

Original Article

The Evolution and Foundation of Talent Management – A Comprehensive Review

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Abstract

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Talent, the natural aptitude through which the competence and skill of every individual is determined in the Global Human Resource Management. Being considered as the most required vertical, the talent management now emerged as the major tool for branding the organisation and to be innovative in the competitive market. The role of Talent Management is inevitable, since it plays the crucial role in identification and placing the right talents in the organisation. This paper deals with the origin of Talent Management in a historical perspective and also tries to understand the growth of Talent Management in stages of evolution.

Keywords: Talent; Talent Management; Skill; Global Talent Management

Introduction

The current global scenario has evolved by facing many transformations, which were the results of enormous discoveries, inventions and emergence of technologies in various fields. Human factors were the mainstream through which all the environmental changes, science advancements, emergence of political and social ideologies have been occurred. The evolution process has been fastened and sometimes stabilized with the natural thrusts as well as by the helter-skelter attitudes of the human race to attain a dominant position in this planet. Inventions of stone tools and wheels etc were the pioneer marks for the future inventions and paved way for the discoveries of many natural sources which contented the requirements of the efforts for further inventions and discoveries. Considerable efforts were made by the talented ancestors, who made the planet, a convenient place for their successive generations. Now here arises the most familiar and highly expressive word "Talent", which was the root cause for all above mentioned advancements. The word "Talent" have been used by many educationalists, human Resource experts, psychologists, technicians, artists, sports persons, entrepreneurs and by many others those are belonging to different streams. The talent has been described by many people, as a result of virtue, spirituality or an innate character. Many times, it is considered to be a rare source of skills which are in demand in the current or future scenario. But the literal meaning of the word "Talent" denotes the ability or possessing some skills which have been available with an individual naturally, ie, by birth. So far there seems to be a lack of research related to Talent and how it is distinguished from other similar terms like knowledge, capability, potency and many other terms. Novera Ansar and Akhtar Baloch¹, in the year 2018, published a research article that concentrated on the emergence of the term Talent. They have analysed the usage of the term, "Talent" which possessed a different meaning that is associated with monetary units. The word "Talent" in the holy Bible was also denoting the monetary units and it has been mentioned in many chapters of the Bible. In the year 2011, a researcher named Tansley, C², registered his opinion that the word "Talent" might be used to denote the Human Capital.

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He also noted the different perceptions, as an individual and as an ability, by which the word “Talent” has been defined. When many European countries use the word “Talent” to represent the ability, skill and as an innate factor, Japan literatures considered “Talent” as a state of final accomplishment. The meaning of Talent from monetary units to human ability started changing during the thirteenth century, which was mentioned by Hoad³, a researcher, in the year 1993. He stated that the word “Talent” started attaining its meaning, which resembles the terms like ability, capability and skill were gradually evolved during the Middle Ages.

The Dictionary of American Psychological Association⁴ defines talent, as an aptitude for outshining in a single or number of activities. They have also stated that the talent can be enriched by an individual if he/ she relishes the ability possessed by them or through understanding the best ways to exploit for their ambitions. Similarly, the Psychology Dictionary⁵ also served a comparable definition as the capability of handling same or different activities and tasks. *Talent - An innate skill or ability, or an aptitude to excel in one or more specific activities or subject areas. Ideal circumstances for the development of a talent include enjoyment of the talent for its own sake and a clear perception of how it can be exploited to fulfil the individual's long-term aspirations (American Psychological Association). Talent – Divine gifted ability that is presented in a person at the time of birth. Talent is the innate skill or capability of handling particular or different activities (Psychology Dictionary).*

Hence, psychologically and in the point of view of many scholars, Talent is considered to be an innate (inborn) behaviour, which was mentioned as “Innate Talent” in many cases especially in education and sports. It is strongly believed the talent is also developed through characteristics of the parents and hence it is also a reason for considering it as an innate ability. A question may arise, whether only a few minority numbers would be considered to be talented? When we consider talent as a skill, different skill will be available with different people and it is the task or challenge of the human resource management to identify such talents to enrich their organisations.

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, commonly known as CIPD⁶ is a Professional body operating in Britain, which awards and accredits the qualifications for human resources. CIPD has undergone research in association with its professionals in the year 2007, where the research is carried out on the Home Country Enterprises, Multinational Companies and among Small Entrepreneurs. Finally, they furnished a definition during the consolidation of their research. The definition provided by the CIPD has been furnished as follows. *Talented individuals are those who can make the greatest difference to organisational performance, either through their immediate contribution or in the longer term by demonstrating the highest levels of potential (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2007).*

NHS Leadership Academy⁷, currently a Britain based organisation furnished a detailed work about their talent management practices in the year 2014. The organisation concentrated on four major topics like talent, talent management, Reasons for the adopting talent and talent management to their organisation and finally the activities of the professionals who were associated with the talent management. The review tried to bring out some new definitions for the term “Talent” and hence they adopted profound research to analyse the definitions, roles of talent and the above mentioned topics. Here is the definition from their summary report about Talent, which is based on organisations and Human Resource. *Talent is about high performance and potential of a selected number of people to move up the organization into senior leadership or managerial positions. Talent is an inclusive term which refers to all employees (NHS Leadership Academy, 2014).*

In current scenario, the word “Talent” is highly utilized or considered to be a term which is associated to organisations and Human Resources. Talent is believed to a coupler which connects the recruiters and the job seekers and at the same moment, it has also been considered to be a measuring unit in various circumstances in the organisational environment. Hence various organisations in global scenario started intending on developing the talent management as their prioritised strategy. Now, management practices have made the term “Talent” as an inevitable concept for the organisational development. Such circumstances and practices paved way for the creation of Talent Management, which becomes a familiar concept within a short period of time.

Talent Management – An Overview

When the term “Talent”, was taken over by the organisations and HR practices, the global companies and other organisations which thrive in advancements and competitions, considered that it is mandatory to concentrate on effective utilization of talent sources. Hence many research were conducted by the professional organisations for human resources and research centres to discover the need for talent in the management practices as a strategy. McKinsey & Company, which a United States based consulting firm, published a research book in the name “The War for Talent”, where the concept of Talent Management was believed to be first analysed during 1998. But Doohar & Marting⁸ have already mentioned the term “Talent Management” in their works for American Management Association in the year 1957 itself. The war for talent describes the need for talent management, which has to be accepted as a corporate strategy for the future of organisations globally. Steven M. Hankin, et al⁹, in the “War For Talent” highlights the importance of talent for the organisations to be successful.

Similarly current organisations from different parts of the globe have defined the talent management from their perception, experiences and approaches. Definitions from various scholars also indicated the differences between the Talent Management and Human Resource Management. Some definitions tries to bring out the role talent

management in Human Resource Management and some speaks about the significance of Talent Management in general aspects. Business Jargons¹⁰, a business encyclopaedia which is available online, defines Talent Management as the organised processes which constantly prevail in the organisations. Such processes include the detection of vacant positions which has to be filled by the suitable candidates and offering training to enhance and prepare them for their long term career goals.

According to a definition stated by John Hopkins University on Talent Management, it is collection of Organisations' Human Resource Processes, which were formulated for recruiting, motivating, developing and retaining the productive manpower in the organisation. Katarzyna Niedźwiecka (2016)¹¹ listed out several definitions by various authors in which approaches the Talent Management in the similar perception. All the definitions stated that Talent management is a sequence of activities, which is also acquired as a strategy by most of the organisation in leading their management practices towards organisation development. The similar definitions^{12,13,14} for Talent Management practices by different scholars were listed as follows. *"Talent management is the processes of ensuring that talented people are attracted, retained, motivated and developed in line with the needs of the organization"*, (M. Armstrong, 2007)¹². *Talent management is the "attraction, development, and retention" of the talents, i.e. the most valuable staff members, by creating conditions conducive to their potential development, so that they can be put to use for the company's operations for as long as possible* (Jamka, 2011)¹³. *"Talent management is a set of activities taken vis-à-vis personnel with outstanding talents, to ensure their development and increase their operational efficiency, while simultaneously achieving corporate goals* (Moczyłowska, 2010)¹⁴.

So, from the above definition, Talent Management could be understood as the regular practices, which cannot be skipped in any stages. Concentration and effectiveness are required in all the stages in making the strategy to be successful one by which the future of the organisation could be framed through predetermined and focused vision. When the stages like entering, transforming and exiting occurs in the career cycle of an individual, he travels in the organisation based on the systematic procedures framed by the organisation and such procedures and practices were considered to be the Talent Management Practices. The process, practices and approaches of Talent Management differs from one organisation to other based on the nature of the organisation, external and internal environment like organisation culture, legal environment etc. These are also considered to be the influential factors that decide the practices and approaches of the Talent Management of any organisation. The demand for human resources in various sectors are arising in high frequency, in other words, the value of human efforts are understood and are being recognised in this current competitive scenario. Hence the search for talent is considered to be more significant to remain, advance and triumph the competition among the organisations. As the talent is believed to be the future deciding factor of the organisations, they were much concerned about the search for talents. Many verses and statements like "War for Talents", "Race for Talent", "Talent Hunt" etc, proves the importance and the requirement of talent by the organisations for their competitive growth.

Typically, the word Talent Management is always connected or viewed in the perception of the Employer and the candidate. It is always related to the competencies which were considered to be the eligibility for any job profile. It is determined by the way through which the management approaches the employees, who were the processors of the Talents. Hence, here the planning, approaches and the procedures for treating talented employees will be effectively formulated for retaining such employees in the organisation. Achieving the organisational goal through creating a strong human capital is identified as the common strategy in almost all the organisations despite of their structure and economic value. So, it is not only significant for an organisation to recruit talented candidates, but also to retain the talented employees. Organisation goals must be associated with the strategy of talent management by which effective and expected positive results could be attained by the organisations.

Origin of Talent Management

The Word "Talent" and "Talent Management" evolved at different period of time and under different environments. As we have seen in the overview of Talent Management, the term reaches a familiarity after the Mc Kinsey's research named "War for Talents". The term "Talent Management" was used in some places in the book and many authors in future have cited and described that Mc Kinsey was the first to utilize the term "Talent Management". But previously the term was mentioned in the book named "Selection of Management Personnel", which was published by the American Management Association in the year 1957. The evolution of the term talent has been discussed by various authors under innumerable perceptions, out of which many have been evidential. As previously stated, Bible has the references of the word "Talent". Along with the references from the bible and many other sources, talent can be understood as a monetary unit in olden days. The term was used to denote the currencies in Greek and Roman Civilization and eventually denotes the weight or mass of the precious metals like gold and silver. Various assumptions have been reviewed so far to find the tradition of the term "Talent" and it has been understood the term was utilised for different concepts and not at the same period. The cultural environment of different geographies understood the term "Talent" in different perception or description. As stated by Tansley (2011), Europeans understood "Talent" as an inborn characteristic or a strength, which has the common meaning in many European languages like English, French and Polish. But in the case of Japanese scenario, they consider "Talent" as an accomplishment which must be acquired. Centuries and centuries have experienced the need for human workforce who created infrastructures that determined

the pride of empires and their civilizations. Hoad, T. F. (1993) has noticed a gradual transformation started occurring during thirteenth century where “Talent” have been understood as capabilities and skills of an individual.

Workforce and Industrial revolutions are always interconnected and these terms were highly associated with the emergence of Talent Management. As we all know the four stages of industrial revolution like Steam at 18th Century, Electricity at the 19th century, Information Technology at the 20th century and the current century’s digital revolution that is influential through the artificial intelligence and biotech concepts. It has been discussed in an article authored by Adina Tarry¹⁵ (2018), where he speaks about the gradual development of Human Resource through industrial revolutions, which is the origin for talent management. Before the emergence of Talent Management, Human Resource Management has been denoted by the term “Personnel Management”, where the processes will be concentrating on recruitment and administration. Later when Human resource management practices progress towards training, development and appraisal, the concept becomes wider and advanced. And now it is the time to accept and approve the talented workforce as the asset of the organisations and it paved the way for “Talent Management” as a strategy for Organisational Development.

Kipkemboi Jacob Rotich (2015)¹⁶ analysed the development of Human Resource as a management and as an organ of the organisations. He compared the development of human resource, continental wise, where the scenario of handling work force differs based on the cultural and political administration influences. Asian and Australian countries have growth stages in Human Resource management with the phases like Administration, Welfare administration and Strategic Human Resource Management. Similarly North American and European Countries owned phases like welfare stage, Administration Stage and Strategic Human Resource Management which occurs in different duration and period of time within these continents. During the intervals of each industrial revolution, there was a heavy demand for skilled and unskilled workforce which created numerous job opportunities for the people. Skilled workforces were screened based on the talent and the unskilled were trained for performing certain tasks. European and American countries utilised the industrial revolution in designing and deciding their Industrial future through hunting a large talent group from their colonial countries in the form of skilled employees and as labourers. After the Second World War, the nature of the labour management has seen many changes and new approaches evolved with new terms like Personnel Management which is succeeded by the Human Resource Management.

Again, the need for talent, made many organisations to design new approaches and strategy within and apart for Human Resource Management concreted the path of the term “Talent Management”. Mellahi, K. & Collings, D. G (2010) have narrated the emergence of Talent management in their works under different topics, in which Talent and Talent Management were the core concepts. Like many researchers and authors, they also stated that “War for Talent” was the concept, which created an impact among organisations in recruitment and talent search. Organisations gradually understood the importance of acquiring talented employees and the search for talent has grown as a race among the organisations. Such scenario has been narrated by Mellahi, K. & Collings, D. G, where the history of Talent Management was pictured. Moreover, they have classified the Talent Management into different stages from its time of emergence, in which talent had been specified as a concept that comes under HR practices. Further in the second Stage, talent was associated with the employee training needs and development in the organisation. And in further stages, talent becomes an unavoidable element in the management practices, concentrated in various positions and it has emerged as a management strategy for growth in various dimensions.

Conclusion

Now, Talent Management has come across variations and advancements through different approaches by various organisations. Hence Talent search is understood as the foundation of the organisation’s future, the culture of recruiting has progressive changes in its processes and key result areas. The history of Talent management communicates the need for efficiency in workforce and the requirement of identifying the suitable positions and profiles for talents in the organisation. When talent becomes the code and basic eligibility for various job profiles, it is also an alarm for the job seekers to recognize their talent to get exposed in the Talent market of the global environment.

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