

Human Resources Management Practice and Challenges; the case of Makuey Woreda, In Gambella People Nation Regional State

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Abstract: *Human Resource Management (HRM) involves the policies and practices for dealing with human resource (HR) aspects of management such as HR planning, selection, recruitment, orientation, development, training, job analysis, compensation, labor relations and performance appraisal (Dessler, 2007). Human resources are the source of achieving competitive advantage because of its capability to convert the other resources (money, machine, methods and material) in to output (product/service).*

This study was conducted in the year 2018 with the purpose of this study was to explore the implementation of Human Resources management practices and challenges associated with it in the Makuey woreda public office. The study outlines how effective human resources management plays in enhancing development, to provide services effectively and efficiently depends upon competent public servants. And the study also identify the challenges and practices in the areas of Human Resource Management and to create a functioning human resource management system in all office in the woreda.

In this study qualitative descriptive research design was employed to explore the whole situation related with the Human Resources Management practices. Qualitative data from both primary and secondary sources were collected. The study revealed that in Makuey Woreda practices related to Human Resources Management are poorly implemented as the criteria and regulations related with recruitment and selection were not followed, there was unplanned and insufficient training and development, unorganized and poor practice of employee performance appraisal system, lack of the linkage between employee performance and reward system. Also managing work place diversity, recruiting skilled manpower, attracting and retaining qualified personnel were not well planned and lacked consistency, aggravated by inadequate and unplanned training and development program, as well as inability to have the right people in the right positions were identified as challenges in implementing the Human Resources Management practices and hence create effective and efficient service delivery in the sector.

The study suggested that, merit based recruitment and selection practice, well organized training and development activities, rational and objective employee performance evaluation as well as consistent compensation and rewards should be strictly followed as stipulated in the civil servant administration guideline for proper implementation of the of HRM Practice.

Key Words: *Human Resource Management, service delivery, practices, public sector, performance.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1. Back ground of the study

According to Armstrong (2006), the term 'Human Resource Management' and 'Human Resource' emerged after replacing the term 'Personnel Management' with almost same definition of managing people in an organization; it is a deliberate and consistent approach of managing organizational imperative asset (i.e. people) in order to operate business smoothly and achieve objectives which functions through human resource system including HR strategies, HR policies, HR process, HR practices and HR programs. In order to develop a sound HRM system, the organization should have effective Human Resource Management practices and equally sound and workable monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Moreover, human knowledge and skills are a strategic resource that needs to be skilfully managed.

The Ethiopian Civil Service was established formally during the reign of Menelik II in 1907, with the aim of ensuring orderly and efficient arrangements for the workings of government (Solomon, 2005). Under a 'western-inspired' administrative system, the 'formal framework' of government brought Ethiopia into the twentieth century, but Menelik's subsequent illness until his death in 1913 stunted further modernization (ibid). Although the institution underwent a series of changes commensurate with a host of new needs and imperatives, the period was marked by weak leadership until HaileSELLASSIE succeeded Menelik's daughter, Zawditu, in 1930. Later on, during his reign, Emperor HaileSELLASSIE undertook a series of institutionalization and restructuring measures in the hope of bringing about an effective and efficient civil service governed by specified rules and procedures of a uniform nature. Unlike all the previous regimes, the present government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, in the 1995 federal

constitution assigned powers and authority to the Federal Government, the nine Regional State governments, and two Autonomous administrative regions (Adebaby, 1998).

In the year 1995 constitution, the Federal Democratic Government of Ethiopia decentralized the Ethiopian Civil Service sector's power. However, the fact that the decentralization programs are mostly designed on an ideological basis rather than on pragmatic reality on the ground accompanied by the lack of information regarding local social, political and economy issues that may hamper its effectiveness has been playing negative role when it comes to the implementation of the human resources management functions (Olowu and Adamolekun 1999). As a response to this nation-wide decentralization process, Gambella People National Regional State one of the least developed or emerging regions in Ethiopia, also decentralized the major human resource management decision activities. Among many are recruitment, selection, promotion, transfer of employees delegated to the regional, zonal, and woreda (the lower government structure in Ethiopia) level bureaus with clear working and implementation guidelines.

Therefore this study aimed in assessing the overall impact of human resources management practices on the performance of the Civil Service Sector as well as its contribution in creating globally competitive business environment. In addition the study attempted to assess how the Human Resources Management practices in the civil service sector help in creating conducive business environment for the business people.

1.2. Statement of the problem

The political, economical and socio-cultural development of any country is depending on the number of qualified and skilled human resource in that country Haslinda (2009). The human resource management is the challenge to the region and also there is no appropriate human resource management strategy developed in the region to capacitate the employee to become efficient and effective in their work. Therefore, the region should work on the challenges of human resource management through different reforms up to the standards seen in other better regions.

The effective implementation of HRM affects the performance of public sector organizations. However in Makuey Woreda civil sector, HRM has received relatively little attention and hence effectively the service delivery performances is annually reported as not satisfactory. The woreda has more than 28 public services offices with over 1400 employees established by law for effective and efficient service delivery to the woreda community.

However, all the signs and reports of the woreda shows very little in term of effectively service delivery and hence the sector is infested with rather large number of unqualified employees, u motivated to deliver and probably high turnover among the skilled and qualified workers. Therefore, study tires to understand how the overall human resources practices are being implemented and the challenges associated with it using descriptive qualitative study.

1.3. Objective of the study :

1.3.1. General objective

- The objective of this study is to explore how the Human Resources Management Practice are being implemented and the associated challenges in Makuey Woreda.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

- To assess the implementation of Human Resources Management practice in the public Sectors of the Makuey Woreda.
- To identify the challenges encountered on the practice of Human Resources Management.
- To assess the attitude and Knowledge toward Human Resources Management in Makuey Woreda.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

2.1. Concept of Human Resource Management

The term "human resource" was coined by management guru Peter F. Drucker (1954) in *The Practice of Management*. In this seminal work, Drucker presents three broad managerial functions: managing the business, managing other managers, and managing workers and work. Drucker argues that the human resource possesses a quality that is not present in other resources: "the ability to coordinate, to integrate, to judge and to imagine." Unlike other resources utilized by managers, the human resource can only utilize itself.

Human Resource Management (HRM, or sometimes abbreviated to HR) is concerned with all aspects of how people are employed and managed in organizations. In the 1980s, against a backdrop of economic recession and increased pressures on firms because of globalization and the accelerated pace of change brought about by technological developments, a number of academics began to think about people in organisations from a different perspective.

According to Storey (1995) defines HRM as "a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of a highly committed and capable workforce, using an integrated array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques"; while Byars & Rue (2004) see HRM as "activities designed to provide for and coordinate the human resources of an organization."

Bratton and Gold (2007) also defined Human resource management (HRM) is a strategic approach to managing employment relations which emphasizes that leveraging people's capabilities is critical to achieving competitive advantage, this being achieved through a distinctive set of integrated employment policies, programs, and practices.

Human resource management (HRM) practices help the organizations to achieve competitive advantage. According to the resource based view of the firm (Barney 1991), competitive advantage can be developed and sustained by creating value in a way that is rare and difficult for competitors to imitate and the quality the human resource within is difficult to imitate. Proper HRM practices can help the organization to increase mutual understanding between the employees and the employer hence bring about better performance.

2.2. Human Resource Management Practices

HRM practices are the primary means by which firms can influence and shape the skills, attitudes, and behavior of individuals to do their work and thus achieve organizational goal (Martin sons, 1995). Human Resources practices are designed to improve the knowledge, skills, and an ability of employees, boost their motivation, and enhance the retention of valuable employees.

The concept Human Resources Management practices includes, human resources planning, recruitment and selection, Training and Development, performance appraisal, compensation and rewards and etc.

2.2.1. Human Resources Planning: is an administration and operations used to be the two role areas of human resources. The strategic planning component came into play as a result of companies recognizing the need to consider human resources needs in goals and strategies.

2.2.2 Recruitment and Selection: According to Beardwell et al. (2004) the recruitment and selection process is concerned with identifying, attracting and choosing suitable people to meet an organizations human resource requirement. Ensuring that the right people are in the right place at the right time is a critical factor in gaining and maintaining competitive advantage. Recruitment and selection have always been crucial processes for organizations. They are integrated activities. (Bratton and Gold 2007) refers to recruitment as "the process of generating a pool of capable people to apply to an organization for employment. Selection is the process by which managers and other use specific instruments to choose from a pool of applicants the person or persons most likely to succeed in the job, given management goals and legal requirements". Recruitment and selection represent the entry point activities. Recruiting procedures and selection regimes will have an influence over the quality and type of skills new employees possess.

2.2.3. Performance Appraisal: Performance appraisal is a systematic process to evaluate the performance of an employee after certain period (Schuler, 1981). Performance appraisal also influences other human resources practices such as recruitment and selection, training and development, rewards and incentives, and employee relations. According Armstrong, (2001), "Performance Appraisal is defined as a strategic and integrated approach to delivering sustained success to organizations by improving the performance of the people who work in them and by developing the capabilities of teams and individual contributors".

It is concerned with performance improvement, employee development, satisfying the needs and expectations of all the organization's stake holders-owners, management, employees, customers, suppliers and the community. As performance appraisal leads to pay raise, promotion, and training; it is assumed that better performance appraisal can have impact on organizational performance.

2.2.4. Training and Development: Training and development is considered to be the most common human resources practice (Tzafir, 2006). Training and development refers to any effort to improve current of future employees' skills, abilities, and knowledge (Aswathappa, 2008).

Training and development constitute an ongoing process in any organization. "Training is the formal and systematic modification of behavior through learning which occurs as a result of education, development and planned experience (Armstrong, 2001)." In contrast, staff development refers to the development of supporting, technical and professional staff in organizations, such us local authorities, in which such staff form a large proportion of those employed. Its aim is to enable such employees to perform their current and future role effectively (Collin, 2001).

Furthermore, it helps employees to identify organization goals and mission, helps not only managing change but also developing positive culture in the organization, which in turn may lead to providing higher level of service to stakeholders (Armstrong, 2001). On the other hand human resource development (HRD) acts as a triggering mechanism for the progression of other HRM policies that are aimed at recruiting, retaining and rewarding employees, who are recognized as the qualitative difference between organizations. The investment in employee learning is a way of creating a primary internal market, and policies aimed at upgrading skill reduce an organization's dependency on external source of skill (Bratton and Gold, 2007).

2.2.5 Rewards and incentives: The term 'reward' is discussed frequently in the literature as something that the organization gives to the employees in response of their contributions and performance and also something which is desired by the employees (Agarwal, 1998). In the context of managing people, the reward and incentive system underlines a core feature of the employment relationship.

According to Bratton and Gold (2007), "Reward refers to all the financial, non- financial and psychological payments that an organization gives for its employees in exchange for the work they perform." Reward practices engendering debate among academics and organizational leaders on the role that it plays in achieving substantive employee behaviors like task performance, flexibility, quality and commitment. It is also argued that the design and management of reward systems holds one of the most difficult HRM tasks for general manager. Compensation refers to all types of pay or rewards going to employees and arising from their employment (Dessler, 2007).

2.3. Factors Affecting HRM Practices: HRM practices is important factor for organization success which differ from one country to another, and the factors which affect the HRM practices include external and internal factors. As quoted by Ozutku and Ozturkler (2009), external and internal factors affecting HR practices differ significantly across countries. Some of the major potential influences are as follows:

2.3.1 External Factors: Kane and Palmer (1995) opine that external factors affecting HR practices are those pressures on firms that cannot be controlled and changed in a favourable way in the short run. These factors include, Economic Changes, Technological Changes, National Culture, Legislations /Regulations, and Globalization.

2.3.2 Internal Factors: The Internal environment of organizations strongly affects their HR practices. According to (Milkovich and Boudreau, 1991) researchers have compiled a lengthy list of organizational characteristics related to HR practices. The important internal factors are: Organisations Size, Organisational Structure, Business Strategy, Human Resource Strategy, Power and Politics, and Academic and Professional influence on HR Practices.

2.4. Challenges of Human Resource Management (HRM)

Human resource management is a broad and vital function in public as well as private organization. This most significant function of management faces different challenges in present businesses and organization. There are many challenges in present business circumstances, including globalization, workforce diversity, technological advances and changes in political and legal environment change in information technology.

Irshad (2008) on his research on challenges on human resource management in large organizations in Pakistan identified different challenges of human resource management, including inappropriate training and development program, Low job satisfaction and lack of motivation due to lack of proper compensation and benefit, inability to create a conducive working environment, high rate of turnover, technological knowhow and globalization.

Also Ikemefuna and Mbah (2011) on their research finding in Nigeria identified diversity of work place, the effect of technology on workplace, upgrading the skill of professional (professional development), training and development program, human resource management and politics (polarization of HRM), business change and globalization as challenges of human resource management.

All these challenges increase the pressure on HR managers to attract, retain and cultivate talented employee who copes with these challenges. It is difficult for human resource managers to pay no attention to these challenges rather they have to design and execute innovative mechanisms of developing skills and competencies of human resources to prepare them to accept the emerging challenges. Hence, one can say that the role of the Human Resource Manager is developing with the change in competitive market environment and Human Resource.

3. METHOD:

3.1. Research Design

The research design used in this study was qualitative descriptive design so that implementation of the human resources practices could be described from the Makuey woreda civil servants perspectives. Both primary and secondary sources of data were collected using the appropriate data gathering tools and used purposive sampling techniques to target the intended subjects based on their responsibilities in the civil service sector and their knowledge towards the different human resources management practices.

From the total 28 public sector offices, 7 offices were purposefully selected based on number of employees, based on the service they deliver, as well as their annual performance reports, and in similar manner 105 respondents were included in the study based on their positions, years of services and the like using purposive sampling and were part takers of either the interviews, focus group discussion or key informant interview. Hence the target population of this study are the Makuey woreda public sector employees.

To collect primary data, structured interviews, key informant interviews and Focused group discussion where used as data gathering tools. The secondary data was collected from Good governance and public service office as well as the human resources departments of the respective offices reports and files.

4. DISCUSSION:

Human resources management practices discussed in this study were; human resources Planning (HRP), Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Performance Appraisal and compensation and rewards system.

4.1. Human Resources Planning

The human resources planning is the basic and the foundation for the human resources management practices in any institutions, as it's taken from the institutional strategic plan which is very much related with nature, size and operation of the institution.

This study revealed lack of clear and participatory human resources planning in the whole woreda. In some few offices of the woreda, there is only plan of the human resources requirement it's dictated by the approved structure not based on any need assessment. The reason is most of the employee working in human resources support core process are not human resources professionals. This problem is believed to have affected the whole HRM practices, as the rest of the HRM practices are conducted in a dark, with clear objectives and criteria's as well as not transparent.

4.2. Recruitment and Selection

Getting the right person in the right place at the right time remains the key objectives in any organization recruitment processes. Lack of clear job applicant attraction strategies, such as lack of advertisement to attract competent applicant, inability to strictly follow the selection guidelines are some of the problem discussed by the civil servants during the study.

The problem of technical skills of those working in the human resources management department is also aggravated by the accountability and responsibilities in case of any misdeed in the process of recruitment and selection processes. In the study process, through the interview question the respondents' clearly indicated that especially the officials were never made accountable when they hiring an employee who is not competent by education and work experience as stipulated in the recruitment and selection guideline.

The problematic recruitment and selection process is against what Ivancevich (2007) explained. According to Ivancevich (2007) the success of most organization depends on selecting the right employee with the required knowledge, skill and attitudes that help the organization in the realization of achieving goals. Therefore, it generalized that the ineffective recruitment and selection has its impact on woreda's civil service sector performance.

4.3. Training and Development

Training and Development programme in any institution should focus on improving and Developing skills and knowledge of existing employee in the office to improve their performance in their daily work as well as preparing them to handle future responsibilities. Training and development plays a significant role in the civil service sector in terms of improving individual and organisational performance to deliver timely, and quality service to its respective clients, especially the business people and hence helps in enhancing the performance of the regional government in general.

According to the regional bureau civil service HRM practices implementation manual, every government bureau shall have the duty to identify the human resources need, allocate budget to it, decide when to recruit, and etc to prepare plans and budget for training and thereby ensure that the civil servants receive the necessary training and furnish information there on to the Bureau of Civil Service.

In contrary to this general consensus, this study revealed that, due to lack of clear planning in the woreda, the training and development were never carried as planned and the plans were actually not even based on any identified gaps in performance. Most of the training were conducted with no clear achievable objectives and hence making it difficult to major the success level of the trainings and development. Therefore, training and development as important factor for better service delivery by identifying

4.4. Performance Appraisal

According to the federal public service proclamation (Proclamation No 515/2007), The objective of employee performance appraisal is to enable public servant to effectively discharge their duties in accordance with the expected level of quality standard, in the time allotted, with minimum expense, and identify their strength and weakness with a view to improve their future performance.

However, this study shows lack of integrated HR Planning has highly contributed to the lack of committed, experienced and highly skilled personnel in the civil service sector leading to the much delayed service which mostly angered the business community working in the region. The study also shows that, the performance appraisal system suffers from lack of transparency, weak follow up and the linkage between performance and reward system is loose.

4.5. Compensation and Rewards System

In line with the performance appraisal the participants of this discussion indicated that, there is no reward system that can be attributed to the performance of the employees. The participants also claimed as there is no proper performance appraisal system, it is unthinkable of any right way of giving rewards and incentives to the employees, because this reward and incentive provision should always be attached to the performances appraisal outcome. Therefore the respondents dismiss the rewards system in Makuey woreda saying it does not exist because even the promotion in the civil service sector is done randomly influenced by other factors such as personal relations, influence from the top officials or even through bribing of those responsible to approve it.

5. CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATION :

The commitments of the woreda leadership as well as those responsible in managing human resource resources departments plays crucial role in making sure that those practices are seriously followed for sake of employees satisfaction, which would eventually creates better commitment among the civil servants to perform their duties and hence deliver as expected.

The study also indicated that recruitment and selection practice at the woreda are not merit based which causes problem in recruiting the right person to the right position as stipulated in the recruitment guideline. The study revealed that the human resources needs as well as training and development needs are not plan based, and those which are planned, were not at all participatory. Making most of the training and development programmes ineffective for improving and developing skills and capacity of employees as anticipated. The training and development were ineffective in assessing training needs, setting expected outcomes, setting performance objectives and goal of training and development programmes as well as raising the need budget for internal and external training and development.

The Makuy woreda Public Service and Good Governance Office, which is responsible in overseeing human resources management practices in the woreda is also ill equipped with the proper human resources as well as proper budget to execute its mandate.

From the secondary data collected regarding the qualifications, relevance of the filed as well as number of human resources, almost all offices in the woreda are poorly equipped and hence creating poor performance if any. Study also discovered that performance appraisal system suffers from lack of transparency, weak follow up, unable to identify and fill the gap of employees, and poor linkage between performance and reward system is loose.

5.1. CONCLUSION

General it can be concluded that the human resource managements challenges are identified in this study include: problems of recruiting skilled manpower, failure to attract and retaining qualified personnel, inadequate training and development plans, lack of attention to professional development, political interference from the woreda officials, lack of transparency in the whole process of HRM are the major ones.

The study indicates the need to expand human resource management knowledge and competencies for the effective management of human resources in the woreda. There is also a need to increase competent human resource professionals who would help in properly handing the human resources management practices and scientific and transparent ways making sure that the civil servants develops understanding of their importance and trust the whole mechanisms in the sector.

The current recruitment and selection procedures are very unclear and bias and in most of the cases the participants claims that the procedures does not allow bureaus to hire the right person to the right post because vacancies are not publicly advertised so that the job seeker could apply and recruited accordingly.

The civil service training and development programs to be effectively and yield the expected outcome, the office must train staff based on the training needs of government offices, coordinate and support the training program of the different government offices.

This luck of integrated HR Planning has highly contributed to the luck of committed, experienced and highly skilled personnel in the civil service sector leading to the much delayed service which frustrates the service seekers. The study also shows that, the performance appraisal system suffers from lack of transparency, weak follow up and the linkage between performance and reward system is loose. There is also tendency of looking into Performance Appraisal as a political agenda than a management approach and in most organisations there exist a tendency to meet deadlines and not to go further.

The study also indicates that employees are promoted inconsistent to their achievements, which indicates there is no link between performance and reward in their in the sector. The respondents feel that in the absence of strong link between performance and reward system is the main drawbacks of the performance appraisal system in the civil service sector.

Hence, the respondents dismiss the rewards system in the Makury woreda, saying it does not exist because even the promotion in the civil service sector is done randomly influenced by other factors such as personal relations, influence from the top officials or even through bribing of those responsible to approve it.

5.2. RECOMMENDATION

Based on these study findings, the following recommendations are given bellow;

- The over woreda administration in general and the public service and good governance office in particular need to realized the importance of properly applying the different human resources practices, which in turn could indicated how much the woreda values its employees.
- Acknowledging that human Resources are the main factor of any success in the rapidly changing business environment.

- Those positions related to human recourse management should be filed with HR professionals to help understand the human resources handling sciences and techniques.
- Recruitment and selection should be made merit based as well as transparent, need based and targeted training and development plan should be prepared in a participatory manner. Because it's well established truth that merit based recruitment and selection is a foundation for organizational development and efficient and effective service provision. Thus, it is recommended that to improve the poor service provision in the woreda be minimized through merit based recruitment and selection processes by attracting skilled, experienced and committed personnel to the civil service sector. In order to minimize problems related to recruitment and selections, proclamations, directives, procedure, regulations and manuals of human resource management that emanated from public service authority should be applied properly.
- Training and development program should be well organized and planned training and should focus on updating, capacitating, improving and developing skill, knowledge employees to execute present operation and prepare them for future responsibilities as well. The objectives and expected outcome of the training should be stated clearly and result should be evaluated against the stated standards.
- The study also found that there was a performance appraisal practice which attempts to assess the performance and behavior of the employees, but was not periodically planned and the points of evaluation were never agreed on by the employees. Most says that the evaluation criteria's were politically driven. There is also lacks link between good performance and reward as well as transparency and continuous follow up as per the evaluation result.
- Hence, to be effective, it is recommended that performance appraisal system of employee should be identifying and filling gaps and weakness of employees, focused on objective performance criteria and done with commitment, and should be conducted in a transparency and continuous follow up.
- Encourage employee to work together (team work) share ideas, develop a sense of ownership over their job and their work place.
- Create employee friendly working environment and encourage employees through the application of different incentives mechanisms both financially and non-financially to achieve organizational goals.

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