



GLOBAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH  
(Scholarly Peer Review Publishing System)

# A REVIEW ON THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (HRD) EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA'S HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

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## ABSTRACT

HRD Education is springing up and emerging in everywhere all over the world including the developed countries like U.S. and U.K. as well as in developing countries like Malaysia and Thailand. Future of every country relies on its human resources and without a formal HRD university programme/s countries are going to have difficulty in establishing strong National HRD programmes and providing its industries with well-qualified human resources. This review presents the status of HRD Education in Sri Lanka's Higher Education System in terms of government and private universities and institutes, which follows a literature review to identify the mother branches/ subjects in the stream of HRD and use those subjects to review the HRD content of degree programmes offered by government and private universities and institutes within Sri Lanka in order to identify the gaps in HRD Education in Sri Lanka's Higher Education System.

**Keywords:** HRD, HRD Education, Sri Lanka, Higher Education System

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this review was to identify the status of HRD Education in Sri Lanka's Higher Education System in terms of government and private universities and institutes. HRD related degree programmes have been found dominantly in the U.K. and the U.S. However, it has been observed that HRD have emerged interestingly more often in developing countries like Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand than in other developed countries. This review aims at providing areas or course modules to be covered under HRD degree programmes by showing the significance of HRD for Sri Lanka's universities and institutes that do not currently have HRD related degree programmes so that practitioners can include HRD in to their curriculum. Further this piece of review will show what are the mother branches/ subjects in the stream of HRD along with the major scope of HRD.

### 1.1 What is HRD?

The term HRD was first defined by Harbison and Myers (1964) as "...the process of increasing the knowledge, the skills and the capacities of all the people in a society. In economic terms, it could be described as the accumulation of human capital and its effective investment in the development of an economy. In political terms, HRD prepares people for adult participation in the political process, particularly as citizens in a democracy. From the social and cultural points of view, the development of human resources helps people lead fuller and richer lives, less bound to tradition. In short, the processes of HRD unlock the door to modernization". This definition has a broad perspective as it defines HRD in relation to economy, culture, political and social contexts rather than

individuals and organizations. Then Leonard Nadler in 1969 introduced HRD in a conference in US as a series of organized activities, conducted within a specialized time and designed to produce behavioural changes (<http://www.whatishumanresource.com>). According to Nadler (1970) HRD is having three components: training, education, and development. Later Swanson, R. A. (2001) defined HRD as a process of developing and/or unleashing human expertise through organization development, personnel training and development for the purpose of improving performance whereas McLagan (1989) defined HRD as the integrated use of training and development, organization development and career development.

Further, an article presented by Devdas, U. M., Silong, A. D., & Krauss, S. E. (2011) have identified the major roles of HRD that are popular today comprised of individual development, organizational development, career management, and performance management. And also Haslinda Abdullah (2009) on his article "Definitions of HRD: Key Concepts from a National and International Context" has mentioned that the main key functions of HRD are individual development, organizational development, career development and performance improvement.

### 1.2 Scope of HRD

According to Abdullah (2009) most countries like Russia, Germany and Korea equate HRD with T&D and the main focus is on activities related to training where as in other countries like Thailand, Singapore and India, the scope of HRD is seen to be very broad, encompassing activities related to the possibility of developing human resources' physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual improvement as well as improving their technical and productive skills. Further he explained that these countries' HRD activities may seem to be at the extreme of the spectrum, but most countries seemed to be more focused on activities related to learning, performance improvement, behavioural and attitudinal change as well as changing organizational culture and the focus on HRD activities among these countries varies in accordance to the individual country's perception and acknowledgment of HRD, which may change with the evolution of knowledge and the influence of globalization (Abdullah, 2009)

### 1.3 Methodology

This study has been designed as a review paper with a focused literature review on HRD as well as has accessed websites of public and private universities and institutes within Sri Lanka to review the curriculum content of HRM/ HRD related degree programmes.

## 2. FINDINGS

By having considering various literatures and research findings of various scholars, it has been identified that individual development, organizational development, career development, training and development and performance management as mother branches / subjects in the stream of HRD. And that identified subjects have been used to review the curriculum or syllabus content of HRM/HRD degree programmes offered under Sri Lanka's Higher Education System. By using the information gathered through curriculum review, Table 01 and Table 02 has been derived. Table 01 represents HRD Education in Government Universities and Institutes of Sri Lanka while Table 02 represents HRD Education in Private Universities and Institutes of Sri Lanka.

As per information of Table 01 and Table 02, the detailed review on curriculum content of HRM/HRD degree programmes of Sri Lanka's government and private universities and institutes, it has been clearly identified that the HRD related course units/modules have been neglected by many private and government universities and institutes except University of Kelaniya. Further findings show that University of Kelaniya has pioneered in establishing Human Resource Development significantly and specifically by having HRD as an alternative stream in the Final year of their degree programme in the history of Sri Lanka for the very first time.

When it comes to HRD Education status of other developing countries, the research done by Gary N. McLean and Chiraprapha (Tan) Akaraborworn on "HRD Education in Developing Countries" has identified some significant findings to be considered about HRD education in developing countries. Accordingly researchers have found that there is no unitary approach that has been taken by developing countries in providing education in HRD while some developing countries have taken significant steps in establishing HRD as degree programs, whereas others have relied heavily on HRM, or some other field, to provide the little education that occurs in HRD. Further researchers have identified that major countries, like Brazil and China, appear not to have practiced HRD education widely, especially in an academic context.

As per the study of McLean G.N. and Akaraborworn C. (2014), HRD education in Thailand has a long journey over the past for more than 20 years from 1992 to 2014 in terms of academic programs and research. In Thailand, there are seven academic institutions that began to offer HRD programs: 1 bachelor's degree, 6 master's degrees, and 8 doctoral degrees as well as there are more than 30 HR programs that offered HRD subjects under the degrees of Human Resource Management (HRM), Community and Social Development, Public Administration, Business Administration, Industrial Psychology etc.

Further, the case study of McLean G.N. and Akaraborworn C. (2014) focused on the economic and HRD background of Malaysia as well followed by details related to three premier universities in Malaysia: Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas). Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) currently offers HRD degree at all three levels – bachelor's, master's, and doctorate whereas Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) has the distinction of offering the first undergraduate degree in HRD and there are two types of MSc HRD programs in UTM while Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) offers a major in HRD at all three levels, holding the distinction of offering the first HRD PhD. HRD at Unimas follows

international standards, including training and development, organization development, and career development as well as HRP (human resource practices) which includes all other HRM functions. Almost every passed out graduates from Unimas have been employed creating a great demand for their degree programmes.

Accordingly, the Malaysian government emphasized on HRD as a national priority. As a result, Ministry of HR and the Ministry of Education of Malaysia have established various programs focusing on education and skills development. The National HRD Fund (HRDF or PSMB in Malay) supports private sector training programs in various ways. For higher education, Malaysian citizens are offered significant financial support (subsidies, loans) to study in local and overseas universities, including: My brain program, My Masters, My PhD, and so on (McLean, G.N. & Akaraborworn, C., 2014)

All the above findings clearly showed how HRD is prioritizing and practicing by other developing countries like Thailand and Malaysia as well as the status of HRD Education Sri Lanka.

**Table 01: HRD Education in Government Universities and Institutes of Sri Lanka**

Name of University or Institute	Name of the HR Degree Programme	HRD related course units	No: of modules in HRD	Is there any specific stream for HRD? (YES/NO)
University of Colombo	Bachelor of Business Administration (Special) in Human Resource Management	Training and Development, Performance Management	2	NO
	MBA in Human Resource Management	-	0	NO
University of Peradeniya	Bachelor of Business Administration (Special) in Human Resource Management	Human Resource Development, Employee Performance Evaluation, Organizational Development & change, Personality & Skills Development	4	NO
University of Sri Jayawardenepura	Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (HRM) (Special)	Self and Professional Development, Performance Evaluation & Management, Human Resource Development	3	NO
	MBA (Human Resource Management)	Performance Evaluation and Management, Human Resource Development, Training Management	3	NO
University of Kelaniya	Bachelor of Business Management (Human Resource) Special Degree Programme	Techniques in Training and Development, Human Resource Development, Organizational change and development, Theories in Human Resource Development, Individual development, Performance Management, Career development, Macro Human Resource Development, HRD Internship, HRD Dissertation. *Specifically and significantly consider HRD by having a special stream on HRD in the final year.	10	YES
	Postgraduate Diploma in Human Resources Management	Performance Management	1	NO
	Master of Human Resource Management	Human Resource Development	1	NO

University of Jaffna	Bachelor of Business Administration (Human Resource Management - Special)	Performance Management, Human Resource Development, Career Management	3	NO
University of Ruhuna	Bachelor of Business Administration (Special) in Human Resource Management	Performance and Rewards Management, Human Resource Development, Career Management	3	NO
The Open University of Sri Lanka	Master of Business Administration in Human Resource Management	Human Resource Development, Performance Management, Managing Change in Organizations	3	NO
	Postgraduate Diploma in Human Resources Management	Human Resource Development, Performance Management and Compensation, Leading and Managing Change in Organizations	3	NO
Eastern Univeristy of Sri Lanka	Bachelor of Business Administration Specialization in Human Resource Management	Performance Evaluation and Compensation Management, Training and Development, Human Resource Development	3	NO
South Eastern University of Sri Lanka	BBA / B.Com (Human Resource Management Special)	Organizational Change and Development, Human Resource Development, Performance Appraisal	3	NO
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka	-	-	-	-
Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka	-	-	-	-
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka	-	-	-	-
Uva Wellassa University	-	-	-	-
Institute of Human Resource Advancement	Bachelor of Labor Education (BLE)	-	-	NO
	Master of Human Resource Management	Human Resource Development	1	NO
Traincomalee Campus	Bachelor of Science (Majoring) in Human Resource Management	Orgnizational Development and change, Human Resource Training and Development	2	NO
Vavuniya Campus	-	-	-	-
The General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU)	-	-	-	-

Source: Author

Table 02: HRD Education in Private Universities and Institutes of Sri Lanka

Name of University or Institute	Name of the HR Degree Programme	HRD related course units	No: of modules in HRD	Is there any specific stream for HRD? (YES/NO)
National Institute of Business Management Established under National Institute of Business Management Act, No. 23 of 1976	Advanced Certificate/ Diploma in HRM	Human Resource Development, Performance Management, Training and Development	3	NO
National School of Business Management Limited (NSBM) Established under Companies Act No. 07 of 2007 and having company number PB 4833	Bachelor of Science in Business Management (Human Resource Management) (Special)	Human resources Development, Performance Management	2	NO
	Postgraduate Diploma in Human Resource Management	Human Resource Development, Organizational Change & Development	2	NO
Horizon Campus Established under Companies Act. No. 07 of 2007	Bachelor of Science in Business Management (Human Resources Management)	Training and Development, Performance Management	2	NO
KAATSU-Highly Advanced Medical Technology Training Centre (Pvt.) Limited (KIUM) Established under Companies Act. No. 07 of 2007	Bachelor of Management Honours in Human Resource (Date of Recognition - April 08, 2016)	Personality Development, Organizational Change and Development, Performance Management, Training and Development	4	NO
ANC Education College	-	-	-	-
The Australian College of Business & Technology (ACBT)	-	-	-	-
The Postgraduate Institute of Management (PIM)	-	-	-	-
Institute of Personnel Management (IPM)	B.Sc. HRM & Development at Salford	Resourcing, Development and Talent Management, Professional Development	2	NO
	M.Sc. HRM & Development at Salford	Resourcing Learning and Talent Management	1	NO

Source: Author

### 3. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this paper, the author attempts to review the Human Resources Development (HRD) Education in Sri Lanka's Higher Education System in terms of government and private universities and institutes by referring the literature on HRD to identify the mother branches / subjects in the stream of HRD and thereby use them to identify the degree of HRD involvement in content of degree programmes in Sri Lanka by having a brief cross check on other developing countries where HRD Education plays a significant role. Based on the review it was identified that HRD Education in Sri Lanka's Higher Education System is still at an entry level in many universities and institutes. There is an almost complete gap in HRD Education within Sri Lanka's Higher Education System and initial steps needed to be taken immediately at every level by introducing mother branches/subjects of HRD in to the degree curriculum of both government and private universities and institutes as HRD programmes are springing up in everywhere all over the world, even in developing countries like Thailand and Malaysia where their governments emphasized on HRD as a national priority due to its importance.

Future of every country relies on its human resources and without a formal HRD university programme/s countries are going to have difficulty in establishing strong National HRD programmes and providing its industries with well-qualified human resources. Thus it is needed to introduce HRD Education to Sri Lanka's Higher Education System through solid HRD degree programmes at every level i.e. bachelor's, master's, and doctorate with the involvement and interventions of Sri Lanka's government like Malaysian government does in order to nurture and develop the country with qualified HRD practitioners.

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