

# HRD Practices & Organization Culture in India

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*HR practices have been developed in the context of industrial change and economic development. Managers in the organizations would be confronted with the need to reorient culture, thinking and paradigms. HRD as a function and as a prime mover would need to focus on this changing and emerging role. There are very few evidences where values or organizational culture is directly linked to HRD practices of the organization. This study attempts to examine the effect of HRD practices on organization culture of some leading private and public sector organizations in India. The study revealed that the human resource development practices are a strong predictor of organizational culture both in private sector and public sector organizations in India. There is ample demonstration of meaningful relationship between HRD practices and organization culture.*

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## Introduction

Modern organizations in India were originated under British rule. The British were the first to introduce the western type of administration in India. They were meticulously briefed to be strict with and to be distant from the Indian subordinates (Mishra 1970). Hence emotion aloofness combined with high control of subordinates characterised the British style of Indian management. This was the model that Indian managers inherited from the British when the latter left India in 1947 (Sinha 1990). India after independence remained a centralized and controlled economy, and characterized somewhat by feudal concentration of capital. More than 90% of corporate India is family owned (Business Today 1996). The changes in the market scene have necessitated the Indian industry to look inward for the development of human resources (HR). Indians are more accustomed to think in terms of narrow identities like our own selves, castes, communities, regional and linguistic groups. Deficient infrastructure and frustrating bureaucracy at operating levels, the cultural and indigenous barriers added fuel to fire. Ganesh (1982) goes even further and argues that

family ethics, caste, religion, language, and politics erode work culture in Indian organizations.

**The emergence of Japanese human resource management has led to the concept of culture in a big way.**

Human resource systems simply by virtue of their design and implementation have impacts on norms and expectations that go beyond the specific behaviours these systems are designed to reinforce. During the Japan Boom of the early 1980s, most popular and scholarly attention was focused on the Japanese management in Japan. Japanese – style HRM was considered as a source of competitive advantage for Japanese firms not only in Japan but also in other countries especially in the USA. The emergence of Japanese human resource management has led to the concept of culture in a big way. The corporate culture was coined which gained popularity after the book carrying the title by Terrence Deal and Robert Waterman, appeared in the USA in 1982. Ever since Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman's *In Search of Excellence* appeared an extensive literature has developed on culture (Hofstede 1994).

The culturalist school view states that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to export wholesale Japanese-style HRM practices to other countries, such as the United States, because of major national and cultural differences between more homogenous and collectively oriented Japanese employees and

more heterogeneous and individually oriented foreign employees (England 1975, Hofstede 1983, Nakane 1970). Indian organizations reflect two broad profiles of work culture, soft and a synergic work culture (Sinha 1990). Khandwalla (1996) found these changes to significantly improve the organizational culture, which is reflected in rhetoric such as change is only constant, only quality ensures survival, and people, not products, are paramount.

### Review of Literature

Silverzweig and Allen (1976) were the first to investigate explicitly the effect of company's culture on its performance. Ouchi & Jaeger (1978) and Ouchi & Johnson (1978) felt that financial success of firms is attributable to strong emphasis on certain humanistic values, such as concern for wellbeing of employees and consensual decision making. In a similar way, Pascale & Athos (1981), based on the survey of 34 Japanese and American companies' were of the opinion that Japan's higher productivity was largely due to its focus on human relations, mainly on the aspects of skills, style, staff and super ordinate goals. Peters & Waterman (1982) argued that companies with strong organisation culture are highly

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successful and that superior firm performance can only be achieved if companies move away from a pure technical, rationalistic approach towards more adaptive and humanistic approach. Carroll (1983), Reynolds (1986) and Hitt and Ireland (1987) questioned the approach taken by Peters & Waterman. Owing to such results, the causal link between strong organisation culture and performance was seriously questioned by the end of 1980s (Enz. 1988). Chatman (1991) found the study of values gained further importance in the context of Indian organizations. Where cultural and social diversities were to be assimilated into larger unity the unity achieved by matching organizational context with large socio-cultural context and through integration of members into the general organizational climate.

Thornhill et. al. (2000) found potential role for HR-centred strategies to be used to change or realign the culture of an organization. Biswas et. al. (2007) were of the view that in the Indian business scenario HRM should take into account the dominant social norms and values, while formulating the policies and practices that can enhance organizational effectiveness. Sinha (1988) brought into focus that while creating linkages between organizations socio-cultural and environmental tensions and paradoxes often exist in Indian organizations. This is especially relevant in the case of organizations, where diversities and contradictions in values seem to characterize the cultural system.

Singh (1989) felt that HRD mechanisms can be categorised into three families based on their value orientation. HRD interventions can be designed to promote any kind of culture. In fact, prior to designing HRD intervention, it is important to clear the “managerial culture” that is intended to be developed. Singh has been criticised for oversimplification that defeats the purpose for which the typology was considered necessary. Despite the criticism his work remains important in the field of HRD and culture. Research evidence shows that HR practices along with culture do affect efficiency in the organization. There are hardly or very few studies which show a link between HRD practices and organization culture. The present study has shown that if organizations can also be developed and do make attempts to socialize their employees through HR practices, to develop congruence between the persons and the jobs, the personal values may have serious impact on culture.

### **Objectives of the Present Study**

The present study examines the impact of HRD practices namely planning, recruitment, selection, performance evaluation, training and development, career management and rewards on the organization culture viz. self-realization, status enhancement, sulphitic values and socio economic support in private and public sector organizations.

### **Method**

The sample drawn for the study was based on a non-probability incidental

sampling procedure. The total number of participants consisted of 214 management personnel, which was inclusive of managers and executives above supervisors drawn from four major private and public sector organizations. The respondents included employees from all the major departments of the organizations. The data was collected through comprehensive self-administered questionnaire. The respondents from private sector organizations were ninety-five, whereas respondents from public sector organizations were 119.

### Model

This study used the moderated or interactive relationship model to study the impact of HRD practices on organizational culture. This model further analysed the impact of HRD practices on organization culture. This model implies that moderation or interaction could be said to exist if returns from one practice (e.g. HRDP) varied across the other practice (e.g. organizational culture) at all levels. This means, Self Realisation is determined by the interaction of the predictor (e.g. HRDP). The presence of interaction is established if the cross product coefficient differs significantly from zero.

The variable HRDP has been defined and measured in terms of : planning (PL), selection (SL), recruitment (RC), performance evaluation (PE), training and development (TD), career management (CM), rewards (RW) i.e.

$$OC = f(HRDP) \dots \text{Equ. 1.2}$$

Where  $\alpha$  is the intercept coefficient and  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$  are slope coefficients.

$$HRDP = f(PL, RC, SL, PE, TD, CM, RW) \dots \text{(Equ. 1.3)}$$

The variable organizational culture (OC) depends on the variable such as self-realisation (SR), status enhancement (SE), sulphitic values (SV), socio economic support (SES) i.e., Organization culture that consisted of (SR, SE, SV, SES) has also been conceived as a function of HRD practices:

$$OC(SR, SE, SV, SES) = f(HRDP) \dots \text{(Equ.1.4)}$$

Assuming a linear model we have

$$SR = \alpha'' + \beta'' HRDP + \epsilon_t \dots \text{(Equ.1.5)}$$

$$SE = \alpha''' + \beta''' HRDP + \epsilon_t \dots \text{(Equ.1.6)}$$

$$SV = \alpha'''' + \beta'''' HRDP + \epsilon_t \dots \text{(Equ. 1.7)}$$

$$SES = \alpha''''' + \beta''''' HRDP + \epsilon_t \dots \text{(Equ. 1.8)}$$

Equation 1.2 explained the normative additive model when two factors were entered together into the equation. In these equations, a regression coefficient estimates the effects of the independent variable (factor) on the dependent variable, across the levels of the other independent variable (s). It means that  $\beta$  reflects the trends of change in OC (Organisation Culture) with changes in HRDP (HRD practices) and  $\gamma$  reflected the trends of change in OC with changes in HRDP.

According to equation 1.5  $\beta''$  reflected the trends of change in Self-realisation with changes in HRDP. Equation 1.6 explained that  $\beta'''$  reflected the trends of change in Status Enhancement with changes in HRDP. Equation 1.7 explained that  $\beta''''$  reflected the trends of change in Sulphitic Values with changes in HRDP. Equation 1.8 explained that  $\beta''''''$  reflected the trends of change in Socio economic Support with changes in HRDP.

**Discussion**

This study explored the relationship between above mentioned variables and HRD practices in private and public sector organizations. Rewards, one of the HR practices, was strongly related with

all variables of culture in public (with one exception) and private sector organizations. People within the organization are rewarded for acting in accordance with the dominant values of the organization. Rewards send clear and consistent signals about desired values and norms expected from people working in the organization (Sethia & Van Galinow 1985).

Organisation Culture in this study was measured in terms of four subordinate values like self-realisation, status enhancement, sulphitic values and socio economic support. Self-realisation, one of the variables of culture was strongly related to HRD practices in private sector. Career management, rewards, recruitment and selection are

**Table 1: Predicting Self realisation for Private sector (n=95)**  
Dependent Variable: Self realisation

S.No.	Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	F
1.	Career Management	.62	.39	.00	58.47
2.	Rewards	.67	.45	.06	36.89
3.	Selection	.69	.47	.02	26.70
4.	Recruitment	.71	.50	.03	22.73

P<.01

$$SR = 7.67 + 0.3 CM + 0.22 RW + 0.38 SL - 0.27 RC$$

$$t\text{-value} = (4.22) \quad (3.21) \quad (3.1) \quad (2.93) \quad (-2.5)$$

$$R^2 = .48 \quad F = 22.74 \quad p < .01$$

**Table 2: Predicting Self-realization for Public sector (n=119)**  
Dependent Variables: Self realisation

S.No.	Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	F
1.	Rewards	.55	.30	.00	50.01
2.	Planning	.60	.36	.06	32.95

P<.01

$$SR = 8.65 + 0.26 RW + .22 PL$$

$$t\text{-value} = (4.7) \quad (5.1) \quad (3.38)$$

$$R^2 = .35 \quad F = 32.85 \quad p < .01$$

selection are strong predictors of self-realisation in private sector. People with dominant values of self-realisation are socialized into the organization through recruitment and selection practices. Managers within the company are rewarded for acting in accordance with the values of self-realisation. Those working in the organization with desired values of ability utilisation, achievement, advancement, aesthetics, personal development, peace of mind and creativity are not only rewarded but their career is also being managed by the organization, so that they can serve the company for longer period. Nadler et. al.

**Career management, rewards, recruitment and selection are strong predictors of self-realisation in private sector.**

(1994) felt that HR practices are symbolic and carefully watched signals and include who gets promoted, sidelined, dismissed and selected affect cultural values. Sinha (1988), contrary to his expectations found, ability utilization, achievement and personal development to be most salient work values in certain Indian organisations.

**Rewards and Planning are strong predictors of self-realisation in public sector.**

Rewards and Planning are strong predictors of self-realisation in public sector. Planning creates an environment so that managers in the organizations can institute action plans to cope with projected HR needs. Reward is strongly related to self-realisation. Other HRD practices such as, recruitment and selection bear in mind the constitutional obligations, while filling the job. The jobs are reserved for certain caste and tribes, taking into account the constitutional obligation rather than organizational goals. Automatic promotion up to certain level for managers and high job security reduces the influence of the performance evaluation and career management. So, only few HRD practices affect the culture in general and self-realisation in particular in public sector organizations.

Selection, rewards and performance evaluation turned out to be relatively stronger predictors of status enhancement in private sector. Selection based on merit leads to status enhancement.

**Table 3: Predicting Status Enhancement for Private sector (n=95)**  
Dependent Variable: Status Enhancement

S.No.	Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	F
1.	Selection	.57	.32	.00	44.41
2.	Rewards	.63	.40	.08	30.54
3.	Performance evaluation	.67	.45	.05	25.02

P<.01

SE = 4.2 + 0.42 SL + 0.19 RW - 0.16PE

t-value= (2.77) (4.62) (4.3) (-2.97)

R<sup>2</sup>=.43 F=25.02 p<.01

**Table 4: Predicting Status Enhancement for Public sector (n=119)**  
**Dependent Variable: Status Enhancement**

S.No.	Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	F
1.	Rewards	.32	.10	.00	12.46
2.	Training and development	.36	.13	.03	8.41

P<.01

SE = 6.29 + 0.09 RW + 0.10 TD

t-value= (4.41) (2.76) (2.01)

R<sup>2</sup>=.11 F= 8.41 p<.01

Rewards (financial and non-financial) were strongly related to status enhancement. Managers who emphasized recognition and encouragement were more effective in shaping the culture of organization or targeted results. Performance evaluation, one of the HRD practices, was a strong predictor of status enhancement and served as a key input for administering a formal organizational reward, career growth and a tool of punishment (Cummings 1973). As a purveyor of organizational expectations performance evaluation was critical. Through the evaluation process those working in the organization were aware of how well they were meeting their task and role demands (Asford & Cummings 1983). The beta weight of performance evaluation was found to be negative. Clear rewards are the hallmark of organization that effectively socialise newcomers. In addition to their readily apparent value, the rewards that provide challenging assignments, promotions and salary increases prove to be status enhancement for managers (Chatman 1991).

Indians are highly status conscious. They feel easier to work in superior-subordinate roles than with equals

(Kakar 1978, Kothari 1970). Peer group relationship induces anxiety until the peers are ranked on some real or imaginary dimensions. Juniors yield to seniors on every conceivable on-the-job or off-the-job occasion. 'Check out with the boss' is the crux of the majority of decision making, which naturally shifts the locus of control into the highest position in the organization (Dayal 1987). Juniors would open the door for the senior, refrain from taking drinks in his presence even on social occasions, speak humbly, would not retort or disagree strongly and would rather withdraw from a situation, which is likely to force a confrontation (Roland 1984, Sinha 1988).

**Reward was also found to be a strong predictor of sulphitic values in both private as well as public sector organizations.**

Reward was also found to be a strong predictor of sulphitic values in both private as well as public sector organizations. Those working in the organization with desired values of risk taking, variety, autonomy, life style and creativity were rewarded. Rewards

**Table 5: Predicting Sulphitic Values for Private sector (n=95)**  
**Dependent Variable: Sulphitic Values**

S.No.	Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	F
1.	Rewards	.62	.39	.00	60.60
2.	Training and development	.66	.44	.05	36.60

P<.01

$$SV = 3.69 + 0.19 RW + 0.15 TD$$

$$t\text{-value} = (2.68) \quad (5.35) \quad (2.83)$$

$$R^2 = .43 \quad F=36.60 \quad p<.01$$

**Table 6: Predicting Sulphitic Values for Public Sector (n=119)**  
**Dependent Variable: Sulphitic Values**

S.No.	Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	F
1.	Rewards	.46	.21	.00	30.39

P<.01

$$SV = 7.69 + 0.22RW$$

$$t\text{-value} = (6.08) \quad (5.57)$$

$$R^2 = .20 \quad F=30.39 \quad p<.01$$

encourage people to be more creative, have variety and autonomy in work life along with risk taking and help to chalk out one's own life style in the organization. Similarly, training and development in public sector organizations was a strong predictor of sulphitic values. So, rewards and training and development in private sector affect both individual esteem and life style significantly. These HRD practices were related significantly with sulphitic values in private sector organizations. Managers were developed to take variety of tasks in order to perform at optimum level. Managers in the organization were developed to be autonomous and chalk out their own life style to be more effective on the job. This also means employees will expect organizations to offer them opportunities to develop a portfo-

lio of skills that enhances their marketability. Thus, organization will have to provide work assignments and learning opportunities that allow for challenge and growth and self-development (Maurer & Tarulli 1994).

**HR practices were significantly related to socio economic support in private sector.**

HR practices were significantly related to socio economic support in private sector. Selection, career management and recruitment were strong predictors of socio-economic support. Through recruitment and selection practices, newcomers with stronger systems of support report fewer adverse psychological outcomes related

**Table 7: Predicting Socio Economic Support for Private sector  
Dependent Variable: Socio-economic support**

S.No.	Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	F
1.	Selection	.44	.20	.00	23.23
2.	Career management	.49	.24	.04	14.88
3.	Recruitment	.60	.36	.12	17.04

P<.01

$$SES = 11.61 + 0.56 SL + 0.38 CM - 0.44 RC$$

$$t\text{-value} = (6.33) \quad (4.21) \quad (4.25) \quad (-4.05)$$

$$R^2 = .34 \quad F = 17.04 \quad p < .0$$

**Table 8: Predicting Socio-economic support for Public sector (n=119)  
Dependent Variable: Socio economic support**

S.No.	Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	F
1.	Rewards	.24	.06	.00	7.54

P<.01

$$SES = 17.39 + 0.10 RW$$

$$t\text{-value} = (15.18) \quad (2.75)$$

$$R^2 = .05 \quad F = 7.54 \quad p < .01$$

to job performance than do those with less support. The quality relationships with organizational insiders can even help newcomers to overcome the negative effects of unmet expectations (Major et al.1995). Interacting with enthusiastic newcomers may be good for insiders' attitude and morale. The study also explored connecting career management and organizational culture (socio economic support). People working in the organization look for career management that will give them breadth of experience that seems to be needed now. So, a shift in culture happens, not because people have changed, but because their beliefs about what they have to do get ahead have changed (Hugh 2000). Rewards were a strong predictor of socio economic support in public sector organi-

zations. Litwin et. al. (1996) felt that the nature of rewards is a key determinant of how effective they are. The reason could be that the managers working in the private organizations are experiencing tremendous amount of change around them, thereby realizing that socio economic well being will provide them the amount of stability in a fast changing environment. Sinha, (1988) found values such as, dependency, social interaction and social relations to have low salience in certain Indian organisations.

### Conclusion

This study clearly revealed that a reward is not merely a tool for shaping the behaviour of individuals receiving them. The respondents are of the opinion

that it is the single most important variable that affects organizational culture, measured in terms of self-realisation, status enhancement, sulphitic values and socio economic support. It showed that greater the congruence between values of individual and nor-mative requirements of the organizations better would be the effectiveness if employees feel rewarded. In Indian public and private sector organizations reward was considered to be the single most important variable that affect culture of organization. Nadler et. al. (1994) report that rewards are “what employees most frequently mention as the real indicator of commitment to cultural values”.

**In Indian public and private sector organizations reward was considered to be the single most important variable that affect culture of organization.**

The present study was conceived around the framework that HRD practices shape the pattern of inter-actions between and among the managers and employees (Cutcher-Gershenfeld 1991). Further organizations generally organise human resource practices that are consistent with their culture (Osteman 1987, Block, Roomkin & Salsburg 1987). In other words, the available body of knowledge on the subject has amply demonstrated a meaningful relationship between HRD practices and cultural aspects.

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