

Title: Assessing the Effectiveness of Post Graduate HRD Curriculum in Higher Educational Institutions: A Case Reflection of Indian Students in HEI's.

Rationale:

The advent of Industry 4.0 and resultant workplace and business changes across globe have introduced newer workplace settings, systems, configurations and competencies thereby demanding an improved employee performance and need for development of more work/outcome-oriented curriculum for students in their formative years of professional development and later conversion of same into aspired human resource development practitioners (Lim and Rager, 2015). This transition rather challenges primarily rests on the shoulders of the academic institutions to develop the students for meeting the workplace changes and henceforth the need for greater flexibility in HRD competencies has resulted in a widespread use of curricular approaches as a basis for a workplace learning provision (Gaudet and Vincent, 1993). Addressing the above stated urgency on the part of academic institutions, specifically the higher education institutions, that are recognized agents of infusing professionalism among the students the, institutions of higher education have moved toward educating more skilful trainers and HRD professionals; individuals better equipped to satisfy fast-paced changing business needs locally, nationally, and globally.

Globally higher educational institutions, over the past two decades, have benchmarked, adopted, tailor designed and implemented focused academic programs to educate prospective HRD students and practitioners in responding to the continuously evolving economic and social environments. Gauging historical US perspective on this dimension of developing aspiring HRD professionals since 2010, more than 78 higher educational institutions claimed that they had a master's and/or doctoral graduate degree program for HRD (Roberts, 2010). The HRD programmes/academic programmes with HRD curriculum across US have been firmly institutionalized in schools, professional institutions and different academic bodies, thereby reflecting adoption of HRD academic programmes a universal phenomenon, subsequent student acceptance as well. Despite of universal acceptance and institutionalization, several researchers have expressed concern about the considerable variation in program structure, curriculum content, institutional affiliation, and its academic and professional identity that need to be tailored and customized as per the local context, infrastructure and available human capital for developing HRD professionals and practitioners (Kuchinke, 2000, 2002, 2007; Reddick, 1997).

Responding to the above stated argument of developing HRD programs that are tailored as per the context, the study of Kuchinke (2002) acts as a reference frame to understand the architecture of HRD programs which means how HRD programs were designed and composed in terms of curriculum, course outline, intended outcomes and resultant implications for aspiring HRD professionals. The generalized observations that were deduced in majority of HRD program curricula were considered similar, and the content areas that surfaced across higher educational institutions included convergent instructional design, instructional delivery and evaluation, performance analyses, history and philosophy of the field, instructional technology, organization development, consulting, management of HRD, organizational learning, strategic and economic issues related to HRD, diversity issues for HRD, and international HRD respectively.

The international acceptance and endorsement of above said HRD curriculum/contents in HRD programs of higher educational institutions across US as a context has been aggressively researched, but exploring the architecture of HRD programs in terms of curriculum, course outline, intended outcomes and resultant implications for aspiring HRD professionals in Indian subcontinent needs research attention as India is on the forefront of becoming USD 5 trillion economy by 2024-25 primarily on the basis of human capital advantages it possess in terms of its rich demographic dividend with working-age populations (over 58 per cent), with an average age of 29 and India's growth story largely shoulders on the education sector (Human Resource Development Sector Report, Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office, Niti Aayog, 2021). Having one of the largest education systems in the world, India owns 993 Universities, 39,931 colleges and 10,725 Stand Alone Institutions. The Higher education segment in India comprises of central universities, state universities, deemed (public and private) universities, Institutes of National Importance and private universities (state aided private and unaided private institutes). With such a giant academic footprint across globe the professional programs in universities are continuously being designed in order to make their graduates more competitive, in terms of professional development and industry readiness. Riding on this giant academic wheel, that higher education institutions of India, are coping with the newer demands of workplaces by making academic programmes more outcome oriented and industry ready with integration of future, professional, industry relevant skills for better employability.

The massive academic footprint of Indian higher education system presents a rich frame of reference for researching the academic programs' viability against above mentioned criterion

that is professional development, employability, industry readiness and allied dimensions through assessment of students' perception towards the academic programs on the different above mentioned content criteria such as instructional design, instructional delivery and evaluation, performance analyses, history and philosophy of the field, instructional technology, organization development, consulting, management of HRD, organizational learning, strategic and economic issues related to HRD, diversity issues for HRD, career and leadership development, coaching and international HRD respectively.

Focus of the Paper: The present paper seeks to assess the perception of students for select academic programs of higher educational institutions of India. The select academic programs here refers to HRD programmes either as full credit programme or as major specialization /professional programmes with HRD as one of its core curriculum component undertaken by the post graduate students of select higher educational institutions of India. The select higher educational institutions comprising as scope for the present study shall be:

1) Public academic varsities as there is a preference for publicly supported higher education as 75 per cent university students enrolled in government and government aided institutes (All India Survey for Higher Education, 2021) 2) Successfully running MBA Programme or PGDBM programme with HRD as specialization being offered 3) HEI's offering HRD as a full time specialized academic programme.

The insights thereby drawn from the perception mapping shall provide the areas of concern and thereby shall lay the basis for reshaping post graduate courses for human resource development (HRD) offered by departments of education in Indian higher education institutions. Also, the naïve contribution shall be the India specific perspective as majority of studies focused only on graduate HRD programs or courses offered by academia in western countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom (Zachmeier, Cho and Kim, 2014), (Stewart, Mills and Sambrook, 2015).

Proposed Objectives of the Study:

1. Mapping the Perception of Post Graduate students of select HEI's towards overall HRD Curriculum/Program/specialization Content.
2. To assess the extent of awareness/familiarity of students with reference to the various HRD interventions.
3. To rank the preference of students for various HRD curriculum contents: instructional design, instructional delivery and evaluation, instructional technology, organization

development, consulting, diversity issues for HRD, career and leadership development, coaching and international HRD respectively.

4. To explore the reasons for the students' desirability of pursuing HRD program/course.
5. Additionally, the importance of each curricular content area of the post graduate HRD programs shall be assessed by the students against perceived employability.

Intended Research Methodology:

The present study is quantitative research work, wherein the survey instrument (both online-offline format) shall be administered. The target population for the present study comprise of post graduate students studying Full time Professional Programmes as Master of Business Administration Programme/Master Degree Programme with HRD as major specialization or HRD as full academic programme in select public universities in India, whose professional courses and programmes are duly recognized and accredited by the bodies like AICTE, UGC, NBA respectively. The rationale for using the Public Universities with professional programmes recognized by the above-mentioned affiliating bodies is that these recognizing bodies includes a large pool of academic institutions with post-graduate students pursuing HRD specialization, thereby making survey outreach more feasible and accessible.

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