, and this would establish a strong linkage between the business system and the people system. When this linkage is not sufficiently established, it can cause adverse effects on organizations. On the other hand, a balanced organization would have a proper mix of strategic HRM and business efforts. This is indicated in Diagram.

Internal Customer Orientation:

Diagram II

Internal Customer-External Customer Satisfaction Model



Performance excellence of bank organizations depends on customer 'delight' and customer 'surprise'. A delighted customer will not only return for continued business, but will also bring with him more customers. When the customer base increases and is sustained, one can say that the organization is moving in the direction of excellence.

Satisfaction and delight of the ultimate customers (external customer) is a function of the satisfaction of yet another set of customer who are internal to the organization. These internal customers (employees) are the people who deliver the multifarious services to the external customers. The level of satisfaction of the internal customer, therefore, will decide the quality of services the external customers receive. One cannot expect excellent service from a dissatisfied internal customer. His / her frustration and dissatisfaction with work will obviously get reflected in the way he / she treats the customer. To enhance the level of satisfaction of the internal customer, therefore, a great deal of organizational efforts have to precede. This is depicted in Diagram.

Shared Vision: The traditional view that “people respond positively only when their self-interests are involved” has been challenged and exposed by experiences of several organizations and results of research studies. In corporate parlance ‘vision’ is a familiar word. More often than not ‘corporate vision’ is usually associated with the top management or a select group of people and which is normally ‘imposed’ on the rest of the employees. For a vision to be truly effective and meaningful, it has to be shared by a majority of the organization’s employees. Such a shared vision binds the employees, which, in turn, can produce greater results.

Employee Empowerment: Empowerment is the process of encouraging involvement of employees in the organizational activities. This view presupposes the belief that employees have inherent potential; that they are the primary resource for enhancing productivity and that organizations can unleash greater power to combat competition by energizing the ‘critical mass’ of employees. Effective and meaningful empowerment programs help the organization to unleash the human potential for growth and competitiveness. For empowerment programs to succeed, organizations have to deliberately make efforts to move from the traditional hierarchical orientation to networking. This is possible only when the managerial personnel at all levels, starting from the top, believe that their employees are powerful resources which can contribute to performance effectiveness. This will bring in a role-responsibility reversal process, and meaningful employee empowerment will take (see Diagram)

Team Working: As organizational complexity increases, it becomes imperative to look at issues and problems from diverse perspectives. Individual thinking and actions may not necessarily bring out the best solutions and results. What is required in the complex environment is to develop organizational synergy at all levels. This calls for team building. Working in teams will not only produce better results but will also cater to certain fundamental psychological needs such as identification, companionship, understanding and support. Satisfaction of these needs will facilitate greater involvement of employees in organizational efforts.

Learning organization: In a dynamic environment it is important for organizations to continuously learn and adapt. A learning organization is the one, which is not only skilled at creating, acquiring and transferring knowledge but also at modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights. Organizations that will truly excel in the future will be the ones that discover how to tap people’s commitment and capacity to learn at all levels in an organization. On the other hand, if the

organization has a 'learning disability', it will gradually work towards self-extinction⁴⁶. Today, banks like any other organization cannot remain complacent. The learning spirit has to be developed. It may be construed that a learning organization means a lot of formal training. On the contrary, a learning organization means that every unit and individual levels a problem solving perspective is developed. There is introspection, analysis and openness to accept failures. There has to be readiness to unlearn, relearn and adapt. Only search continuous learning organizations can become vibrant and competent to deal with the external environment effectively.

Competency Identification Through EDC: Organization the world-over have realized that in responding to environmental changes the speed with which the response is made is crucial. Conventionally, changes in the systems are brought about with relative speed and ease, but effecting the changes in human resource is difficult and time consuming. In such circumstances, organizations have preferred to get 'tailor-made' human resource from the market in terms of skills and knowledge.

In this connection **Employee Development Center** (EDC) is fast emerging as an intervention to create the competent database for immediate as well as future developmental uses. It is well accepted that performance appraisal system reveals competencies that are specific to a given job, but not all the capabilities that the individuals possess.

EDC, therefore helps to draw up the competency profiles of employees, which can be used for a number of meaningful HR interventions like placement, promotion and training. If professionally carried out, EDC can be a non-threatening system, which can effectively assist both the organization and the individuals. In India Ballapur industries Ltd., Siemens India Ltd., ICICI Ltd., etc are currently using the EDC approach.

Sustaining the Initiatives:

As mentioned earlier, it is probably relatively easier to set up a new HR system or copy it from else where. The most important task is sustaining these efforts. Looking at the experiences of Indian banks, it can be observed that at different stages, banks adopted various HR systems with vigour and enthusiasm. And after a lapse of time, these became rituals or defunct. To clear examples are quality circles and branch meetings. Most banks during the 80's started implementing these ideas. In all banks, except a few, these have now become extinct. An analysis of the reasons for this shows that these ideas were initiated by some one at some time. After he / she left that position, the ideas either became rituals or they ceased to exist.

To derive continued benefit of effective HR systems and processes there is an imperative need to institutionalize the HR efforts. Institutionalisation on the other hand, requires, internalisation. A large number of people within the organization needs to be brought in line with the HR efforts. The Khan working Group on universal Banking recently recommended the induction of HRD professionals in banks. Although bringing HR professionals from outside may be a good idea, the implications of this experiment has to be seriously considered. Are the banks in a position to offer competitive compensation packages to these professionals ? What will be their career path in the

banks.? The banks past experiences of induction personnel specialists has not been very encouraging. Their career paths met with dead ends at the middle management level, if they had not picked up banking skills. The initiatives taken by these specialists quite often received 'cold' responses from the higher –ups in the functional hierarchy who are sometimes unable to understand the concepts, relevance and intended impact.

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