



In a Nutshell

K B S Kumar

In the light of the various country experiences that we have gone through in the previous chapters, we observe that it is high time for the countries to wake up and take the necessary corrective and precautionary measures to channelize and capitalize the human resources appropriately. This chapter offers the observations from the previous chapters in a nutshell and the learning insights towards employee training and development practices and overall human resource development in the organizational context.

One thing that we can infer from the previous chapters is that training and development, for sure, is assuming paramount importance across the world. The industries have realized the need for effective training to the employees. The activity that was perceived as one of the administrative jobs while inducting new employees, today stands as an organizational imperative.

However, we've observed through the chapters, that the status of training and development as an organizational practice stands at different stages in different countries. The reasons for the differences are manifold. While various countries vary in economic growth, cultures, style of management, customs, perceptions

etc. they vary in the organizational training and development practices too. The various country experiences offer several learning insights into the factors that can affect the training and development activity in an organization. In this chapter, we shall take a stock of those sundry factors that are likely to have an incidence on employee training. Upon observing the experiences of various countries with respect to training and development as an organizational practice, the chapter offers the EGGPIC (Economy-Globalization-Government Policies-Organizational policies-Integrity-Culture) Model that describes the factors that can affect the training and development activity in an organization.

1) Economy

Economy is undoubtedly a factor that affects employee training. As we observed in chapter 1 Integrated Report, the author suggests that “in most countries today, knowledge work has been recognized increasingly as a key sector of the economy, both in terms of economic outputs and political clout.” Thus this changing paradigm at the economic level certainly stands as a promising factor in emphasizing on the knowledge management and thus promote the need for employee training and development.

The author in the paper says clearly “a key consequence of this trend is the realization of knowledge as a primary source of wealth creation and competitive advantage.” He adds Drucker’s observation to his findings who says “we are entering a “knowledge society” where the basic economic resource is no longer capital, natural resources or labor but “is and will be knowledge” in which, knowledge workers will play a central role.” This paper on the Asian countries is indicating towards paradigm shift in the economy’s priorities and thus introducing knowledge as the buzzword of the next society, and thrusting on employee training as sacrosanct for any organization.

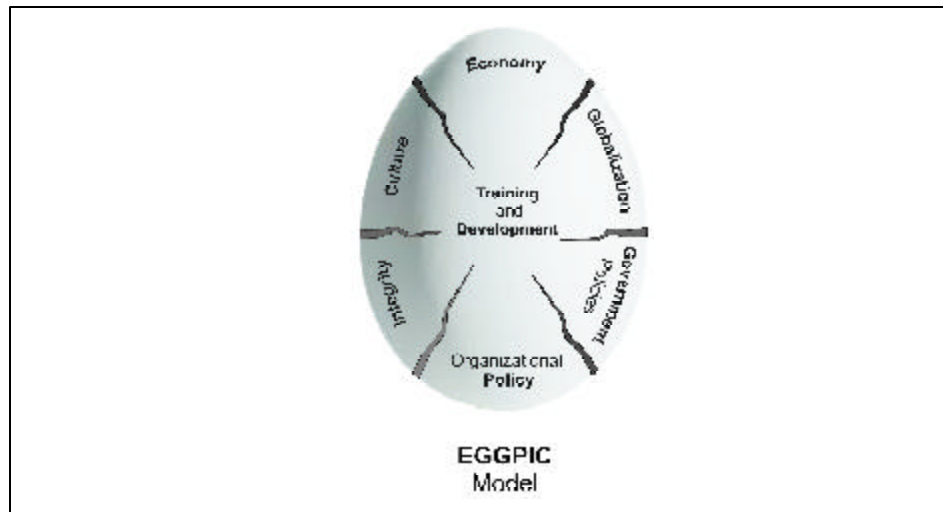
2) Globalization

Undeniably, globalization has been shaking the world and waking the sleeping countries up to the call of growth and development. Simon McGrath in his seminal paper “Globalisation, Education and Training: Insights from the South African Automotive Sector” says “Education and training have a strong relationship with globalization”. The paper further identifies three major elements of this

relationship which include the quantity and quality of existing education system and training in a country which helps evaluating the country's involvement in globalisation. According to Te Velde, the focus is needed on how the human resource development policy seeks to combine with the organization strategy for a positive incidence of globalisation and its overall human resources development. As a result of the wake up call from the globalization, South African companies appear to be reacting towards the development of the human resource development. The ubiquity of globalization is certainly a strong factor that urges the organization across the world to groom their workforce to face the competition from the global players.

3) Government Policies

Government is unquestionably among the front-runners in any country to volunteer in nourishing the human resources of the country. While a company's responsibility is to ensure employee training as long as he is associated with the company, government's responsibility is much deeper and broader. The government must take charge of improving every individual from the very grassroots levels by establishing a proper education system, unbiased vocational training programs thereby making the people employable. As suggested in the chapter 'Training and Development – South African Experience', "the formal education system in South Africa is paralyzed by a lot of inconsistencies and incoherence. The education and training system also reflect a lack of co-ordination characterized by poorly articulated programs, weak connections with the industry, which in turn result in ineffective skill profile of the South African citizens." This clearly suggests lack of focus on human resource development in education resulting in poor employee training practices. Taking a cue from the South African experience, the governments must appreciate the inevitable correlation between the education system in the country and the training practices at work place. Thus, we can infer that the government need to play an instrumental role in sowing the seedling of human resource development by correcting and improving the education in the society. Nonetheless, government's role does not end there. Government plays a crucial role with respect to the workplace training too. Government should act as an effective catalyst by laying down the policies in favor of employee training, organizational improvement and thus, economic growth.



4) Organizational Policy

Incidence on training and development is also to a great extent determined by the organization policy and its clauses towards training needs. As we observed in the Chapter 'Workplace Training in Europe', the organization policies in turn are determined by several factors viz: education levels of employees, gender, family background, research and development activity in the organization, size of the firm and scale of its operations, sponsorship of the training, labor markets, the pension and other government policies. Organizational training policies are derivative of several factors. If the companies fail in striking balance among the several factors, there are possibilities of training policies being biased and the privilege of training program concentrated among a few employees. Hence, the companies should be meticulous while drawing the training policies to ensure that the training programs unbiased and rational in practice.

5) Employee Integrity and Self-responsibility

While the above mentioned were the factors affecting training at the economic, government and the organizational levels, employee training is also affected at the individual level. The employees under the employer's constant guidance should work towards inculcating employee integrity and self-responsibility, towards the growth of the organization and thus contributing towards the economy. In Chapter 1, the author claims: "Another challenge that is closely related to the need to

developing a culture of learning and innovation is how to encourage employees' self-responsibility for learning." He further illustrates that the report from Thailand aptly captures the point: "Training is becoming less about delivering knowledge per se but more about helping people to learn and find out the needs by themselves." Taking a cue from the comments, we may infer that the organizations should bring in place more innovative and stimulating development programs, which will prompt the employees to be proactive and self-motivated about the training needs and programs.

6) Culture Attitudes and Perceptions

Last but certainly not the least, we gather from the Chinese and the American experiences that training, at the individual level is significantly affected by the culture, attitudes and perceptions of the employees towards training. Jin Shen and Roger Darby in their paper, 'Training and Management Development in Chinese Multinational Enterprises' observe: "They (Chinese) adopt usually an ethnocentric approach to international training and development, and provide different levels of international training and management development for expatriates." In another paper titled 'Cross-cultural training of managers': An evaluation of a management development programme for Chinese managers, Mohamed Branine opines that "although considerable efforts had been made to train the largest possible number of managers, there was still a gap between what Chinese managers could do and what they had been expected to do in order to meet the demands of increasing economic reforms. Limited resources, inadequate means, traditional ways of learning, power relationships, are examples of some of the apparent obstacles to the efficient implementation of Western-designed and delivered programme of management development in China." That gives a clear indication that the Chinese culture is greatly influenced by the Confucianism and thus, the resulting in the perceptions and attitudes of the employees towards the employees training practices, which are different from and inferior to that of the global practices. Similar cultural variations are also observed between the Americas and even between the USA and Canada. One must remember that John Dalton's theory of survival of the fittest holds good even today. The countries cannot afford to hide in cocoons of their respective cultures. The organizations should race towards the best practices rather than adhering to cultural practices

and perceptions. The organizations must play a pivotal role in engendering the culture of best practices among the employees and make them more adaptable to the inevitable change.

To conclude, it is clear that in order to groom employees into a productive and competent human resource, a collective responsibility and collaborative effort on the part of employers, employees, policymakers, government, the regulators *et al.* and a strict and conscious adherence to the factors discussed in the EGGPIC model are imperative. This in turn promises to engender human resource development as a culture and create a common global platform for the development of employees across the companies globally.

(K B S Kumar is consulting editor at Icfai Books, a division of the Icfai University Press. He can be reached at kbskumar@icfaipress.org).