

**S. S. Khanka.** *Human Resource Management: (Text and Cases)*. New Delhi: S. Chand & Company Ltd. 2007. 449 pages. Paperback. Indian Rs 300.00.

Human Resource Management (HRM) is a process of procuring, developing, maintaining and controlling competent human resource in the organisation so that the organisational goals are achieved in an effective manner. HRM has undergone tremendous change in its functions over the past 20-30 years. Many years ago, large organisations looked at the “Personnel Department,” mostly to manage the paperwork around hiring and paying people. But more recently, organisations consider the major role of HR Department as staffing, training and helping to manage people so that people and the organisation perform at the highest level of their capacity. The modern HRM views manpower as resource and asset of the organisation rather than just considering it burden on the resources. Usually large national and international businesses utilise these services due to their multidimensional operations and sizable employment. Small businesses carry out these activities by themselves to save cost associated with full-or part time help. However, they generally ensure that employees have—and are aware of—personnel policies conform to prevailing regulations. These policies are developed by the HRM professionals in the form of employee manuals and handbooks.

Today’s business world is truly a global village that is closely integrated and without geographic boundaries. In the current setting, HR must understand the implications of globalisation of businesses, technology changes, workforce diversity, changing skill requirements, continuous improvement initiatives, the contingent work force, decentralised work sites and employee involvement. The core function of HRM is now to ensure that employees can operate in the appropriate language and work in multicultural groups. Communications are understood by a multilingual work force who can operate in cultures that differ on variables such as status differentiation, societal uncertainty, assertiveness, individualism. It takes into account the global dimensions of assertiveness, future orientation, gender differentiation, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, individualism/collectivism, in-group collectivism, performance orientation, and humane orientation. It is pertinent to note that not all HRM theories and practices are universally applicable. HRM must understand varying cultural values. The changing world of technology has altered the way people work, changed the way information is created, stored, used, and shared.

The move from agriculture to industrialisation created a new group of workers—the blue-collar industrial worker. Since WWII, the trend has been a reduction in manufacturing work and an increase in service jobs. The emphasis is on technology that makes organisations more productive, helps them create and maintain a competitive advantage, provides better and more useful information. The changing world of technology is affecting HRM Practices, i.e., recruiting, employee selection, training and development, ethics and employee rights, motivating knowledge workers, paying employees market value, communication, decentralised work sites, skill levels, legal concerns, workforce diversity. It is the era of “Knowledge Worker”—individuals whose jobs are designed around the acquisition and application of information. The challenge is to make organisations accommodating to knowledge worker and diverse groups of people. In today’s workforce, minorities and women have become the fastest growing segments, the numbers of immigrant workers and older workers are increasing. This is increasing the importance of HRM through its different functions for better management of workforce.

Human resource development (HRD) is one of the major functions of an effective HRM system. But many people include HRM in HRD explaining that HRD includes the broader range of activities to develop personnel inside of organisations, e.g., career development, training, organisation development, etc. While HRM functions start from staffing of organisation and goes to management of employees training, their development, compensation, and implementation of personnel and management practices conform to various regulations besides their performance evaluation. The book under review "Human Resource Management: Text and Cases" logically explains all aspects of HRM in a simple and effective manner and enable readers to understand the key elements of HRM. The book is divided into 7 sections according to the main functions of HRM. The first section deals with the nature and scope of HRM, its evolution and development and strategic aspect. The section also explains the main objective, scope, and function of the HRM.

The section on acquisition and absorption includes the discussion on human resources planning, job analysis and design, recruitment, selection, placement, induction and socialisation. These functions provide the sound basis for organisation's future performance in the business world. Career planning and development is presented in the book with different models and explained with the help of case studies. The relationship among different HRM functions is elucidated by flow-charts. The depiction of relationship in this way is simple and effective. The next section is devoted to the discussion on employee's development. It covers career planning and development including training, executive development and organisation development. The issues of internal mobility and separations are also discussed in the section to highlight the importance of retaining good employees during the recessionary times. The discussion on salary and compensation is part of Section IV which mainly deals with the maintenance and retention. The concept of incentives is taken up in the section in the context of motivation. The discussion includes both monetary and non-monetary aspects of incentives to motivate employees for higher productivity and performance. Industrial relations and the role of trade unions is also discussed at length in the section that is another important aspect of employees participation in the decision-making process. Section V of the book includes the human resources accounting and need for the HR information systems. HRM in the international setting and its role in the virtual organisations is discussed in section VI. The discussion in this section highlights the importance of HRM in the changing environment. The last section is devoted to the case studies from Indian organisations which enhances the utility of the book for students.

The book is an important addition on HRM by taking into account all aspects of the subject and gives a well-knitted and balanced coverage of theory, contemporary issues and practical examples. Employee empowerment, potential appraisal, successful planning, strategic HRM in changing environment, leadership in new millennium are some of the emerging topics discussed in the book. Mr S. S. Khanka, the author of the book, is the Head of the Department of Business Administration and Dean of School of Management Studies, Aassam University. He has a teaching experience of more than 20 years and also international exposure.

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