An Organizational Concept of Human Resource Development – How Human Resource Management Scholars View ‘HRD’ (Literature Review)

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Abstract

HRD is an important topic of present time. It is considered by management professionals, as sub discipline of HRM, but many researchers have, broadened the scope and integrated the concept of HRD by looking it from socioeconomic angle and giving it other dimension such as physical, intellectual, psychological, social, political, moral and spiritual development. However HRM professionals view it, in organizational context. And from HRM scholars’ viewpoint HRD in narrow concept consists of activities of training, education and skill building though all these terms themselves have meanings broader and deeper than their usual perceptions and in broader concept besides these activities also comprise activities like empowerment, awareness raising, team building, community mobilization and development, organization development, entrepreneurship development, sensitization and conscientisation, human resources planning and policies.

Introduction

Human Resource Development (HRD) is an important and very attention receiving discipline of present time. It is a relatively young academic discipline but an old and well-established field of practice (Swanson and Holton, n.d). Researchers have developed new theories and conceptual frameworks that address a broad range of phenomena of interest to the HRD profession (Torraco 2004). A key area of inquiry has been to try and figure out the current boundaries of HRD (Metcalfe and Rees, 2005) but defining HRD has not been so straightforward, and the writers and researchers are continuously debating the issue, and there seems to be no consensus, despite of the fact that numerous efforts have been made to define HRD (Haslinda 2009).

According to Rao (1995) the scope of HRD is extended, at one side, to developing competencies of human resource by enhancing knowledge, building skill, changing attitude and teaching values, and at other side, creation of conditions through public policy, programs and other interventions to help people to apply these competencies for their own and others’ benefits and making things happen.

Objectives of the Study

The core objective of this paper is to present an organizational model of HRD encompassing all the aspects of human resource development from organizational point of view.
Research Methodology
This research article has been developed from descriptive secondary information searched by reviewing literature about Human Resource Development (HRD) and Human Resource Management (HRM), published in research journals in the form of research articles, research reports of various organizations and books of Human Resource scholars on this topics.

Defining HRD
HRD is considered by scholars of Business Administration as a sub discipline of Human Resource Management (HRM), concerned with developing productive skills by imparting training. HRM scholars, Werner and DeSimone (2006 p.5) defined Human Resource Development (HRD) as:

“A set of systematic and planned activities designed by an organization to provide its members with the opportunities to learn necessary skills to meet current and future job demands”.

Haslinda-a (2009) expressed referring many studies that numerous attempts to define human resource development (HRD) by academics, researchers and practitioners have led to confusion in the literature, illustrating the elusive nature of this concept. The process of defining HRD is made still more difficult by the evolving nature of HRD; for example, the term HRD started out as simply “training”, and then evolved into “training and development” (T&D), and then into HRD. Confusion also arises over the “purpose”, the “location” and the “intended beneficiary” of HRD. This is further complicated by attempts to define HRD from an international or global perspective. The emerging field of national HRD (NHRD) have also been explored and debated and has had notable influence on the definition of HRD. Haslinda-a (2009) further narrated that a disagreement arises, with some authors arguing that it is not possible or feasible to provide a single definition of this concept. In reviewing the literature surrounding the meaning and understanding of HRD, a number of dimensions can be seen to be influencing the evolving and complicated nature of HRD. Haslinda-a reported, that Harbison and Myers offered the first definition of HRD in 1964. This definition is very broad in perspective, as it elaborates HRD in relation to culture, the economy and social and political contexts rather than individuals and organizations. They defined HRD as:

“HRD is the process of increasing the knowledge, the skills, and the capacities of all the people, in a society. In economic terms, it could be described as the accumulation of human capital and its effective investment in the development of an economy. In political terms, HRD prepares people for adult participation in the political process, particularly as citizens in a democracy. From the social and cultural points of view, the development of human resources helps to people lead fuller and richer lives, less bound to tradition. In short, the processes of HRD unlock the door to modernization”.

According to Khan and Khan (2011) this definition, too much broadens and integrate the concept of HRD and makes it Integrated HRD.

Haslinda-b (2009) also quoted definitions for HRD, proposed by other researchers and writers (i.e. Nadler & Nadler, 1970 and Werner & DeSimone, 2006). These definitions varied from the perspectives of an individual researcher or theorists to definitions of HRD by country.
addition, theorists have even tried to define HRD from a global and international perspective. Definitions from organizational point of view are listed below.

   “A series of organized activities conducted within a specified time and designed to produce behavioral change” (by Nadler and Nadler 1970)

   “A set of systematic and planned activities designed by an organization to provide its members with the opportunities to learn necessary skills to meet current and future job demands” (Werner and DeSimone 2006)

(Swanson and Holton, n.d) has also quoted definitions of HRD offered by some authors (McLagan; Gilley & England and Smith) as:

   “HRD is the integrated use of training and development, career development and organizational development to improve individual and organizational effectiveness” (McLagan).

   “HRD is organized learning activities arranged within an organization to improve performance and personal growth for the purpose of improving the job, the individual, and the organization” (Gilley and England).

   “HRD is the process of determining the optimum methods of developing and improving the human resources of an organization and the systematic improvement of the performance of employees through training, education and development and leadership for the mutual attainment of organizational and personal goals” (Smith)

Byrne, (1999) is of the opinion that HRD is a function in an organization that provides opportunities for an individual worker to improve current and future job performance, while simultaneously best utilizing human capital in order to improve the efficiency of the organization itself. Ideally, well-developed and well-implemented HRD systems are integral to the company’s strategic plan and benefit both the employee and the company.

Dimensions of HRD in Historical Perspective

Werner and DeSimone (2006) described HRD as a function of HRM. (Swanson and Holton n.d) asserted that it is easy to logically connect the origins of HRD to the history of humankind and the training required to survive or advance. While HRD is a relatively new term, training—the largest component of HRD—can be tracked back through the evolution of the human race. Metcalfe and Rees (2005) also expressed by quoting many studies that HRD is relatively a new field of academic study and there is no homogeneity in ‘HRD intellectual inquiry and proliferation of global HRD. Research suggests that we should, at least, be starting to scratch the surface of the many socio-cultural variations that shape HRD philosophies and practices.
According to Haslinda-b (2009) the origin of HRD was suggested to have started, in the USA during the advent of the ‘Industrial Revolution’, in 1800s. But some writers argued that the roots of HRD emerged in 1913 when Ford Motor started training its workers to produce mass production in the assembly line.

Haslinda and Hiok (2009) by referring many studies narrated that researchers believe that the debates are complicated by the beliefs and understanding of individual stakeholders and HRD practitioners. Haslinda and Hiok are of the opinion that theorizing and modeling HRD worldwide is a complex task and varies between countries. Although somewhat debatable, several studies in both developed and developing countries have been undertaken to develop a descriptive framework of HRD practices. These studies found that the nature and extent of HRD varies from one country to another and is influenced by the economic, political, cultural, labor market and educational systems of each individual country. In an attempt to explain human resource development, numerous authors have debated the theoretical concepts of HRD, yet a distinctive conceptual and theoretical identity has not been established.

Haslinda-a (2009) squeezing from many researches has concluded that most countries such as Russia, Germany and Korea equate HRD with training and development (T&D) and the main focus is on activities related to training. USA scholars have charted the intellectual history and origin of HRD within human development (psychology and education) and human capital (economics and management). In the United Kingdom scholars have highlighted the importance of culture, leadership and organizational learning as components of HRD processes. The terrain of HRD inquiry has thus perhaps always been multidisciplinary.

Jaishi (n.d) expressed that HRD has gained increasing application as a goal, and as a process in the developmental field. As a goal it is equated with the development of human capacity and up-lift of human aspirations. In terms of process, HRD involves activities related to education, training, empowerment, awareness raising, skills enhancement, team building, community mobilization and development, organization development, entrepreneurship development, sensitization and conscientisation, human resources planning and policies. In the Indian concept of HRD (expressed in “The National Concept of HRD”), education and culture constitute the core of the strategy, however, it is not education in the narrow sense of schooling, but a broad concept encompassing health, nutrition, employment, science & technology, equality and special attention to weaker groups, education being used as an instrument of peoples development and access to opportunities and facilities in all these areas.

**Organizational Concepts of HRD**

Livingstone and Raykov (2005) quoting some studies analyzed that with the current expansion of the global economy and the fast-changing evolution of technology and innovation, organizations are facing an ongoing need for employee learning and development. As knowledge increasingly becomes a key factor for productivity, it has also become a currency for competitive success. Understanding factors that contribute to organizational learning and the transfer of knowledge to the workplace environment are essential to human resource development (HRD). The culture and environment of an organization can influence the types and numbers of learning-related
events and employee job satisfaction as well as employee motivation to transmit newly acquired knowledge to the workplace context.

(i) Organizational Narrow Concepts of HRD
Fisher (2005) declared HRD as one of the more moral management functions, which is intended to help people to learn and develop. David Weir a professor of Intercultural Management in France is of the view that HRD uses training and development to identify, assure, and help to develop the key competencies that enable individuals to perform current or future jobs with planned individual learning accomplished through training, on-the-job learning, coaching or other means. HRD uses organization development as a focus for assuring healthy inter- and intra-unit relationships and helping groups to initiate and manage change by facilitating individuals and groups to effectively impact on organization as a system. Haslinda-b (2009) Located the HRD by its functions and expressed that the function of HRD is to provide learning, education and training to the human resources selected and recruited.

(ii) Organizational Broader Concepts of HRD
Gulcin (2006) is of the opinion that HRD encompasses the broad set of activities that improve the performance of the individual and teams. Schmidt and Kunzmann (2006) revealed in ‘holistic view on human resource development’ that HRD must be understood in a broad sense, incorporating formal training, self-directed learning, informal and collaborative learning activities.
Egan, et al (2004) expressed with reference to (Kuchinke, 1996) that HRD has extended beyond a narrow concentration on training to include organizational and systems-level issues that influence the development of broad skill sets, abilities, and knowledge associated with learning in technical, social, and interpersonal areas.
Metcalfe & Rees (2005) expressed by extracting from many studies that management and organizational writers have noted, the field of HRD has expanded beyond training and development to include a strong connection to corporate strategy, individual responsibility for learning, extension into team learning, incorporation of career development, an emphasis on internal consultancy, organizational learning and knowledge management and the nurturing of the intellectual capital of an enterprise.
Swanson and Holton (n.d) expressed that HRD is a process of developing and unleashing expertise for the purpose of improving individual, team, work process, and organizational system performance. HRD efforts typically take place under the additional banners of “training and development” and “organization development” as well as numerous other titles. Two major realms of practice take place within HRD. One is organization development (OD); the other is training and development (T&D). OD focuses at the organization level and connects with individuals, while T&D focuses on individuals and connects with the organization.
According to Schmidt and Kunzmann (2006) HRD must be understood in a broad sense, incorporating formal training, self-directed learning, informal and collaborative learning activities. The ontology should avoid an overly bias towards one of these forms, although it is
clear that formal training is much better understood than informal and collaborative learning activities, which is still subject of major research activities.

Kumar (2005) expressed that HRD is not only training for operational skills but also includes behavioral skills as it ultimately aims to create an enabling culture wherein the capabilities are “acquired, sharpened and used”

**Purpose, Benefits and Importance of HRD**

Haslinda-a (2009) expressed that behind the theoretical debates concerning the nature of HRD, there is a set argument pertaining to purpose of HRD. The purposes of HRD are said to influence the nature and extent of HRD activities being implemented. The purposes of HRD are centered on learning and performance perspectives, both benefiting the individual and the interests of shareholders. In a wider perspective, the purposes center on economic benefits, social benefits and the ethics of HRD. These points indirectly suggest that a reconciliation of the purposes of HRD centrally focus on training, development and learning within organizations for individual development to achieve business strategies and for the development of organizational competence.

Yussof and Kasim (2003) revealed that the role of HRD is crucial, in promoting and sustaining growth and, HRD, in particular education and training, contributes significantly to economic development in terms of increased worker productivity and income. The economy becomes more productive, innovative and competitive through the existence of more skilled human capability.

Swanson and Holton (n.d) asserted that organizations have been created by humankind and can soar or crumble, and HRD is intricately connected to the fate of any organization. Human expertise is developed and maximized through HRD processes and should be applied for the mutual long-term and/or short-term benefits of the sponsoring organization and the individuals involved.

According to Rao, (1995) human resource development holds the key for economic development by enabling people to become more productive, because economic development depends upon level of industrial activity of production, which onward depends upon the productivity of human resource. And Yussof and Kasim (2003) asserted that the quality of human resources will determine the success or failure of any development effort, especially concerning industrialization, adopting technical change and global market response. Viewed from this perspective, HRD therefore requires special attention to complement changes in the economic profile of the proposed growth regions.

As per Indian concept (expressed in “The National Concept of HRD”) of development, it is not just about factories dams and roads, development is basically about people, the goal is the people’s material, cultural and spiritual fulfillment. So Jaishi (n.d) opined that the emerging concept of HRD puts people at the center of development, because development is not only by people, it is also for people. Thus human development, instead of stressing on the formation of human capital for development, emphasizes on enlarging people’s choices in order to improve their quality of life.
Discussion and Conclusion

From the above literature it is revealed that HRD has different concept in MRM perspective than integrated HRD as defined by Harbison and Myers in 1964 and elaborated by Khan and Khan (2011). Definition of Harbison and Myers is very broad and useable in socio-economic perspective as elaborated in diagram-1 and diagram-2. (Gray, yellow and green area of diagram-2)

It is Concluded that HRD in organizational perspective is focused in narrow sense by its function on learning, education, training and development to the human resources selected and recruited to identify, assure, and help to develop the key competencies that enable individuals to perform current or future jobs with planned individual learning accomplished through training, on-the-job learning, coaching or other means (green area of diagram-2).

Whereas the scope of HRD in organizational perspective has broadened and extended beyond a narrow concentration on training and development to include organizational and systems-level issues that influence the development of broad skill sets including behavioral skills, abilities, and knowledge associated with learning in technical, social, and interpersonal areas and also expanded to include a strong connection to corporate strategy, individual responsibility for learning, extension into team learning, incorporation of career development, an emphasis on internal consultancy, organizational learning and knowledge management and the nurturing of the intellectual capital of an enterprise, so HRD is a process of developing and unleashing expertise for the purpose of improving individual, team, work process, and organizational system performance. HRD along with education and training also involves activities related to, empowerment, awareness raising, skills enhancement, team building, community mobilization and development, organization development, entrepreneurship development, sensitization and conscientisation, human resources planning and policies (yellow and green area of diagram-2).
Venn Diagram-1 Showing Domains of Human Resource Development

**Human Resource Development**
Socioeconomic (integrated) viewpoint

- HR Physical development
- HR Emotional development
- HR Intellectual development
- HR Political development
- HR Spiritual development

**Human Resource Development**
Human Resource management viewpoint

- HR planning
  - Recruitment
  - Selection
- HR organizing
- HR Leading
- HR Controlling

Area of Human Resource Development

*Source* - Self constructed (Already used in Khan and Khan, 2011)
Venn Diagram-2 Showing Relationship of Integrated and Organizational Concepts of HRD

Source - Self constructed

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