

Employee Induction

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Induction of a new employee into the work place as an aspect of personnel management has not received adequate attention in our country. Whereas in some large size corporate enterprises, both in public and private sector, induction programmes are noted to be in vogue, the same cannot be said to hold true in general.¹

The present paper, which is based on a survey of personnel practices, examines corporate enterprise practices as regards inducting personnel in manufacturing industries in India. The data for study purposes was collected through a questionnaire followed by personal interview method. A sample of 31 organisational units in various industry groups* and located in different parts of the country is studied.

Introducing the new employee to the organisation, work place, its rules and regulations, and fellow workers has been regarded as an important personnel activity after the task of selection is over in the hiring process. The term 'Orientation' is very often used to signify the above. No difference, however, is proposed here between induction and orientation, for practically both mean one and the same thing. Sociologists call the orientation a process of socialisation consisting of learning new attitudes, norms, and behaviour patterns.² Just as a person entering a new country must learn a new language, and a different set of ways of doing things, so a new employee must learn how to behave and how to get things done in a new organization.

1. Report of the National Commission on Labour, Ministry of Labour and Employment and Rehabilitation, Govt. of India, 1969 pp. 85-86.

* Industry group are divided into five categories e.g., Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals, Engineering, Textile, Food, and Processing.

2. George A Miller and Wesely L. Wager, "Adult Socialization, organizational Structure and Role Orientation", *Administratively Science Quarterly*, June 1971, pp. 151-63.

Irrespective of the position which a new employee takes in his work place, it should be recognized that he begins a new life and needs to know the organization, its objectives, functioning, goods manufactured or services rendered and the like. This is to make him successful on the job. In order to be an asset to the organization, new employee needs to know the organization, its policies and procedure. In the Indian context, this becomes indispensable, particularly where, workers comes to industry from rural or semi urban areas. The environment of the city life is a novelty to them, and the need to acclimaize arises. To quote extracts from I.L O's resolution—"In order to facilitate and expedite the integration of the newly recruited employee in the enterprise and the group with which he is to work, management should adopt a well thought out induction programme. Induction procedure are intended to give the newcomer all information he needs about management work and philosophy life in the new enterprise. Further more, they should create an atmosphere which will help the new comer to become quickly familiar with his new surroundings and to feel at home.

The information given to newly recruited employees should include such matters as conditions of work, rules of behaviour, health and safety regulations, opportunities for training and advancement, workers rights and obligations, leisure facilities, welfare service and benefit scheme, the structure and activities of the undertaking, its products and the role of the particular job that new comer is to occupy within the enterprise as a whole.³ The utility in adopting induction programme is stated to be in such benefits as reducing turnover and grievances, infusing a sense of belonging in new employee, and developing a favourable attitude towards the company and thus facilitating job effectiveness.⁴ Researches in Western countries have shown that,

'the first few days on the job were anxious and disurbing ones'.

'new employee initiation practices by peers intensified anxiety'.

'Anxiety interfered with the training process', and

'turnover of newly hired employees was caused primarily by anxiety'.

The new comers were noted to be reluctant to discuss problems with their superiors. Employee induction then aims at minimising such problems. Through induction programmes an attempt is made to 'instal' a new employee so that he or she is sufficiently acquainted with the Company to adapt himself, feel comfortable, and learn the job. Such a process need not be mechanical, it should rather demonstrate the importance of a sensitive awareness of the management to empee's anxieties, uncertainties and needs.

3. Technical meeting concerning certain aspects of Labour-Management Relations with in the undertakings, Geneva, 5-15 October, 1964.

4. National Industrial Conference Board, "Employee Induction", Studies in Personnel Policy, No. 131

PRACTICES

Induction programmes are found to vary from brief informal introduction to quite lengthy formal courses. It was revealed in the course of survey, that one multi-unit organization in the food group had a prescribed **orientation and induction** programme for all categories of employees. The managerial and the middle management personnel, on joining, were given detailed induction for one month. The senior management staff were exposed to 15 days induction programme, while the unskilled workers were given a day's induction. The induction programmes were designed to familiarise the employees with the organization men, product, procedure, systems, and facilities. The organization also familiarized employees with its business philosophy.

The survey results revealed 15 out of 31 units running induction courses mainly for supervisory and managerial personnel. Table A gives us an idea as to how new employees were inducted in the organization. Obviously method (b) in the table seems to be more widely practised for all the categories of personnel. 'Any other' method included the practice of the factory manager, or the President or the Chief executive introducing the supervisory and managerial personnel to the organization.

In many organizations, a booklet was found to be issued titled as "know your Company", or "This concerns you" or introducing employees to the organisation and giving information on such items as wages, training, leave rules, health, chances of promotion etc. The information given to various categories of employees at the time of induction is given in Table B. It seems from the Table that the higher the category of employee, the greater are the chances of information being given at the time of induction on items like company's organisation, its product/products, working rules and regulations benefit plans in operation, and about the union. Environmental factors like the nature of employee, his position and task, the work group and the leadership are known to exercise influencing role in induction programmes. Nature of employee and the task seems to be critical factors. It is for these reasons managerial personnel are given detailed orientation than others.

Table A and Table B are given on the following pages.

Table A

Induction Methods Used

(No. of units)

Induction Method	Workser	Clerks	Supervisors	Managers
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
(a) New employee is shown where he has to work and left to himself for getting acquainted with his fellow workers, company rules etc.	10	5	2	2
(b) The new employee is taken to the place of work and introduced to the Supervisor/Departmental head, who in turn introduces him to his task and fellow works.	19	22	18	11
(c) The supervisor informs the employee about plant and the company rules, nature of product/products, process of production etc.	11	10	5	2
(d) An old experienced employee (called sponsor) introduces the new employee to his work and fellow workers.	2	2	1	...
(e) Any other	9	11

Table B

Information Content of Induction

(No. of units)

Items of Information	Workers	Clerks	Supervisors	Managers
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
(a) Information about the organization.	5	13	20	22
(b) Information about the Company product/products.	10	14	23	23
(c) Information about working rules and regulations.	20	25	27	27
(d) Information about Company's benefit plans in operation.	17	22	25	25
(e) Information about Company's recreational and educational activities.	14	16	19	17
(f) Information about union (if Company is unionised)	7	8	13	14
(g) Any other

In some cases units were found to be giving no information about rules and regulations or working and service conditions during induction presumably because rules and regulations were incorporated in the Standing Orders and employees were supposed to go through the same.

The Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946 applies to every establishment wherein 100 or more workmen are employed or were employed on any day of the preceding twelve months. The object of the Act is to require employers and industrial establishment to define precisely the conditions of employment for employees and to make the said conditions known to workmen through them. The Act applies to manual, skilled, supervisory, technical or clerical personnel covered by the definition of workmen in the Act. Some of the units in the study were found to have their own Standing Orders giving information on varied items like recruitment, medical examination, notice of attendance and departures, attendance rules, wage rates, festival holidays, overtime, shift working and transfers, leave rules, safety, housing etc. Similarly, Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association, and the Bombao Mill Owners Association had their Standing Orders. For clerical staff in the textile units in Northern India, there were Standing Orders of the Employers Association of Northern India, Kanpur. In one of the organization under study, general conditions of service for clerical and supervisory staff were made known through application blank e.g., general conditions of service were given in the application blank along with the stipulation that employees read the same and declare that conditions were acceptable to them.

Standing Orders, it seems, serves the purpose of a transitional orientation programme, informing workers about rules, regulations and policies and thus help reduce ill will, disciplinary action and dismissal caused where employee did not know rules or consequences of violating them. More advanced orientation programme seems to exist in companies having induction courses and providing booklet, copy of personnel policy, introducing employees to the organization and giving information like company's history, product, personalities and services. Exceptional and most farsighted orientation programme, explaining how the company depend upon the worker, how the workers on the company, workers contribution to company importance of their job, are yet to take place in Indian enterprises. It is such orientation which help build up the self respect of the worker and cause internalised motivation.

Personnel Department's Role.

Some personnel department regard induction as a 'staff' function, while others place it in the 'line'. Most companies place responsibility in the 'line' with the line manager receiving staff assistance. This is perhaps due to the fact that the most important person involved in

the orientation process is the supervisor of the new employee. Supervisor generally requires special training in this function. Personnel department should not overlook its own responsibility for training all those involved in the orientation programme. In a relatively large organization, it is specially important that managers and personnel specialist should coordinate the information content, the new employee needs. Often new employees receive information, they do not immediately need, and fail to get vital information needed during the first day of a new job. Personnel specialist's contribution in the orientation process is mainly through the design of the induction programme/course, and conducting the same with assistance of the 'line'. Keeping in view the sensitive awareness, anxiety, and the need which new employee reflect, such a task is quite challenging to him. Further, personnel specialist help systematize the process through developing an orientation checklist providing feed back to the process and improving the same. The increase in effectiveness of induction programme through developing suitable communication devices suited to specific type of employee could be another area of his contribution in this respect.