

In-Plant Training at BSNL: Employees' perspectives

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Abstract :

Training is significant for managing organizational complexity that occurs because of the increased mechanization, automation and dealing in services of diversified lines of products and services. The primary purpose of In-Plant Training is to provide expertise in technical and managerial areas to employees of the organization. Since the importance of training is tremendous, it is interesting to know the employees' views towards in-plant training at BSNL, number one telecommunication company in the public sector, located in Mangalore. The important finding states that trainees were able to implement the training inputs in to practice which is an indication that the In-Plant training at BSNL was effective. Training conducted in BSNL enables the people to get ready for the higher level responsibilities and challenges. Training cannot be divorced from the practicalities of Telecom business in particular and any business in general. Training should be recognized as a fruitful activity which ultimately leads to the growth of BSNL and the people in it.

Key words : In-Plant Training, telecommunication, responsibilities, challenges, organizational complexity

Introduction

Every modern management has to develop the organization through human resource development. Employee training is the most important sub-system of human resource development. Training is a specialized function and is one of the fundamental operative functions for human resource management. Training increases employees' quality and quantity of output. Training is significant for managing organizational complexity that occurs because of the increased mechanization, automation and dealing in services of diversified lines of products and services. Since the importance of training is tremendous, it is interesting to know the employees' views towards in-plant training at BSNL, number one telecommunication company in the public sector, located in Mangalore.

Literature Review

It is training which changes and moulds employee's knowledge, skill, behaviour, aptitude and attitude towards the requirement of the job and the organization (Rao, 2006). Job and the organizational requirements are not static; they are changed from time to time in the view of technological advancement and change in the awareness of the total quality and productivity. The training bridges the differences between job requirements and employees' present specifications. However, the power of training in maneuvering the attitude of the employees definitely lies in its quality. As per Bulin (2001), to be successful, training programmes should carefully assess the training needs, who is

to be trained, who will be doing the training and the best method to use. Apart from these, there is also a need of culture to encourage people to participate and support them as they adapt to new ways of working. If the employees are unable to use new skills and ideas after participating in training programmes, frustration and disappointment and frustration might even result in careless attitude of the employees towards training. Pankaj (1988) has rightly stated that training should be pro-active, planned and continuous process. The trainers must have proactive attitude to the changing environment and also help organization as well as people to carry out their responsibilities promptly. With a view to bringing in the quality concept in training, organizations have to conduct training and retraining on an intense basis. Retraining evolves unlearning old concepts and acquiring new skills with a view to improve performance and to bring about measurable changes in knowledge, skills, attitude and social behaviour of employees (Chidambaram and Alamelu, 1997). It is not very easy to change the attitude of any individuals since it is their innate quality. According to Kanekar (1989), an attitude characteristically provokes behaviour that is aversive or acquisitive, favourable or unfavourable, affirmative or negative toward the object or class of objects with which it is related. Allport (1935) presents his definition of an attitude as 'a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related. As per Luthans(1998), attitudes make up the personality of the individuals. That means if we consider the individuals as the personality of the organization, then individuals with right attitudes give strength to the organization. People with the right attitude are bound to have right perspectives towards the training provided to them. Thus attitude brings an important concept of behaviour of an individual, which should be moulded in such a way as to get higher performance, efficiency and commitment from the employees. Changing the attitude is possible with the help of effective training. The author also supports the view of Krishnaswamy(1982), that the role of training is to bring about changes in attitude and sense of commitment among the employees; otherwise, the total exercise may go waste. Kilam (2000) suggests that training and other organizational development exercises being taken seriously, should aim for aligning attitudes and responses of the employees towards the organizational goals. Without suitably trained persons with the right attitude, the organization cannot achieve its goals (Kohli, 2002-03). This paper tries to make a sincere effort in analyzing whether training has helped in changing the attitudes of the employees for better or is it the training quality that needs to be taken care of to get higher results. Cogle (1976), conducted a study in Banks and concluded that an often neglected and little understood asset of any bank was the morale and satisfaction of its employees. Employee satisfaction was the result of many factors within the bank and effective training results in improving employee satisfaction. A proposition by Kane (1981), highlighted the factors such as quality of teaching, learning, the methodology adopted, quality of the faculty, infrastructural and physical facilities that are best suited to the local situation are essential and to meet the standards of professional training in the banking sector in particular and other sectors in general. Evaluation of training is a reliable indicator to know where one stands in terms of development, performance and it also enables preparation of appropriate future training plans

and processes. Birla (1999) has stated that evaluation of training raises the commitment and involvement of trainees in the work place. It also improves methods of work and enables people to work with minimum supervision and wastage to produce quality goods and services. Lynton and Pareek (2000) have highlighted the purposes of evaluation from the point of view of evaluation of training programme, training process, facilities and contents of training, training outcomes and post training factors. The authors stated that the objective of the training evaluation was also to ensure post-training support at work and maximization of cost effectiveness of training. To bridge the gap between the existing performance and potential performance is an important objective of training (Bhatia, 2007). Every organization big or small, economic or social, old or newly established should provide training to all employees irrespective of their qualification, skill and ability for the job. Training is not just delivered once to new employees, but offered continuously in every well run establishment. The need for training arises due to organizational complexity, increase productivity, reduce supervision time and mainly to match the employees specification with the job requirements and organization needs (Blanchard, P. N., & Thacker, J. W., 2007). For the organizational viability and transformation process the organization has to train its employees to impart specific skills and knowledge in order to organizational efficiency and to cope with the changing environment. Not many studies have been done to find out the effectiveness of In-Plant training with specific reference to public sector telecom company, BSNL. Thus in order to fill the gap in the relevant area the present study on, **In-Plant Training at BSNL: Employees' perspectives** were taken up. The study was carried on with the objectives mentioned below.

Objectives

- 1. To understand the process of training, schedule, types and need analysis at BSNL To diagnose the influence of gender in In- Plant training**
- 2. To know the influence of experience in the effectiveness of In-Plant training**
- 3. To analyse the effectiveness of in plant training in BSNL through employees' perspectives**

Research Methodology and Sampling

In order to understand the employees' perspective on In-plant training of BSNL, a well-structured questionnaire was prepared and data was collected from the employees working in different departments in BSNL Mangaluru. The data was analysed by applying chi-square test, t-test and ANOVA. The Descriptive Research research design was used to describe the point of view as it exists. Exploratory design was also applied with a view to investigate the facts to collect accurate and adequate data to describe phenomenon under study. Employees were selected by using the stratified random sampling technique in the present study to get estimates of each stratum in addition to the population estimates. **The total employees at BSNL are 250, out of which 187 respondents were taken as the sample for the study from all the divisions of the company.** This optimum size helped to fulfill the requirements of

efficiency, reliability and flexibility of the analysis and interpretation of the data. The sample chosen for the study is depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: List of employees derived from various sections

Departments	Designation	No. of employees
Staff section	STOAG	23
Establishment Section	STOAG, STOAP	10
Legal co-ordination cell	STOAP	05
Welfare Section	STOAG, STOAP	18
General Section	STOAG, STOAP	20
Building Section	STOAG, STOAP	12
Hindi Section	STOAG, STOAP	02
Commercial Section	STOAG, STOAP	04
E B	STOAG, STOAP	05
Planning Section	STOAG, STOAP	01
PRO Section	STOAG, STOAP	09
PRO/ Marketing	STOAG, STOAP	19
Pay Section	STOAG, STOAP	12
L & A Section	STOAG, STOAP	08
TRA-1	STOAG, STOAP	10
TRA-2	STOAG, STOAP	04
TRA Computer Section	STOAG, STOAP	11
TRA Sub Ledger Section	STOAG, STOAP	09
PGM Secretariat	STOAP	05

STOAG → Senior Telecom Office Assistant General

STOAP → Senior Telecom Office Assistant Phones

Out of 187 respondents chosen 101 were male, constituting 54.1 per cent and remaining 86 (45.9 %) were female. Out of the chosen respondents, 70 (37.43%) were in the age group of 46 to 50 years. As experience is the most important indicator to understand employees' perspective on training, it is essential to know the experience level of the employees. Table 2 shows the experience level of the sample respondents.

Table 2: Experience level of the employees

Experience	Respondents	Percentage
1-5 years	53	28.34
6-10 years	75	40.11
11 years	59	31.55
Total	187	100

It is essential to know the frequency of in-plant training attended by the employees as the perspectives given by them is very much dependent upon the amount of exposure they got through training.

Table 3: Frequency of In-Plant training attended by the employees

	Frequency	Percentage
less than 3 trainings per year	80	42.78
3-6 trainings per year	70	37.43
6-9 trainings per year	34	18.18
more than 9 trainings per year	3	1.61
Total	187	100

Findings

1. Schedule, purpose, types and training needs analysis of In-Plant training at BSNL: The In-Plant Training covers the program of all levels of personnel viz., executives and supervisors. In-Plant training is provided for all who are new to the company and for those who are already working in the company with the lack of knowledge of new technology. The schedule of In-Plant Training is decided in advance according to the availability of both the trainer and the trainees. The training calendar is intimated to all people concerned so that programme is conducted smoothly and successfully.

Purpose

The primary purpose of In-Plant Training is to provide expertise in technical and managerial areas to employees of the organization within campus. The second purpose of the In-Plant Training is to control the expenditure on training and third is to develop in-house faculty or the company faculty. The goal is achieved since in In-Plant Training, the trainer is made available from the internal sources and since the class room training and on the job training is conducted inside the premises of the organization, transportation, lodging and boarding cost are not incurred. This will help to reduce the cost, and develop the untapped manpower resources.

The most changing sector these days is Telecom and the modern technological developments in this sector are very high, graduate students of engineering branches (ECE, ETM, IT) are expected to familiarize themselves with most recent developments in telecom sector in order to move along with the development in this Telecom industry. The circle office of BSNL sets a target every year regarding training. That means BSNL has to train the target number of employees set by the circle office. The number of training targets set by the central office was 191 non-executives and 40 executives in 2014 which was to be achieved before the financial year that is before March 2014. The employees may be executives or non-executives. If executives are not aware of the new technologies or if they have any doubt regarding the existing technology then they can request for the training. Executives having the problem on the job can speak with the higher authorities about the training based on their need. The non-executives are provided training as they are new to the company and they are unaware of the technologies used in the company. BSNL provides training inside the plant as they have well equipped training center with all the facilities is a cost effective process. Training inside the plant is provided by trainers from outside

Types of training programmes at BSNL: The training programmes compulsory for the employees are;

a. Seminars and Workshops-The company conducts seminars on the latest topics that are new in telecommunication technologies. The institute also conducts workshops on important topics concerning DOT. To conduct seminars and workshops special trainers are called from leading technical organizations and academic institutions.

b. Workshops-Workshops in different areas are a regular feature at all the training centers and are conducted not only for the technical areas but also for the other administrative areas.

c. Induction Training-The induction training is imparted in various disciplines for the newly recruited staff as a pre-job training. This training is provided in the training center are to ADET (Probationers), Asst. Managers (Probationers Telecom Factory), Junior Engineers (Telecom Factory) and Junior Accounts Officers.

d. In-service Training-The purpose of in-service training is to impart necessary knowledge and know how about the new systems, technologies inducted into the network from time to time. The institute offers in-service training in latest technologies and techniques. JTO specialization batches conducted are a part of in-service training. The courses are monitored continuously and the utility of these in-service courses is assessed from time to time.

e. Long term O&M (Operations & Management) courses-Designed for the technical staff to provide them hands-on practice and to upgrade their skills on the Model equipments provided at various training centers.

f. Short Term in-service courses-These are arranged as Refresher Courses for the staff at all the training centers. All the subject areas- Switching, Transmission, Networks, Computers, Management, Mobile, Internet, Broadband, Satellite, Data Communications are systematically covered at training centers. In addition to these, management topics, regulations, marketing, soft skills etc are also covered at these training centers.

g. Field Trainings-In order to help the staff in their day-today activities, various Field Training Programmes are conducted outside the training centers. These programmes are being organized extensively, to take the training to the doors of the users.

h. Remedial Training-It is arranged to overcome the shortcomings in the behavior and performance of employees. BSNL has different training centers all over India. They maintain a training syllabus that includes the kind of training to be given to the different categories of employees. After delivering the necessary training programme to the employees an exam will be conducted to evaluate the amount of learning. Trainees also need to give feedback regarding training programme.

Training Need Analysis: Training needs depends on whether the trainer is training new or current employees. The main task in analyzing new employees' training needs is to determine what the job entails and to break it down into subtasks, each of which needs to be taught to the new employee. Analyzing current employees' training needs can be more complex, since the trainers have the added task of deciding on the type of training. Particularly with lower-level workers, it's common to hire inexperienced personnel and train them. Employers use task analysis to determine the new employees' training needs.

Task analysis is a detailed study of the job to determine what specific skills- like Java (in the case of a Web developer) or interviewing (in the case of supervisor) job requires. Job descriptions and job specifications are helpful here. These list the job's specific duties and skills and thus provide the basic reference point in determining the training required. Employers can also uncover training needs by reviewing performance standards, performance on the job, and questioning current job holders and their supervisors. Some employers supplement the job description and specification with a task analysis record form. This consolidates information regarding required tasks and skills in a form that's especially helpful for determining training requirements. For current employees, performance analysis is the process of verifying that there is a performance deficiency and determining if such deficiency should be corrected through training or through some other means like transferring the employees.

There are several methods to identify current employees' training needs. These include supervisor, peer, and self performance reviews; job- related performance data (including productivity, absenteeism and tardiness, accidents, short-term sickness, grievances, waste, late deliveries, product quality, repairs, equipment utilization, and customer complaints); observation by supervisors or other specialists; interview with the employee or his or her supervisor; tests of things like job knowledge, skills, and attendance; attitude surveys; individual employee daily diaries; and assessment centers. The first step here is usually to compare the person's actual performance to expected performance.

Training Need Assessment Process

Training needs of employees at BSNL are normally identified using following methods.

a. Identifying Specific Problems-An effective system of training need identification ensures that the employee is needed getting training in the area needed by him. This ensures that genuine needs are addressed via in-plant training and that the trainee could truly benefit from in-plant training. Problems like struggling with the job, work performance not being met, bottlenecks in production, deadlines not being met and delayed production. Problems like these suggest that training may be necessary. For this the task and the workers should be closely deserved and the difficulties found out.

b. Anticipating Impeding and Future Problems-Bearing on the expansion of business, the introduction of new products, new designs, new plant, and new technology and of organizational changes concerned with manpower inventory for present and future needs. Every superior is expected to explain to his subordinate the rationale benefits of nominating him for the training.

c. Interviewing and Observing the Personnel on the job- Interviewing personnel and direct questioning and observation of the employee by his supervisors may also reveal training needs.

d. Performance Appraisal-An analysis of the past performance records of the prospective trainee and comparing his actual performance with the target performance may provide clues to specific interpersonal skills that may need development.

e. Integration of training with Management Development-Training managers feel that management development is an essential function which is seriously neglected. The neglect is especially apparent in the conduct of performance appraisal interviews and in career planning.

f. Collect Data through interviews-An interview seeks to obtain relevant information from prospective employees about their background, training, work history, education, interests and many more.

g. Questionnaires and surveys -Questionnaires are prepared to know whether the employees are in need of training. In questionnaires some questions were asked regarding their job and work environment. The employees need to answer the questions and based on their answer training is provided.

h. Observation on the work being done-The supervisors observe the employees while working and if any employee cannot put in his best then it is an indication that the particular employee needs training.

i. Preparation of the report- After completing all the above steps a report is prepared regarding the training. This report shows who needs training and on what field he needs training.

j. Develop Action Plan- Once this formal need assessment process is completed the information is used as the basis for training design, development and evaluation. However, one must continue to assess the knowledge, skill and attitude levels of participants prior to each session. At BSNL Training needs are generally the needs that arise due to the lack of KSAs that are necessary for the job to be performed effectively and their dearth causes performance deficiency. Effective training at BSNL takes account of learning style preferences, i, e, the fact that different people learn best in different ways.

Influence of gender in In- Plant training

To understand the influence of gender regarding their opinion on gender discrimination in training at BSNL, Chi-Square test was used and the results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Chi -Square test to know the influence of gender discrimination in training

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)	Point Probability
Pearson Chi-Square	.944 ^a	1	.331	.379	.205	
Continuity Correction ^b	.680	1	.410			
Likelihood Ratio	.945	1	.331	.379	.205	
Fisher's Exact Test				.379	.205	
Linear-by-Linear Association	.939 ^d	1	.333	.379	.205	.073
N of Valid Cases	187					

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 42.31.

54 per cent (101) of respondents were men and 46 per cent (86) of the respondents were women. Chi-Square test result shows that 0 cells have expected count less than 5. Since P value is 0.331 is greater than α 0.05 and is not significant. Thus it is understood that there is no significant relationship between the gender of the respondents and their responses to gender discrimination in the organization. This confirms the fact that the training in BSNL is not biased on the basis of gender.

Influence of experience in the effectiveness of In-Plant training

Influence of experience in the effectiveness of training was analysed with the help of ANOVA and the results are depicted in Table 5.

Table 5: ANOVA showing the influence of experience in the effectiveness of In-Plant Training

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.501	2	.250	1.007	.367
Within Groups	45.766	184	.249		
Total	46.267	186			

F=1.007 DF=2 P value=0.367 since P value is more than alpha 0.05, the results are not significant. This shows that various categories of employees do not have any influence in giving their opinion on the effectiveness of training at BSNL.

4. Effectiveness of In-plant training in BSNL through employees' perspectives that is mentioned below in brief.

•**Enhancement of knowledge and technical skills**-56.14 per cent of the employees say that their knowledge and technical skills were enhanced, 37.43 per cent of the employees agree to this, however 6.43 per cent of employees are not confident about it. Though training is given to enhance the knowledge and technical skills of the employees, the employees' perception differs here because some of the employees were not getting the training in the field of their requirement.

•**Implementation of training inputs in to practice** -54.54 per cent of the employees strongly agreed that they are able to implement whatever they have learnt in the training programme and remaining 45.45 per cent of the employees agreed to this. This finding shows that the training programme was very effective as the employees were able to implement the the training inputs in to practice. 69.51 per cent of employees strongly agreed that training at BSNL supported the employees to update themselves in new technologies. Out of 187 respondents, 58.82per cent of the employees said that the training programme matches with the departmental goals due to which it helps them to perfect their job skills.

•**Evaluation of training programme and satisfaction level of the employees**-96.4 per cent of employees were highly satisfied with the training programme conducted at BSNL. 72.7 per cent of employees strongly agreed that training programme helped them to advance their career. 99.10 per cent of the employees also disagreed that there was any type of gender discrimination in the company. 64.17 per cent of the employees agreed that performance of the trainees were evaluated followed by the training programme and specific action for improvement was taken followed by the result of evaluation.

Findings through informal interaction with the employees:

The company has got a good training room and the training ambience was liked by the trainees. Earlier BSNL was sending their employees outside to get trained then the company realized that it was very expensive to send the employees out. Company calls the trainers from outside to train the new employees as well as the existing employees who do not know about the new technology. The head quarter of the BSNL sets a target as to how many employees should be get trained. Therefore the training conducted in BSNL is enabling the people to get ready for the higher level responsibilities and challenges.

Conclusion

Training cannot be divorced from the practicalities of Telecom business in particular and any business in general. Training should be recognized as a fructuous activity which ultimately leads to the development of BSNL and the people in it. Training should receive the maximum support from the top management at the emotional level, in such a way that the training system should be involved in solving problems of both the people and the organization. Constraints should not be deterrent for experimenting and taking pro-active steps to enhance and improve quality of In-Plant training.

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