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THE RECRUITMENT OF FRESH GRADUATES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

It is said that in any organization, the person who joins as a fresher or directly from the college after completing his formal education, makes a lot of positive changes and brings in a big basket of new ideas. He views the present systems and processes from a completely different angle so as to find out the lacunae and take remedial measures in the interest of the organization. The process of recruitment of fresh graduates is important because it ensures that if the right person is recruited for the right job, then the organisation can achieve its objectives and the sustainable development. On one hand, a fresher joins an organization with a lot of ideas and enthusiasm but on the other hand, he gets zero or insufficient freedom to implement his ideas. And this situation creates confusion or demotivation for the freshers. Hence, it is necessary that there is ample clarity about organization's expectations from the freshers before starting recruitment exercise. This study deals with this important topic and tries to bring the employer and the fresh employees on the same platform. This study will eliminate the unwanted gap between these two important pillars which are responsible for the success of the organization and achieving sustainable development. If hired rightly, it is possible that today's fresher will reach upto a leadership and key position in the organization which can take its success to a high level as sustainable development aims at fulfilling today's needs and expectations in such a way that it does not create any hurdle for the future generations to achieve their needs and expectations.

Keywords: *Expectations from freshers, Recruitment of fresh graduates, Sustainability, Recruitment for sustainable development*

Introduction:

Many times it is seen that whenever a fresh candidate joins the organization, he is either neglected or given too much hand-holding and instructions that he gets confused or demotivated. If he is not given proper treatment or induction or on-the-job training, it adds to his discouragement.

From organization's point of view, today's fresher can add value to the organization's success over a period of time and in turn can achieve sustainable development. It is to be endeavoured that he is given proper encouragement for coming forward so that he gets exposed to all the business operations today so that he leads the organization in future. As he joins as a fresher, there is no chance that he will think with a bias mind but on the contrary, he will contribute to the organization's success to a large extent. For this purpose, it is necessary that organisation's expectations from the freshers are communicated to them at the time of their recruitment so that the above mentioned purpose is easily achieved. In this study, the expectations of the organization are studied in the light of their recruitment and how to bridge the gap between the fresher and the organization are elaborated for achieving the sustainable development. Here, the term "fresher" is used commonly for all the students or persons joining an organization for the first time in all the functions or strategic business units with educational qualification, in general.

Review of literature:

As said by Rodge V. & Gupta R. (2020) that the fresh graduate persons do not possess the skills as expected by the employers. There is a skill-set gap between the employer's expectations and the skill-set available with the freshers. This gap is basically due to the lack of knowledge of the subject and the educational course content taught in the college. India has enough potential and ability to deliver results as expected by the job market but graduate persons do not possess the technical and practical knowledge and this situation creates hurdles for their employment. As per Bansal S. & Agarwal M. (2019) the expectations of the industry have changed as per new business challenges. The graduate students are expected to use innovative ideas to manage the challenges of today's modern business. They are equipped with theoretical knowledge but lacking in practical approach of problem solving. As said by Deshpande A. (2019), every student expects that he should get a job with good salary. Industries expect fresh graduates to have basic management skills to get the things done. But this is not happening and industries feel disappointed. Students are also expected to be techno-savvy but fresh students lack knowledge of IT tools. They can't even give good presentations in fluent English language.

As per Shahare P. (2018) today the industries expect that the graduate students should be readily able to get absorbed with the business functions instead of spending much time on their training. These students should be "ready-to-use" and the college education should take care to groom them, train them and educate them with business functions. Maske A. & Goral S. (2017) say that the expectations of industries from fresh graduates are growing day by day. Considering the gap in their expectations and deficit of skill-sets with the students, many companies have started to apply various other difficult recruitment criteria e.g. specific percentage of marks, no ATKT, excellence in

presentation and group discussion, fluency in English language etc. but still industries are unable to get the good candidates. Vani R. (2017) is of the opinion that employers in India are operating in a highly competitive market conditions. But there is a huge gap between expectations of the employers and the skills available with the fresh graduates. It is needed that the employer and the fresh employees come together to identify the gaps and determine serious action plan to overcome these problems. As stated by Burghate M. and Shahare P. (2017) there are tremendous changes in today's modern education. The employers are expecting students to use new and innovative learning modules and ideas to give business results.

As said by Madhumathi S. (2017) today the business challenges and competition has increased. The employer expects high degree of adaptability from the graduate students. The employer wants them to execute projects on time and exhibit good leadership qualities and good communication skills. Murali S. & Rajaram Y. (2015) are of the opinion that India produces thousands of fresh graduates today but the industries are not happy with their quality. They lack the basic skills which are required to get them a job. The curriculum taught in the schools and colleges are not in line with the expectations of the industry and they are not enough for the industries to face the present as well as future challenges.

Research Problem:

The main problem faced by the fresh graduates is that they are neither aware about their role or job profile in the employment they are planning to join nor what the employer expects from them. This situation creates a big gap between the employer's expectations from the fresh graduates and the skill available with the fresh graduates. Hence, this study is important as it will help fresh graduates to overcome their confusion and inhibitions before joining the employment and fulfill employer's expectations for achieving sustainable development for secured future.

Research methodology:

The primary data for this study are collected from human resource (HR) professionals through a structured questionnaire. Respondents were asked total 13 questions, out of which 3 questions are pertaining to the personal details and 10 questions are about the research topic. The questions on demographics include name, gender and number of years' experience in managing HR functions. The questions on the research topic include whether they recruit or had recruited fresh graduates, in which function they are recruited, whether on payroll or off payroll, what are the main five expectations from fresh graduates, their training, source of recruitment, whether it is cost-effective, whether there is any gap between the employers' expectations and the skills available with fresh graduates, the areas of improvement and what can be done to bridge the gap?

The sampling method used here is simple random sampling. The questionnaire was sent to 67

respondents. Total 28 responses have been received from respondents representing different industries and varied years’ of experience in HR management, through online forms. The secondary data is taken from books, published research papers and articles published by other authors.

Scope of the study:

The scope of this study includes identifying the expectations of the organizations from the fresh graduates i.e. the graduates who are joining employment for the first time after completing their graduation. For this purpose, the “Graduation” is considered to be done from regular college, distance learning, online learning, correspondence courses, from open universities, deemed universities in India, courses declared to be equivalent to graduation in India etc. This study does not deal with the employment of non-graduates or the employment for which graduation is not required.

Objectives:

The objectives of this study are to (a) understand the expectations of the organisations from fresh graduates in order to achieve sustainable development, (b) find out the departments where fresh graduates are mostly employed, and (c) recommend measures to bridge the gap between organizations’ expectations and skills available with the fresh graduates for achieving sustainable development.

Limitation of the study:

Due to present Covid-19 pandemic, the respondents are working from home instead of from office. Personal meeting with the respondents for taking their responses was not allowed. Hence, the questionnaire was sent to them online. Out of total 67 respondents, only 28 respondents gave their responses. This sample size may not sufficiently represent the entire population to reflect the findings with 100% accuracy.

Data analysis:

The primary data received from 28 respondents is analyzed as under. This analysis has helped to arrive at the final conclusions of this research paper. The gender-wise, male or female, bifurcation of respondents is as under:

Gender	Responses received	Percentage of responses
Male	24	85.70%
Female	4	14.30%
Total	28	100.00%

Table 1.1 Gender-wise responses received

The bifurcation of the respondents' work experience in HRM is as under. The highest number of respondents is from 11 to 15 years' experience category.

Work experience in HRM	Responses received	Percentage of responses
Upto 5 years	4	14.30%
Between 6 to 10 years	2	7.10%
Between 11 to 15 years	8	28.60%
Between 16 to 20 years	6	21.40%
Between 21 to 25 years	3	10.70%
More than 25 years	5	17.90%
Total	28	100.00%

Table 1.2 Work experience of respondents in HRM

The respondents were asked whether they recruit or had recruited fresh graduates in the past. The analysis of their feedback is as under:

Whether fresh graduates are recruited	Responses received	Percentage of responses
Yes	24	85.70%
No	4	14.30%
Total	28	100.00%

Table 1.3 Whether fresh graduates are recruited

The analysis of data regarding the various departments (more than one) where fresh graduates are generally recruited is as under:

Names of department	Responses received
Marketing & Sales	19
Production	13
HR-Administration	12
Accounts	8
Post-sales Service	8
Finance	6
Stores/Logistics	4

Purchase	4
Information technology	3
Legal	2

Table 1.4 Departments where fresh graduates are recruited

Regarding nature of appointment, the fresh graduates are either recruited on the payroll of the company, off-payroll or through third party. Sometimes they are initially recruited off-payroll and after some time, they are taken on the rolls of the company as under:

Nature of appointment	Responses received	Percentage of responses
On payroll	20	71.40%
Off-payroll	7	25.00%
Initially off-payroll and then on the payroll	1	3.60%
Total	28	100.00%

Table 1.5 Whether on the payroll or off-payroll

In order to understand HR professional's expectations from fresh graduates, they were asked to give their top five expectations. The data analysis is as under:

Top five expectations from fresh graduates	Responses received
Positive attitude	19
Good communication skill	16
Enthusiasm	15
Confidence	15
Ethics & honesty	13

Table 1.6 Top five expectations from fresh graduates

The respondents were asked whether they are giving on the job training, classroom training, personal mentoring, using all these training interventions or one or multiple training interventions in order to ensure that the new entrants learn about the company as well as the job they are supposed to do. Following is the analysis:

Training	Responses received
On the job training	20
Classroom training	3
Personal mentoring	9
All the above	8

Table 1.7 Training for fresh graduates

In order to understand the process followed by the respondents for recruitment of fresh graduates i.e. on campus, off campus or through referrals, their responses are as under:

Sources of recruitment	Responses received	Percentage of responses
On campus	15	53.60%
Off campus	9	32.10%
Through referrals	4	14.30%
Total	28	100.00%

Table 1.8 Sources of recruitment

To see whether the recruitment of fresh graduates is cost effective or not, the respondents gave their feedback as under:

Whether cost effective?	Responses received	Percentage of responses
Yes	27	96.40%
No	1	3.60%
Total	28	100.00%

Table 1.9 Cost effectiveness of fresh graduates?

The fresh graduates do not have any prior work experience. For knowing whether there is a gap between employers' expectations and the skills available with the fresh graduates, the following are the responses received from the respondents:

Whether the gap exists	Responses received	Percentage of responses
Yes	17	60.70%
No	11	39.30%
Total	28	100.00%

Table 1.10 Gap between expectations and skills available

Conclusions:

The majority of the employers, i.e. 85.70% recruit or have recruited fresh graduates in various departments. The top three departments are Marketing & Sales, Production and HR-Administration. The fresh graduates are mostly recruited on the payroll of the employer. This percentage is very high and not advisable because when they are recruited off payroll, they do not get the welfare benefits, job security etc. and it might impact their learning and productivity.

The top five expectations of the employers from fresh graduates are positive attitude, good communication skill, enthusiasm, confidence and ethics & honesty. If the freshers keep negativity in mind, they will not be able to discharge their responsibilities effectively. If they do not communicate in a professional manner, they will be wasting own time and that of others. If they lack enthusiasm, they will treat their own job as a burden. If they do not work on improving their confidence, they will not achieve the expected results. The adherence to the ethics and honesty will help them to give justice to their job and can prosper with honest business dealings without doing any illegal acts or malpractices.

The fresh graduates are given on-the-job training as well as personal mentoring. This training will help them to get acquainted with the practical aspects of the job instead of relying on theoretical inputs. They can implement the learning from this training for achieving their future professional targets and success. The fresh graduates are recruited on campus and off campus also. The majority of the employers i.e. 96.40% feel that it is cost effective to recruit fresh graduates. This could be due to the reason that employers are not required to pay them hefty salary. Total 17 respondents i.e. 60.70% are of the opinion that there is a gap between employers' expectations and the skill available with the fresh graduates.

In an open ended question, the respondents felt that they should improve on giving long term commitment to the employer, keep learning approach, need not expect high salary, ensure discipline, maturity, improve the communication skills, maturity, understand the business operations properly, confidence, high level of presentation skills, time management and follow ethics.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the fresh graduates should first understand the business operations and the company's culture, rules and regulations quickly. The Government should discuss with the employers about their expectations and include practical subjects in college curriculum. The learning should be practical oriented instead of theoretical. Buddy program or mentoring by senior officers of the company will help fresh graduates. The senior or experienced managers of the company should take genuine interest in coaching, developing and nurturing the fresh talent.

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