



HRM Strategic Integration and Organizational Performance. Ashok Chanda and Jie Shen. Response Business Books, SAGE Publications, B1/I-1 Mohan Co-operative Industrial Area, Mathura Road, New Delhi 110 044. 2009. xxiv + 384 pp. Price: Rs 550.

Strategic HR (human resources) management for organizational success has become extremely important in the last 20 years. This has been pronounced for companies which conduct business on the global market.

However, HR management is a complex function as it becomes more international in character forced by business and political considerations for success in different markets and hence the overall company.

The authors have attempted to bring out the various dependencies that business success has with various HR policies and how this is managed and implemented.

While several metrics can be defined owing to deep dependency on a lot of subjective parameters relating to people, many anomalies crop up and the policies have to be reviewed with new learning that comes in with alacrity and in a strategic manner.

The authors have taken great pains to do an exhaustive literature survey and

have collected data from a large number of Indian organizations and used rigorous statistical techniques to establish the strong correlations between various HR policies and practices with or without strategic integration.

The book is rendered like a program with flow charts and structures which makes it a good reference book for serious HR researchers and professional HR managers. Spread over 13 chapters and divided into 3 blocks, though apparently simple makes reading and assimilating terse. Hence, for a manager not used to the HR verbiage, who the authors propose is the key to success of any integration for increased or managed performance stability or improvement; the book may not be of much help.

Notwithstanding this, the book is useful in helping organizations to structure their outfit to maximum advantage; if suitable OE (organizational effectiveness) and OD (organizational development) practices follow suit and get properly integrated into the business strategy.

At the same time, it is important to remark here that almost all conclusions drawn are quite obvious but provide a statistical validity as the analysis is done across a large population covering all elements of such a survey effort. Hence they are eminently usable as reference material.

However the minutiae that needs to be measured to see how things are working in the context of an organization as it grows could be a serious challenge and authors would do a favour to the corporate world if this aspect is simplified for technical managers who typically handle majority of the workforce.

Another aspect that is interesting in the book is consideration of the fact that most of the workforce is steadily moving towards knowledge based and knowledge use across domains. This brings into focus the relevance of con-

tinuous capability and competency building of employees in keeping the teams happy and their performance level going up as the market environment changes.

It would be appropriate if the authors had also considered institutions of higher education too as innovation and IP (intellectual property) creation is becoming more and more important for survival and competitive advantage. No doubt that our educational institutes have so far done well in a protected environment. But due to sheer increasing expectations of the large global workforce that India has to provide when the higher education or education sector is thrown open like other segments of the market, whether these institutions be marginalized due to sheer numbers if not for content of work is a matter that needs serious consideration. That such thoughts are relevant is my personal opinion. Unless, educational institutions which are key players in the upstream end of the economy are managed as if they were corporate entities, economy cannot grow as desired. This in turn would lead to societal instability that would take the country into a downward spiral. It is my considered observation that this piece of scholarly research should have touched upon this aspect as human talent is one of the most important inputs in all sectors of economic activity.

This book is a masterpiece of scholarly work and good for researchers and senior corporate HR managers. It may also serve as a textbook for MBA students pursuing HR career.

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