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HRM Practices in Indian Consultancy Firms

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Abstract

Job consulting is a knowledge-intensive industry, in which human resources are considered to be the most important asset. This industry, which had been flourishing until recently, has attracted the interest of academia, private business, public authorities and even journalists. As a result, a broad range of issues related to this sector have been explored in detail. However, only a few contributions deal with personnel or Human Resource Management. There are two possible explanations for this lack. Due to its uniqueness and strategic importance, information about human resources has been treated by consulting firms with a great deal of confidentiality. This has been confirmed by our own experience. On the other hand, human resource management in consulting firms has just recently gained a more "explicit" and "formal" shape, thus, making it a subject of researchers' and consultants' interest.

Therefore, the main intention of this paper is to provide an insight into those areas as yet barely touched on by delivering a specific and fairly concrete idea about the role and different facets of human resource management in Naukri.com, Monster.com and Timesjob.com consulting firms. It is mainly aimed at the potential clients and applicants of consultancies and, of course, at scholars looking for empirical evidence with regard to the topic. Further, we can imagine that this research could be a useful source for consulting firm management in a practice-oriented manner.

Key Words: Job Consultancy Frim, Job Satisfaction, Performance Appraisal, Recruitment, Training, Job Seeker, Placement Agency

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1. Introduction

Naukri.com was founded in 1995 by Sanjeev Bikhchandani when India had only 14,000 Internet users. Today, he is churning out strategies to make Naukri.com the most dominant Internet Company in the country. The Founder and Managing Director have taken the company to new heights. As on March 2011, Info Edge had established 67 offices in 41 cities in India, as well as two offices in Dubai which primarily engage in sales, marketing and payment collection. The company also has six subsidiaries and one associate company.

Since its inception, Naukri.com has seen continued growth while outperforming its competitors in every sphere. Naukri.com is a recruitment platform that provides hiring-related services to corporate/ recruiters, placement agencies and to job seekers in India and overseas. It offers multiple products like Resume Database Access, and Response Management tools and its services include Job Postings, and recruiter branding solutions on the site. With 200000 jobs live at any point, Naukri.com serviced over 35500 corporate clients in 2009-2010.

2. OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

The study focuses on few Objectives and those are as follows:

- To study the various aspects of HRM Consultancy industry.
- To study the challenges faced by the HRM in consultancy in the infancy.
- To study the changes HRM in Consultancy firms brought in the success rate of the industry due to having the good talent pool availability.
- To study the duties, responsibilities and issues of care and concern for others that arises within employment and in HRM in Consultancy firms.
- To study and analyze recent and other long-standing debates on problems in HRM in Consultancy firms.
- To study the conceptual framework of HRM in consultancy firms.

3. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

- H 01:- The role of Human Resource in Job consultancy firms is not different from the other businesses. The challenges and the prospects for the human resource are same in the consultancy business as in other forms of business.
- H 02:- HRM practices in Job Consultancy firms are of high standards that help in more employee satisfaction.
- H 03: The employee productivity in Job Consultancy firms is above average

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research design

The methodology used during the research study was as follows:

1. Empirical study

The empirical study consisted of three parts:

a) Survey

The survey was conducted amongst the management and staff by using a questionnaire for analysis, initially compiled by the researcher.

b) Publications, books and magazines



Numerous publications, books and magazines, reports and articles have been written about HRM practices in Consultancy firms and about Naukri.com. Due to the fact that these companies have a "virtual" nature, we have gathered information from both on-line and off-line sources.

The Bibliography classification in this study has the following structure:

Off-line Sources:

- Articles and News from both Journal and National and International newspaper.
- Human Resource Management Journals.

On-line Sources:

- Specialised Web pages on information needs within the scope of the HRM in a consultancy industry.
- Web pages from the "virtual" press with news and opinions about the latest news and trends in Naukri.com which is an online portal.
- Corporate Web pages of Naukri.com.
- Specific portals and sites: recruiting agencies, executive search, public sector, and out placement.

c) Data analysis

The method used to interpret the data was to input the data into a spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel . This was then forwarded to a statistician who analyzed the data by means of a statistical computer program to present the researcher with tabular and graphical data. The results have been shown in Factor Analysis.

Once the readings had been compiled and classified, the next step was the field group, with specific surveys, with its own target sample and content. A questionnaire consisting of 9 questions was given to the employees of Naukri.com so that we can know their responses on HRM Practices in their company. The questionnaires were filled by the employees working in these companies. The results of this survey enhance the prior documentary research in defining the feedback on their job satisfaction and turnover in Naukri.com throughout Research Objective.

4.2 Description of Data

Primary data was collected from a sample of 100 randomly selected employees working in Naukri.com and area covered in Noida, Hyderabad and Chandigarh offices. Two hundred questionnaires were dispatched to the employees working in Naukri.com.

A total of 100 filled questionnaires were received. The respondents were also associated Naukri.com at various tiers of management.

Five points rating scale was used to measure the response. The scale ranged from five (strongly agree) to one (strongly disagree).

5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of literature identified nine essential HRM practices namely; recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, career planning, Job definition, compensation and reward, and employee participation. These practices have been used in the present study to evaluate the HRM in Naukri.com, and how much percentage of employees is satisfied and that their performance is up to the mark as compared to other companies. Recruitment and selection primarily aims at attracting maximum number of highly talented applicants and selecting the best to achieve competitiveness. The process entails concerted efforts by Naukri.com management to



ensure implementation enduring success of organizational strategy. **Cisco (2006)** argued that without excellent induction, the execution of organizational strategy may vacillate.

Effective Job descriptions are based on objective information obtained through job analysis, an understanding of the competencies and skills required to accomplish needed tasks, and the needs of the organization to produce work. Job descriptions clearly identify and spell out the responsibilities of a specific job. Job descriptions in Naukri.com, also include information about working conditions, tools, equipment used, knowledge and skills needed, and relationships with other positions.

Effective selection system in Naukri.com, based on modern, scientific and need-based tests is essential to affect desirable selection. Considerable resources are needed to ensure the effectiveness of these selection tests. Compatibility of individual and organizational value is an essential dimension that should receive priority for sustained retention. Naukri.com, HR practices following the effective selection and Career planning process.

Training and development generate tangible outcome (improved productivity, quality of products and services, and resource optimization), and intangible results in terms of enhanced self esteem, high morale, and satisfaction of employees due to acquisition of additional knowledge, skills, and abilities. **Kun (2000)** stressed that companies should invest heavily in training the workforce for implementation of customer focused strategy. **Blair and Sisakhti (2007)** found that expenditures on training and development yield enormous benefits.

Researchers have concluded that investment in training yields strategic advantage to the organizations (Bitner and Zeithmal, 2001). Naukri.com, Strategic focus on training, acquisition of new skills based on firms' future needs, training in hard and soft skills, and evaluating effectiveness of training are vital to achieve enduring results.

Career development has psychological meaning to the employees. Researchers argue that organizations should pursue participative mechanism to develop career related objectives of employees, make effective plans, implement and monitor the effectiveness of these plans to achieve employees' career objectives.

Strong evidence exists in literature that organizations with effective training pursuits experience lower employee turnover. Research has also shown that comprehensive training and development activities are positively related to productivity reduce staff intention to leave, and organizational effectiveness. The research concluded that training and development positively affect business performance.

Performance appraisal is based on demonstrated achievement of performance objectives established pertaining to a specified job within a given time period (Arthur, 1994; Fey et al., 2000). This process plays a vital role in influencing the perception of employees about self and about their contribution toward organizational goals. The system should be based on fairness, objectivity, inclusiveness, ethicality, standardization, and widely communicated. Regular monitoring of the performance and constant feedback about performance is essential to get the desired results. This Research results show that the employees' participation in setting performance goals, clarity about performance standards, flexibility of the system to respond to the changing needs, and employee right to appeal against performance evaluation are vital attributes of an effective performance appraisal that contributes toward superior performance by workforce.



Compensation includes all forms of monetary returns and allied services provided to employees (Milkovich and Newman, 1999). A comprehensive compensation mix augmented by an effective system of disbursement plays an effective role in attracting the best candidates, shaping employees, behaviour and performance outcome, and facilitates retention of talents. Application of competencies enhances performance and improves effectiveness. Research results concluded that compensation and reward planning is a vital dimension of effective HRM policies in Naukri.com. This research on HRM in a consultancy firms specifically in Naukri.com, provide strong evidence that employee participation is positive and significantly affect on employee's job satisfaction and so that we can see lower turnover rate in Naukri.com. The results of present study are in harmony with the Hypothesis what we have assumed.

6. LIMITATIONS

The study has some limitations. The present study is restricted to a small sample size in one industry and may therefore limit the broad area of the findings. The respondents provided the information on HRM practices and perceived measures of organizational and employee's performance. The possibility of respondents' biasing in reporting may have happened. As we have said earlier, HR practice of the region from a historical point of view may turn out to be a difficult bit. Within the framework of a new region-wide research project, we plan to examine the role and function of consultants in changes of HR functions, knowledge transfer and practical applications of HR, and the historical evolution of these factors, at the naukri.com.

7. PILOT TESTING OF INSTRUMENT

The instrument was pilot tested using a sample of 40 employees from the population. The results of pilot study reflected appropriate adequacy (**Nunnally, 1978**). The Cronbach's alpha of variables ranged from 0.782 to 0.856 respectively.

8. SURVEY FINDINGS

8.1 Reliability and Validity of Data:

The results indicated Cronbach's alpha for questionnaire (30 items) was 0.931. The Cronbach's alpha for individual variable of recruitment and selection (0.785); training and development (0.802); performance appraisal (0.845); compensation and reward (0.794); and Job satisfaction (0.823) Job definition contained (0.783); career planning contained (0.801); employee participation (0.787); Employee Turnover (0.782) were found above acceptable level (**Nunnally**, **1978**). Results are at Table 1.

Table.1: Reliability Analysis

Variables Cronbach's	Cronbach's Alpha
Recruitment and Selection	0.785
Training and Development.	0.802
Performance Appraisal	0.845
Compensation and Rewards	0.794
Job definition	0.783
Job Satisfaction	0.823
Employee participation	0.787
Turnover	0.782
career planning	0.801



8.2. Results: Factor Analysis of The Source Credibility Scale

The nine HRM practices factors accounted for 53.74% of total explained variance.

- The first factor was categorized as Job Definition. This factor had three scale items and related to clear job responsibility, duties and its impacts on the overall mission of an employee and on Naukri.com organization. This factor accounted for 53.76% of explained variance and very important for understanding about the job profile before joining the consultancy.
- The second factor is Selection and this factor consisted of three scale items related to selection systems those who have desired knowledge and skills, merit-based hiring and selection on person-job fit philosophy. This factor accounted for (13.66%) of explained variance and considered as most vital part for employees and organization.
- The third factor i.e., 'training and development' had three scale items and comprised of need based training and development criteria, formal training programmes with focus on employee development, clear career path for individuals, acquisition of multi-skills, and formal evaluation of effectiveness of training. This factor explained (10.03 %) of variance.
- The fourth factor is 'performance appraisal' which accounted for (8.03%) of variance. This factor consisted of five items pertaining to objective, fair and transparent performance appraisal system with strategic congruence, quantifiable results, participation of employees in performance goal setting, continuous formal and informal monitoring, and feedback about performance, and provisions to employees to challenge the rating by supervisors.
- The fifth factor 'compensation and rewards' explained (5.47%) variance. The factor was defined by three scale items and was primarily related to competitive pay package that is disseminated to employees, performance-based pay, comprehensive incentive plans based on employees' contribution to firm's objectives, and combination of monetary and non-monetary rewards, and social recognition, and appreciation.
- The sixth factor is employee participation accounted for (3.8 %) of variance and comprised of two scale items regarding employees participation in decision making, provision of open door communication, autonomy in their functional areas, and opportunities to suggest improvements in the way things are performed.
- The seventh factor is Career planning accounted for (2.5%) cumulative value and comprised of three scale items. This is regarding the employee's career aspirations in the consultancy firms along with clear career path for employees those are working in Naukri.com consultancy.
- The eighth factor is Job satisfaction accounted for (2.36%) Variance and comprised of four scale items. This is about the employees those are working in Naukri.com firm how they are able to balance work priorities with their personal life and how happy they are for getting assistance given by the company in terms of money and leave for studies. This factor is a dependent variable and shows the results about the satisfaction level of Naukri.com employees are high and their productivity is up to the mark as compared to their competitors. They are also satisfied with the food provided by the company and with comfortable working conditions in Naukri.com as compared to other consultancy firms like Monster.com and Timesjob.com.
- The ninth factor is Employee turnover which scales four factors and tells the result that employees feel that this is the best of all organizations for which they work and they don't have any intention to resign from Naukri.com.



8.3 SURVEY FINDINGS

8.3.1 Job Description

The duties and responsibilities of different job roles are clearly defined and we know how our job impacts the overall mission of our company.

Rank	Rank S Disagree(1)		Indifferent(3)	Agree(4)	S Agree(5)
Employees responses	5	12	13	30	40

According to the survey responses Naukri.com employees felt that at the time of interview they were clear about their responsibilities and duties in their firms and they are highly satisfied with their job description because 70 employees out of 100 responses are in favour of Job description results.13 employees think that it doesn't matter to them and 17 employees disagree with this statement.

8.3.2 Selection

The selection systems are highly scientific and rigorous and HR team actively participates in the selection, and they selects those having the desired knowledge, skills and attitudes.

D 1	CD: (1)	D: (0)	T 1:66 (0)	A (4)	C A (F)
Rank	S Disagree(1)	Disagree(2)	Indifferent(3)	Agree(4)	S Agree(5)
Employees responses	9	9	32	38	12

According to this statement 50 respondents feel that their firm's selection procedure is good for them and their HR people select only skilled employees for their jobs and only 18 respondents feel that their firm's selection procedure is not following the proper way to select people.

8.3.3 Performance Appraisal

Appraisal system in our organization is growth and development oriented and Employees are provided performance based feedback and counseling.

	Rank S Disagree(1)		Disagree(2)	Indifferent(3)	Agree(4)	S Agree(5)
Empl	loyees responses	2	15	8	55	20

In these statement responses 75 employees out of 100 felt that their Performance Appraisal process is only for their development and growth and have received their feedback but 17 felt this Performance Appraisal system is not up to date and they are not satisfied with this practices in their firm and only 8 percent people feel that it doesn't matter to them.

8.3.4. Career Planning

Associates in my organization have clear career paths and they are known by his/ her immediate supervisor. Our organization prefers an internal employee whenever a vacancy exists.

1 0	1 /				
Rank	S Disagree(1)	Disagree(2)	Indifferent(3)	Agree(4)	S Agree(5)
Employees responses	5	13	25	45	12

In this question response 57 respondents are agreeing that the career planning in Naukri.com is doing good as a HR practice and they prefers internal employee for internal job application. But 18 per cent felt this practice is not up to the mark and 25 employee's doesn't care about this practice.

8.3.5 Compensation

In our organization, salary and other benefits are comparable to the market, and compensation is decided on the basis of competency or ability of the employee, and profit sharing is used as a mechanism to reward higher performance.



Rank	S Disagree(1)	Disagree(2)	Indifferent(3)	Agree(4)	S Agree(5)
Employees responses	1	60	5	30	4

61% of employees felt that whatever compensation they are getting in Naukri.com is not sufficient and not up to the mark but 34 per cent of employees felt this is not true and only 5 per cent of employees feel that it doesn't matter to them.

8.3.6 Training

Our organization conducts extensive training programs for its employees in all aspects of quality and employees in each job will normally go through training programs every year and most important Training needs are identified through a formal performance appraisal mechanism.

Rank	S Disagree(1)	Disagree(2)	Indifferent(3)	Agree(4)	S Agree(5)
Employees responses	0	2	8	28	62

Research study has been done to examine the effects of training and development on employee's satisfaction and performance. We found positive and significant link between investment in training and development activities and employees performance.90 percent of employees felt that they are getting proper Training and Development programs every year and these needs has been identified with the help of Performance appraisal. But, only 2% of employees feel they are getting proper Training for their jobs.

8.3.7 Employee Participation

Employees are provided opportunity to suggest improvements in the way things are done here and associates are encouraged to participate in making decisions that affect their work.

	0 1	- 0			
Rank	S Disagree(1)	Disagree(2)	Indifferent(3)	Agree(4)	S Agree(5)
Employees responses	2	8	15	55	20

Employee participation is characterized by wide ranging HRM related activities primarily focused on employee management. These practices include employees sharing schemes, cooperatives, industrial democracy, employees' involvement, HRM and high commitment work practices, team working, collective bargaining, employee empowerment, employee partnership in providing input in strategic decision making, and employees' right of information sharing at all levels and according to survey report 75 per cent of employees agreed with this statement that they are encouraged by their HR department to make decisions in their work. But only 10 per cent felt they are not allowed to make any decisions in a Naukri.com.

8.3.8 Job Satisfaction

I am able to balance work priorities with my personal life and I am happy with assistance given by the company in terms of money, leave for studies and the food provided by the company (meals, tea, drinking water etc.)

Rank	S Disagree(1)	Disagree(2)	Indifferent(3)	Agree(4)	S Agree(5)
Employees responses	5	12	13	30	40

This research on HRM in a consultancy firms specifically in Naukri.com provide strong evidence that employee participation is positive and significantly affect on employee's job satisfaction and



so we can see lower turnover rate in Naukri.com. The results of present study show that 70 per cent of employees felt that they are able to balance their personal life and professional life. 17 per cent don't agree with this statement and only 13 per cent find that it doesn't matter to them.

8.3.9 Employee Turnover

Overall, we have extremely satisfied with this organization as a place to work and for me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.

Rank	S Disagree(1)	Disagree(2)	Indifferent(3)	Agree(4)	S Agree(5)
Employees responses	16	19	20	35	10

According to the survey for employee turnover 45 per cent employees feel they don't want to change Naukri.com but 35 per cent employees felt that they would like to change their company in future.

9. FINDING OF THE STUDY

The Research contributes to understanding of HRM in a consultancy firms specifically a case in Naukri.com. The results of the study offered empirical support for the existence of a positive job satisfaction in employees of Naukri.com, consultancy. This study of Naukri.com, employees occurred in Noida, Hyderabad and Chandigarh office offered support for the Hypothesis that the role of Human Resource in a consultancy firms is not different from the other businesses. The challenges and the prospects for the human resource is same in the consultancy business as in other forms of business. HRM in Consultancy firms like Naukri.com is having up to the mark and maintain very high standards of employee satisfaction. The results indicate statistically satisfied practices of HRM like recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, job definition, career planning, compensation and rewards, and employee participation which leads to employee satisfaction and employee retention. The result of present study indicate that extensive use of an integrated approach to efficient HRM practices yield positive results in term of their effects on employee performance and Employee satisfaction. In context of Naukri.com, it would be pertinent to substantiate these results through empirical studies of other industries of the economy.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

On the basis of findings of this study, following recommendations and suggestions are submitted for better relations:-

- 1. Naukri.com, management should regularly review objectives, strategies and processes associated with people management practices in Naukri.com, and make changes or introduce innovations accordingly.
- 2. Managers should monitor the satisfaction and commitment of employees on a regular basis using standardised surveys.
- 3. In Naukri.com managers need to monitor employee perceptions of the policy of their organisations, examining areas which contribute towards a people-orientated culture.
- 4. Employees in Naukri.com need to receive adequate training and support to provide effective vision and direction for the organisation's people management strategies.



- 5. The central element of Naukri.com philosophy and mission should be a commitment to the skill development, well-being and effectiveness of all employees.
- 6. This paper throws some light on HRM and employee's performance link with the help of available literature. Besides quite a number of research activities are underway in consultancies firms, but this phenomenon is turning out to be an emerging issue for Academicians and researchers.
- 7. HRM practices should be reviewed across the organisation in the following areas: Recruitment and selection , Performance appraisal, Training, Reward systems, Design of jobs (richness, responsibility and control), Career planning

11. CONCLUSION

It is important to mention that the HR systems and tools in consulting firms are tending to shift towards those in traditional industries. Nevertheless, we believe that HRM practices of these companies are quite distinctive and thus are keeping their unique features and Employee productivity up to the mark. Many years of service as India's leading consultancies have shown that working as a consultant in these companies offer an ideal environment for strategic thinkers, those with an ability to solve problems, show flexibility and have a desire for continued professional training. The range of activities is challenging. It requires of each individual that he or she is aware of these demands. These job consultancy companies offer attractive and demanding work, and corporate culture, supportive environment and inspire the employees. They must constantly develop their human resources department in such a way that they can continue to offer their employees the outstanding opportunities that will keep them excited about working in these firms. Similar to client projects that these companies execute, they should continuously monitor and revise the current benchmarks for outstanding, motivating human resources development activities. These firms should take the elements which they consider to be reasonable and relevant both for the satisfaction and growth of their employees and for the firm's objectives and develop internal concepts for implementation in harmony with their specific environments. They should regard this form of innovative and active human resources practices as their responsibility towards their employees. In last decade, though HR practices in consulting companies have been focused to transform and improve its operational effectiveness, but few significant changes in real sense of improvement are done, and the actual impact of those transformations has seen only limited level of success. These companies know very well the importance of being nimble in today's dynamic and rapidly changing environment and should be ready to face the ongoing challenge of reinventing the importance as well as role of HRM in developing the most valuable assets - the employees.

Table-2: Rotated Component Matrix: Independent Variables (Only loadings above 0.5 have been, mentioned in table)

	been, mentioned in table)									
		Factor Name								
Item	Job	Selection	Performance	Career	Compensation	Training	Employee			
	Definition	Procedure	Appraisal	Planning	_		Participation			
Jobdef1	.752									
Jobdef2	.874									
Jobdef3	.700									



Sel1		.875					
Sel2		.878					
Sel3		.892					
App1			.889				
App2			.826				
App3			.872				
App4			.816				
App5			.922				
Cplan1				.903			
Cplan2				.852			
Cplan3				.641			
Comp1					.833		
Comp2					.911		
Comp3					.805		
Train1						.907	
Train2						.883	
Train3						.890	
Partici1							.932
Partici2	•						.932

Rotated Component Matrix: Dependent Variables (Only loadings above 0.5 have been mentioned in table) turn 2 has been removed due to poor loading.

Item	Factor Name	
	Job satisfaction	Turnover
Jobsat1	.861	
Jobsat2	.806	
Jobsat3	.621	
Jobsat4	.791	
Turn1		.902
Turn3		.927
Turn4		.917

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