HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING AND EMPLOYEE RESOURCING PROCESS

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Abstract

Human resource (HR)planning is used by organizations to ensure that they have the right number and the right kind of people at the right place and at the right time. Where this process is carried out properly, it brings maximum long-term benefits to both the organization and the individual employee. However, increasing environmental instability, demographic shifts, changes in technology and heightened international or global competition have created imminent role for Human resource planners considering the fact that employee resourcing processes have become more complex in the present time. The study takes a theoretical view of the concept of HR planning in the context of employee resourcing process; highlights the challenges facing the HR planners and their role in employee resourcing process. The study therefore, concluded that the HR planners should positively strive to eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote equality of opportunity when recruiting the workforce, adopt a consistent systematic approach, and giving equal opportunity the highest priority; these are likely to enhance equality of access and fair treatment in the selection of the most suitable candidates. The study thus, recommended that HR planning should be made more effective and result-oriented by linking it to employee resourcing process in the organization.

Keywords: Employee- Resourcing, HR-Planning, Interview, Labour-Market, Recruitment, Screening

Introduction

At the beginning of the 21st century, there were increasing claims that the route to achieve competitive advantage is through people. In a situation where competing organisations are exposed to identical non-human resources in the form of finance, raw materials, plants, technology, hardware and software, differences in performance among such organizations should be attributed to differences in the performance of people. Human resource represents the largest investment by an organisation hence it is important that organisation manage their stock of human resource. As noted by Pattanayak (2010), just like a man is known by the company he keeps, an organisation is known by the people it is comprised of. Human resource management is the strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization's most valued assets, that is, the people who individually and collectively contributes to the achievement of the objectives of the organization. It encompasses those activities designed to provide, motivate and coordinate the human resource of an organisation (Pattanayak, 2010).

In the course of drawing strategic plans by managers that are responsible to plan responses to the pressure for continuous changes; the attraction, recruitment and selection, utilization, development and future of the organization ought to be consistent with line functions such as finance, marketing and production among others. Either explicable or implicitly, all organizational strategies will contain human resource aspect. There are however, long-run debates on whether human resource managers should have an input in the process of strategy making. A crucial element and the crux of the matter in this is the degree to which a link exists between human resource practices and performance of an organization. In recent years, there have been growing efforts to test or establish a causal   link between good Human Resource Management and high organisational performance. It might be argued that the management of people as a strategic asset provides an opportunity to embrace the high performance paradigm of human resource management actually based on high trust, high commitment and high productivity (Godard & Delancy, 2000).

Human resource inputs might emphasize the importance of integrating policies and procedures with a business strategy in which people are seen as a factor of production required to ensure that the business plan is fruitfully implemented. The more business plans are based on figures and mathematical models, the more the need for information about people to be expressed numerically and also for plans about people to be designed to fit into the business plan. The growth of what is Human resource planning technique through the 1960s provided such information and incorporation of same into comprehensive computer models were a key factor in the development of human resource functions.

In this regard, this study is geared towards examining the importance and establishing the role of human resource planning as a corporate activity that drives other human resource functions particularly employee resourcing process.

Literature Review

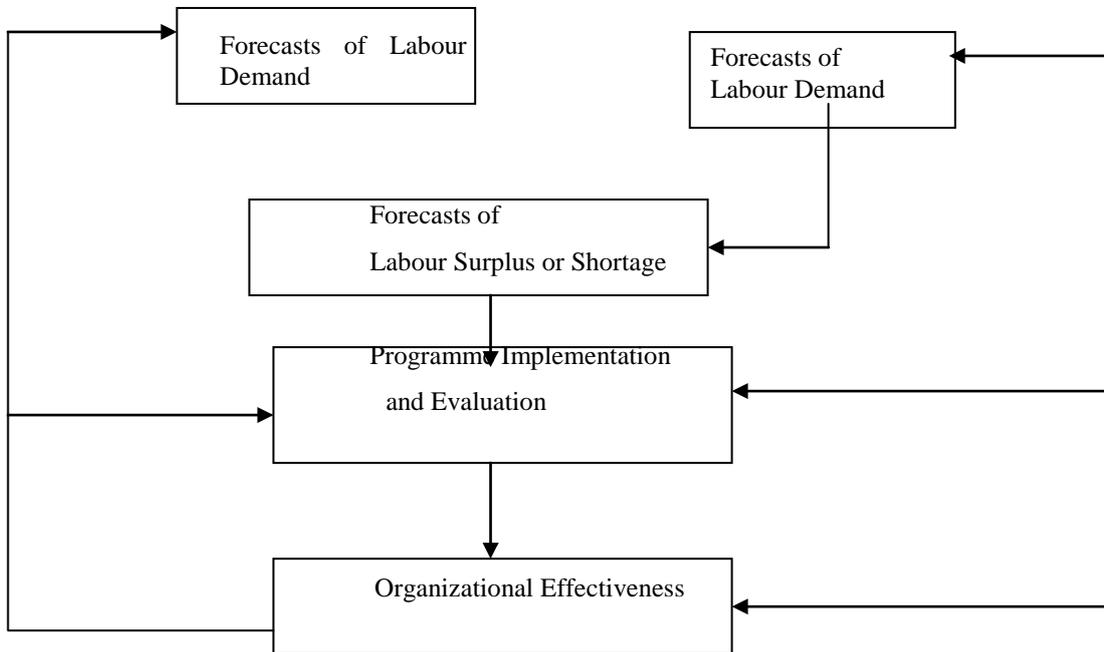**Human Resource Planning and Employee Resourcing**
Planning is carried out within the goals and general policy framework of the firm or agency. It is also affected by public policies, changes in technology and availability of manpower. Planning involves the forecasting of human resource needs in organizations and designing appropriate actions such as recruitment, training and career development based on identified needs. The main functions of human resource department are: human resource planning, selection and recruitment, training and development, career planning, transfer and promotion, risk management, performance appraisal, etc. Human resource planning is a vital ingredient for the success of the organization in the long run. To achieve their objectives, organisations follow certain procedures that ensure they have the right number and the kind of people at the right place and time.

Human resource planning has been a function of management since the origin of modern industrial organisations as noted by Pattanayak (2010), Alfred Marshal observed in 1890 that the head of a business must assure himself that his managers and other employees are the right mix for their work and are actually doing their work well. On his part, Fajana (2002) states that human resource planning deals with the systematic and continuing process of analyzing a firm's human resource needs under mutating conditions and developing workforce policies suitable to the longer-term effectiveness of the organization. It is a vital part of corporate planning and budgeting procedures since, human resource costs and forecasts both affect and are affected by longer- term corporate plans.

Human resource planning involves a complex task of forecasting and planning for the right numbers and the right kinds of personnel at the right places and at the right time to perform activities that will benefit the organization in accomplishing its objectives and in helping its members to satisfy their needs. Human resource planning will be successful to the extent that it properly coordinates each of enumerated elements and it is essentially the fitting of resources to business needs in the longer term or shorter term as the case may be.

Human resource planning provides answers to such questions as:

    i)   How many people will be needed?
    ii)   What skills, knowledge and competencies will they require?
    iii)   Will existing human resource meet the identified need(s)?
    iv)   Is further training and development needed?
    v)   Is recruitment necessary?

    vi)   When will the new people be needed?
    vii)   When should training or recruitment start?
    viii)   What other "People" implications are there in such areas as productivity and commitment?

Figure 1: Process of human resource planning

| Forecasts of Labour Demand | | Forecasts of Labour Demand |

(Figure: boxes showing "Forecasts of Labour Demand", "Forecasts of Labour Surplus or Shortage", "Programme Implementation and Evaluation", "Organizational Effectiveness" connected by arrows)
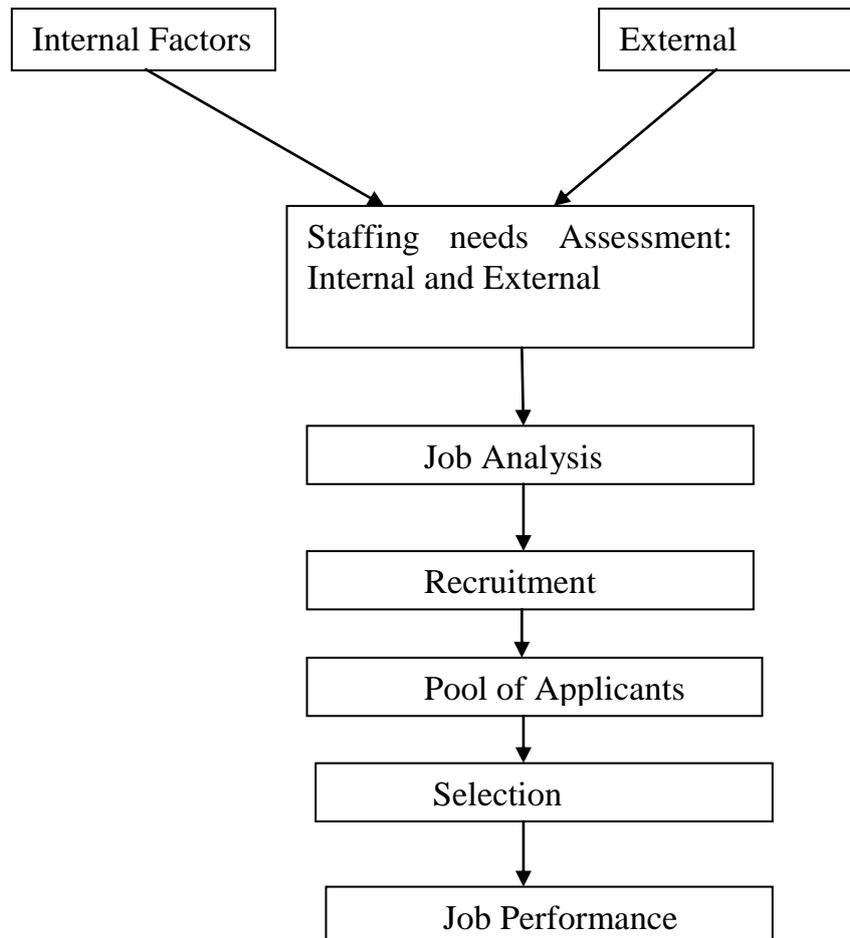
Source: Noe (2000: 147)

The above figure illustrates the process of human resource planning. Employers need to see the attraction and retention of employees as a part of the employment relationship based on a mutual and reciprocal understanding of expectations as well as attempt to predict how a potential employee might behave in future and make a contribution to the organisation's requirements (Newill & Shackleton, 2000). Many approaches to recruitment and selection tend however, to emphasize the power of employers. For example, traditional approaches attempt to attract a wide choice of candidates for vacancies before dropping out those who do not match the criteria set in job descriptions and personnel specifications for the job.

Employees seen as part of the primary internal market become the focus for the bundle of human resource practices (Cooke, 2000). They bring about increased motivation, an increased acceptance of responsibility, dependent skills and greater commitment, providing the organization with a competitive edge. Such employees become part of an organization's core workforce while employee resourcing process represents the entry point of activities. Employee resourcing is the modern term for what has traditionally been referred to as recruitment and selection. The two terms are however used interchangeably among writers. Approaches to the recruitment and selection of employees which forms the secondary internal market could be subject to less screening at the point of entry, attention being paid mainly to possession of required skills. The employees might be recruited and selected by cheaper methods but must be aligned to organizational strategy via specification of required competencies.

Employee resourcing is a critical process for organizations. In recent years, there has been growing evidence that the formation of a positive psychological contract with employees provides the basis for a positive outcome in terms of organizational commitment and motivation. Recruitment and selection are vital tools in the formation of the expectations that form such a contract. With emphasis on a two way flow of communication; employees select an organization that offers them better working conditions and incentives for long term career.

Figure 2: Shows an overall view of the stages of Employee Resourcing and the relationship of these processes with human resource planning:

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┌──────────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────┐
│ Internal Factors │                    │     External     │
└──────────────────┘                    └──────────────────┘
              ╲                          ╱
               ╲                        ╱
                ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                │ Staffing   needs   Assessment:│
                │ Internal and External         │
                └──────────────────────────────┘
                              │
                ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                │         Job Analysis          │
                └──────────────────────────────┘
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                ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                │          Recruitment          │
                └──────────────────────────────┘
                              │
                ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                │       Pool of Applicants      │
                └──────────────────────────────┘
                              │
                ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                │           Selection           │
                └──────────────────────────────┘
                              │
                ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                │        Job Performance        │
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Source: Authors (2018).

Armstrong (2009) states that recruitment and selection process come in four stages: defining requirements, attracting candidates, selecting candidates and placing them on the job. Correspondingly, Robertson and Smith (2001) support Armstrong's viewpoint and added personality assessment to the lists guided by tests and interviews. The British Psychology Society (BPS) (2007) concludes that the ability tests measure the capacity for: verbal reasoning, numerical reasoning, spatial reasoning and mechanical reasoning.

The CIPD (2007) in the course of reviewing all the assessment methods notes that online testing is growing in popularity. Online test are mostly used for recruiting graduates and when dealing with high volumes of applicants. Giving more grounds and credence to online tests, the International Test Commission (ITC) (2005) states in its guidelines that only the use of websites mounted by test, publishers could offer validated psychometric tests; test alone may not provide a complete assessment of an individual as it does not contain other ancillary information. Test-takers must be provided with clear instructions on how to take the test and relevant feedback provided to them; and when individuals take an unsupervised test, procedures should be established to check if the test-takers original responses are consistent with the responses to the confirmatory test.

Ulrich and Brockbank (2005) propose four roles for HR planners which include: managing strategic HR, employee contribution, transformation and change and HR infrastructures to support line managers. Guest and

King (2004) in their research found there was little emphasis on the first three roles; instead the focus appears to be placed on managing infrastructures. In their revised model, Ulrich and Brockbank (2005) gave equal emphasis to the need for HR people to be administrative experts, employee champions and change agents. In the opinion of Syrett (2006), whatever strategic aspirations senior human resource practitioners have may amount to nothing if the functions they represent cannot deliver the essential transactional services their internal line clients require.

Boxall and Purcel (2003) observe that many organizations including the well resourced ones still imagine that recruitment is all about attracting young workers fresh from schools or after only a few years in the labour market. However, according to Pilbeam and Corbridge (2002) recruitment and selection extends to attracting suitable candidates, eliminating unsuitable candidates and converting the successful candidates to an effective employee.

Integrating Human Resource planning with Business/Strategic Plan
The integration of business plan and HR planning is likely to be more appropriate in a stable market place with largely passive (and static) customers and with scope of long-term forecasting because of the predictability of demographic change. This applies to many public sector enterprises and it is happening under the name of workforce planning (Employers' organization for Local Government, 2003).

Brian (2006) posits that a well interpreted business plan seeks to address varying important issues. Guided by the business plan, HR planners will have well designed and sound sourcing demand programmes for different dates in future which then can be compared with the rough supply programmes by striking a balance.

Linking HR planning to business planning interprets these plans in terms of people requirement. However, it may influence the business strategy by drawing attention to ways in which people can be developed and deployed more effectively to enhance the achievement of business goals as well as focusing on programme that might have to be resolved to ensure that the people required will be available and will be capable of making the necessary contributions (Armstrong, 2009). Taylor (2008) stressed that employers quite simply prefer to wait until their view of the future environment is clear sufficiently for them to see the whole picture before committing resources in preparation for its survival. The perception is that the more complex and turbulent the environment, the more important it is to wait and see before acting. However, Farnham (2006) departs from Taylor in theory and practice. Farnham states that HR planning is important because it encourages employers to develop clear and explicit links between their business and HR plans and integrates the two more effectively. It also allows for better control over staffing costs and numbers employed and enables employers to make more informed judgements about the skills and attitude mix in organizations. Farnham (2006) expresses displeasure that organizations give little time to HR planning because of lack of resources and skills, time and effort required and absence of relevant data to do so.

On strategic role of HR planners, Wright et al (2004) stress that human resource planners contribute to the development of business strategies. The emphasis on quantities flow and mathematical modelling which people appear to be the main concern of HR planning in the 60^s and 70^s is at least complemented by and integrated with a qualitative view of people whose performance was at core of business strategy (Legge, 2001).

Dainty (2000) holds the view that a workforce can save the organization a lot of money and at the same time add competent staff to the organization to surpass business target. In support of the foregoing view, Hunger and Wheelen (2003) state that HR alignment implies integrating decisions concerning employees with decisions regarding the outcomes a business is attempting to reach in line with the objective of the company in question.

The penalties for not staffing an organization correctly are costly. Understaffing loses the business economies of scale and specialization, orders, customers and profits. Overstaffing on the other hand is wasteful and expenses. If sustained, it is costly to eliminate because of modern legislation in form of redundancy payments, consultation, minimum period of notice etc. Very importantly, overstaffing reduces competitive efficiency of the business enterprise (Aina, 2005).

Challenges, Problems and Issues of Human Resource Planning
Human resource planning involves projecting how many people will be needed to fill position in an organization. This planning occurs in a changing environment. Organizations study their short-term and long-term needs in hiring new employees. Uncertain economic conditions such as trade competition and changes in technology are example of contingency that can make an organization to adjust its hiring needs.

Hiring new employees can be a challenging part of human resource planning. People can be complicated elements and working with them could portray harrowing experiences. Furthermore, one has to navigate through state and corporate rules, policies and procedures, and also deal with different types of personalities, needs and crises. Understanding some of these challenges one may face in the course of human resource planning could help for hitch-free HR planning when problem(s) arises:

1. **Employee Attitude:** The unfortunate side of human resource planning is dealing with difficult and problematic employees. As in life situation, workplace is staffed with different kinds of people coupled with other negative tendencies which employers must contend with. Human resource personnel are often called to assist with mediation, coaching and even disciplinary actions to foster harmonious and orderly work environment. To prevent hiring problematic employees, human resource planners must use valid and reliable screening instrument. However, it is important to keep documentation of the hiring process and clearly define expectations from the potential applicants.

2. **Workplace Diversity:** Companies must encourage absorption of different talents and skill-sets from all spheres of life to promote expansion, globalization and progress. Diversity can help foster a productive and innovative work environment as blending of new ideas, different perspectives, as well as different approaches to work and problem-solving will not only be result-oriented but also rewarding to the employer.

3. **Mismatch between Applicants' Skills and Jobs:** An organization may find it difficult to fill vacant positions and consequently engage the services of a Consultant. This might be due to pressure or more demand within the organization and not because there is no available talent in the job market. Another reason is likely to be that the organization's recruiting strategies are not attracting the right talent. Being unable to fill positions necessary to achieve operational goals leaves an organization in a weak business position. Consequently, forecasting human resource needs should be supported with effective recruitment, replacement and retention policy framework.

Demographic Changes: Environmental issues such as demographic changes are domiciled in an organization. Demographic changes affect the internal work climate. Differences in work value between generations, such as Baby Boomers and Generations X and Y, mean that employees have different preferences, motivations, interests, aspirations etc and these diverse inclinations have to be satisfied or addressed by the employer.

Role of HR Planning in Facilitating Employee Resourcing Process
HR planning has an important role in facilitating the entire recruitment and selection process in the following ways:

Facilitating the Pre-Recruitment Review: The facilitating of the Pre-recruitment review involves providing advice on whether any internal staff should be considered for filling the new staffing need and if so, what process should be used in considering them; or providing advice on whether the new staffing need should involve giving opportunity to both internal and external applicants.

Providing Expert Advice and Guidance: This focuses on providing expert advice and guidance in the early stages of the recruitment particularly with defining the position, drafting the advertisement, identifying and advising on suitable channels for advertisement, arranging for the announcement to be placed through the agreed channels, and advising on the composition of the selection committee and allied matters.

Functioning as an Expert Adviser to the Selection Committee: The HR planner functions as an expert adviser to the selection committee throughout the entire selection process particularly, by briefing the committee members on interview techniques and providing expert advice on the modalities, screening, short-listing, and making final decision.

Ensuring That Short-Listed Candidates Have Briefing Materials: The focus is on providing materials prior to the interview about the venue, employment conditions and when appropriate, lifestyle issues, and ensuring that all their questions on these issues are resolved after the interview for successful candidates.

Providing Pre-Interview Briefing Materials: HR planners should ensure that all shortlisted candidates are provided with an appropriate briefing package prior to their interview. The contents of the briefing package will depend on the nature of the position. All briefing packages should include information about the salary range for the position and a summary of key employment conditions and benefits. Candidates will need to make decisions and tradeoffs regarding the relative importance of these factors if they are offered the position. HR planners must ensure that interviewees have the required information so that the candidate who is offered the position is able to make a fully informed decision whether to accept the offer or otherwise.

Regional Stations' Capability for Recruitment: HR planners may not be able to provide the full range of services needed for recruitment purposes across all duty stations in an organization, particularly in smaller regional and field locations. In such circumstances, it is important for HR planners to identify which services can be provided and which cannot, all in a bid to ensure hitch-free implementation of the programme.

Ensuring that all Post-Interview Procedures Are Managed Effectively: The HR planner manages post-interview process effectively including those that affect the appointee's transition into her/his new role, workplace and duty station, and those that will sustain unsuccessful candidates' interest for future employment opportunities with the organization. HR planner adds value to the hiring process by taping from the experience of other recruiters or Consultants providing interview training on recruitment and selection process, and also looking at perceptions on the needs of the organization or department from the perspective of other experts outside the department or organization.

Post Interview Issues: Addressing candidates' personal issues are critical to successful recruitment. Some candidates may wish to raise some of the issues already discussed during the interview and other issues after the interview.
HR planners should also ensure that all post-selection formalities are conducted effectively for unsuccessful candidates to guarantee future interest in the organization's recruitment and selection process.

Future Practice in the organization's Recruitment and Selection Process: HR planners need to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of each selection process, develop necessary procedural changes for future recruitments (including pre- recruitment action), and provide suggestions to the selection committee to make their task more objective and rewarding.

Conclusion

Recruitment is the phase that immediately precedes selection. Its purpose is to pave the way for the selection process by producing ideally the smallest number of candidates who appear to be eligible either in performing required tasks or developing the ability to do so within a period of time acceptable to the employing organization. The crux of the matter is that the employing organization should not waste resources in examining the credentials of people whose qualifications do not match the requirements of the job. This is clearly in the interest of both the employing organization and the applicants. The objective of a recruitment procedure is to attract genuinely suitable candidates and carefully examine their credentials in order to produce a shortlist for further screening in the selection process

Equally, the HR planners are committed to ensuring that the workplace is a fair and just environment for all employees. This means that access to employment within the organization and subsequent training and promotion will be made available to all applicants on an equal basis. The HR planners positively strive to eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote equality of opportunity when recruiting the workforce. In sum, a consistent systematic approach giving equal opportunity highest priority is likely to lead to equality of access and fair treatment in the selection of the most suitable candidates for each post in an organization.

Recommendations

The following are recommended to ensure an effective and efficient human resource planning:

i.   Human resource planners/managers must go beyond recruitment and selection process. They should perform other personnel functions. They should address employees' training and development needs. They must source for resources inside and outside the organization to ensure that employees develop the required skills and competencies. Effective communication and co-ordination between line managers and human resource planners could result in identification of training and development needs that exceed current requirements and thereby forecasting the number of personnel that may be required at any given time and this may in turn aid the recruitment and selection process.

ii.   By tying performance reviews, promotions and salary increases to specific corporate goals, human resource planners may truly measure employees' competency level, and alignment which requires a strong relationship between human resource management and business plans. This focus or paradigm should be reinforced when the company is recruiting and selecting new employees to ensure there is a balance between HR planning and corporate plans.

iii.   Once qualifications and skill sets are determined, the next step is to identify the availability of

workers in the labour market that possess the required skills. Attracting, recruiting and selecting applicants are components of the overall employment process. Effective recruitment and selection process saves time and money. Turnover is costly for both start-up and established business. Therefore, the essence of these processes is to make wise and effective recruitment and selection decision that should guarantee higher levels of employee retention. HR planners should strive to get it right in order to add value to organizational development and progress.

iv. There should be a recruitment policy in the organization which must be based upon corporate goals and needs. The criteria for selection and preferences should be based on merit.

v. There should be practice of equal opportunity in recruitment and selection policies devoid of discrimination.

vi. HR practitioners should align organizational values with employees' values upon selection.

vii. Internal employees should be given priority in recruitment and selection process to avoid exhibition of negative attitude to work.

viii. The process of recruitment and selection must be thoroughly assessed under both stable and unstable economic environment and labour market conditions.

ix. The organization must put good transition programme (succession planning) in place to make recruitment and selection process flawless.

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