

# **Transformational Intervention in Human Resource Development in North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Limited (NEEPCO) – A Case Study**

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**Abstract:** *North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Limited (NEEPCO) operates the largest Hydro Power Plant in N.E. Region of India. As per NEEPCO Website (Updated as on: 29.11.2016), the present installed capacity of the Corporation is 1251 MW comprising 755 MW in Hydro, 491 MW in Thermal and 5 MW in Renewable (Solar). NEEPCO Commissioned its first 5 MW MWp Grid Interactive Solar PV Power Plant at Monarchak in Sepahijala District of Tripura on the 15th February, 2015. It is the only CPSU having Hydro and Thermal Power Stations in operation. Presently NEEPCO is implementing 3 Hydro Projects aggregating 770 MW viz. Kameng (600 MW), Pare (110 MW) & Tuirial HEP (60 MW) in the N.E. Region for commissioning within 12th Plan. NEEPCO is the only CPSU operating a Power Plant in Nagaland. There is no denying the fact that at the back of all these gigantic projects successfully being run by the NEEPCO, the most crucial support comes from the human resources rendering their services to this great corporation in various capacities. The paper makes an attempt to study the Transformational Intervention in Human Resource Development in North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Limited (NEEPCO).*

**Keywords:** *Human Resource, Human Resource Development, NEEPCO.*

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## **I. Introduction**

Human Resource Development (HRD) is commonly understood as an organized and systematic intervention towards development of human capabilities, abilities, knowledge, attitude and behaviour in an organization. HRD is a process of continuous developmental function at individual and organizational level. It is a science of anticipating, planning, organizing, motivating, inspiring and implementing all aspects of developmental perspective of human beings. HRD encompasses the dynamics of the organization as a whole laying emphasis on thriving and growing an organized culture of growth and development for one and all.

HRD concept was first introduced by Leonard Nadler in 1969 in a conference in US. "He defined HRD as those learning experience which are organized, for a specific time, and designed to bring about the possibility of behavioral change". According to Leonard Nadler, "Human resource development is a series of organized activities, conducted within a specialised time and designed to produce behavioural changes."

Over a period of time, various authors, academicians and practitioners of HRD function contributed in defining and understanding the conceptual framework on HRD as an organized tool for developing the organization. According to Dr. T.V. Rao (1988), "HRD is a process in which the employees of an organization are continually helped in a planned way to:

- Acquire or sharpen capabilities required to perform various functions associated with present or expected future rolls.
- Develop their general capabilities so that they may be able to discover their own inner potentialities and explore them to the fullest extent for their own and organizational development purposes.
- Develop an organizational culture where superior subordinate relationships, team work and collaboration among different sub-units are strong and contribute to organizational health, dynamism and pride of the employees".

What is understood from the above concept is that the HRD is an organization's process for acquiring and developing the capabilities towards shaping an organization's culture. It is a planned process with continuous intervention in an organized way towards facilitating the employees to update their knowledge and sharpen capabilities. Knowledge, skills, perspective, capability, aptitude, behaviour and values are reflected in one encompassing word called competency. Competency means the ability to do task effectively. Competency

management is an integral part of Human Resource Development. The competency can be divided into two types: Behavioural & Functional. The behavioural competency may indicate motives, traits, self-concept, behavioural traits, values, etc. The Functional competency may include a cluster of related knowledge, skills, abilities, characteristics that are related to the particular functional areas.

Nadler (1984) defined HRD as organized learning experience in a defined time period to increase the possibility of job performance & growth. He emphasized on the process of learning in an organized manner during a specific time period with an anticipated objective for job performance and personal and organizational growth.

McLean and McLean (2001) in his review of the definition of HRD after considering various definitions across the world defined HRD as any process or activity that, either initially or over the longer term, has the potential to develop adult's work based knowledge, expertise, productivity, and satisfaction, whether for personal or group / team gain, or for the benefit of an organization, community, or ultimately the whole humanity.

McLean's definition of HRD encompasses all HR activities, viz., 360 feedback, Action Learning, Career Development, Change & its management, Education, Culture & Diversity, Evaluation, Informal Learning, Knowledge Management, Leadership Development, Mentoring, Need Assessment, Organizational Commitments, Organizational development, Training Effectiveness measurement, Transfer Learning, Work Values, Work place learning, Management development, etc.

According to Dr. Rao (1994), most business organization in today's liberalized economy faces learning challenges. These relate to external learning environment in coping with market changes & competitiveness. It also reflects enhanced customer expectations, changing government policies and internal environment pertaining to implementation of employees development programs. This may generate team works, technology up-gradation, quality developing market orientation. The author remarked that the business, organizations face difficulties in coping with the changed situations due to slow perception of changes in the environment because of lack of effective information systems, lack of employee commitment to learning, resistance to change due to perception gaps, lack of long term perspective in solving problems. Some other aspects of difficulties are lack of investment in developing employees' competencies and motivation and absence of learning mechanism. Some important HRD subsystems according to Dr. Rao which require changes in the today's context are Performance Appraisal System, Organizational Structure & De-layering, Career Planning, Training, Feedback and Counseling, Multi-skilling, OCTAPACE (Openness, Collaboration and Team Work, Trust, Authenticity, Proaction, Autonomy, Confrontation and Experimentation) Value and OD Interventions.

### **About NEEPCO (North Eastern Electric Power Corporation of India Ltd)**

NEEPCO is a Miniratna Schedule 'A' CPSE under the Ministry of Power, Government of India operating power generating projects (Hydro, Thermal and Renewable energy) in NER & beyond. It has 5 hydro, 3 thermal and 1 solar power stations with a combined installed capacity of 1,287 MW with an authorized share capital of INR 5000 crores. NEEPCO has a strong work force of 2,440 employees on its roll. It plans expand its business in execution of non renewable power projects under the Government of India schemes.

NEEPCO with its business domain in conceiving, planning, execution, operation and maintenance of power projects in hydro, thermal and renewable energy (Wind and Solar) has need and challenges in building up the capabilities of its human resources in planned and systematic manner. The human resources of this company, which was incorporated in the year 1976, are relatively in the upper age bracket of average age profile of 48 years and many of the persons holding the key positions are retiring within the next 3 to 5 years. The workforce consist of Executives in various grades who have professional knowledge and varying skill levels, supervisors and workmen who have certain specific degree of technical or non technical knowledge & skill to perform their task although many of them have become redundant since the roles for which they were recruited long time back, no longer exist in today's context. Moreover, the changed nature of jobs with new work policies, procedure, degree of automation, changed use of technological knowhow and new machineries, etc., pose huge challenges to the organization.

A study conducted on HRD policies, programmes introduced and new HR interventions made during the last few years in NEEPCO has its significance since the challenges enumerated above is a typical one faced by many CPSE in India.

### **Human Resource Development in NEEPCO**

Human Resource Department of NEEPCO focuses on both training of employees for their current jobs and developing skills for their future roles and responsibilities. Based on the training requirements received from time to time, the Training and Development activities have been taking place in NEEPCO. However, this entire process was not systematized until the year 2014. For the first time in the year 2014, a detail competency mapping was done for every functional areas in NEEPCO and gaps were identified. In view of the gaps

identified, a systematic long term programme was developed to meet the future competency need of the organization. To implement the long term programme, every year a Annual Competency Development Programme (ACDP) is prepared based on the feedback received from different departments and functional areas. The preceding years beginning with 2014 and till date there has been a remarkable and ingenious period for the HRD department as the said years have witnessed many new and effective HRD interventions for the development of our employees, which are enunciated as under :

**1. HR Odyssey and HRD Accomplishments**

The emergence of a new phase of HR odyssey was started in the year 2014 with major transformational changes in HR systems, policies, procedures and guidelines. The development of the HR Odyssey has been an initiative in this regard to demonstrate the activities and accomplishment by the HR Team during the year. The HR Odyssey is a booklet developed periodically to highlight the accomplishments of HR team achieved during the year. Likewise, another booklet entitled “HRD Accomplishments” has been developed to manifest the various training interventions and achievements of the year.

**2. Development of a World Class Technical Competency Model for NEEPCO**

With the vision of streamlining the training and development activity of the Corporation, a need was felt for developing a competency framework to facilitate the identification of the competency standards for each technical functional team, competency gaps identification and closing the gaps by appropriate HRD interventions.

Accordingly, a model was developed by crowd sourcing exercise involving experienced engineers up to the level of Executive Directors who facilitated in creating a practical and implementable approach paper on training intervention. The model determines the competency gap based on competency level of technical executives. Specific training were devised and implemented through Annual Competency Development Plan (ACDP)

The model developed by NEEPCO was appreciated by Ministry of Power, Government of India and was circulated to all Central Power Generating Organisations under the MOP for developing a similar model in their organisations in line with the NEEPCO’s model.

**3. Preparation of the Annual Competency Development Plan (ACDP)**

The ACDP has operationalised the entire activities of the HRD department by catering to the training needs of the employees deployed in all functional departments of the organization. The ACDP is prepared after incorporation of the training inputs received through the analysis of the training need forms and training requirements forwarded by various departments from time to time. It also took inputs from feedback received from past participant. Budgets are also earmarked for training infrastructure development and organising Interactive talks by Eminent Personalities through Experience sharing sessions. An amount equivalent to 1.5% of the annual salary budget is earmarked for execution of the Annual Competency Development Plan (ACDP). In 2014 and thereafter the emphasis was on the qualitative aspect of training rather than expenditure.

**4. Introduction of Various Innovative training practices**

**Redeployment & Re-Engagement of Employees holding redundant Posts**

For the optimum utilisation of human resources, employees who are in the redundant posts viz., Khalasi, Mali, Bull-Dozer Operator, Duplicating Operators, Blue Printer Operator, etc., have been enabled to undergo Training in trades which are in requirement in the organisation. The following training programmes have been organised in association with reputed training institutes:

- Several numbers of employees who were in redundant posts have been re-mustered & redeployed as Operators (Mechanical) after attending training.
- Attitude & Skill Development Programs were imparted to many employees who were in redundant posts and they have been re-mustered & redeployed as Liaison Assistant.

**Pioneering the system of Inter CPSEs Knowledge – Sharing Visits**

Knowledge exchange programme amongst CPSEs were introduced for the first time in NEEPCO. NEEPCO has deputed batches of engineers in different thermal stations of NTPC and Chamera Power Station of NHPC.

**Organizing Motivational and Interactive talks by Eminent Personalities**

With a view to creating a work culture for imbibing new ideas and know-how that can act as spark for ‘out of the box thinking’ by transfer of knowledge and wisdom from successful and eminent personalities, a new system of organizing “Motivational and Interactive talks by Eminent Personalities” have been introduced.

**NEEPCO Training Information Management Systems (TRIMS)**

The training database management system known as the NEEPCO Training Information Management Systems (TRIMS) has been formulated for the first time in the Corporation. The training details of all the employees of the Corporation can be accessed through this platform. This database has also been further developed so that training needs, training feedback can be incorporated directly into the system by the employees. The introduction of TRIMS has helped in efficient storage of data as well as simplification of the task of assessing the training details of employees.

**Pioneering the System of Comprehensive Training Evaluation**

Prior to the year 2014, there was no systematic training evaluation system in NEEPCO. Training Evaluation is a pivotal function of HRD which helps in understanding the usefulness of training. Training evaluation has been carried out to ensure that the training intervention is able to achieve the desired result and also form a basis for modifying or improving the future training programmes. Framework for training evaluation is as under:

**a. Training Evaluation Framework**

Immediate Feedback	Learning feedback	Impact Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program feedback form (in-house programs)</li> <li>▪ External record form (external programs)</li> </ul> <p>(Participants reaction &amp; satisfaction with learning experience, content, perceived value &amp; service like ambience during the programme)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A pre-program and post training program test is conducted for measuring the transfer of learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assessed after completion of three months of the training programme</li> </ul> <p>(Specific application &amp; implementation of the learning at the work place is assessed.)</p>

**b. Introduction of the System For Assessing the Return on Training Investment (ROTI) for Determination of the Impact of Training on Productivity and Performance**

Return on investment (ROI) is a measure of the monetary benefits obtained by an organisation over a specified time period in return for a given investment in a training programme.

The various training programmes organised for the employees involve a lot of monetary investment. With a view to assessing the utility of this investment made, the system of measuring ROI of certain training programmes was introduced for the first time in the Corporation. Examples of some of the training programs where Return on Training Investment (ROTI) has been assessed:

Name of the program	ROTI determined in terms of monetary gain based on the variables such as output/ quality/time saved/ mandays saved, etc.
1. Redeployment & Re-Engagement of Employees in redundant Posts to the post of Operator(Mechanical)	Cost of Rs.91866889/- saved
2. Redeployment & Re-Engagement of Employees in redundant Posts to the post of Liaison Assistants	Cost of Rs38168860/- saved
3. Operation & Maintenance of Hydro Power Station	Monetary benefit of Rs 98, 76,656/-

*Source: HRD Reports of NEEPCO, 2016.*

**4.5. Training Programme for Union Members**

In order to build a sense of oneness and better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of unions, customized training programmes were organised for the first time exclusively for the union members. The programmes which were organized in association with reputed training institute like XLRI, garnered much appreciation from the Union members. The major focus of the programme was understanding the “Roles & Responsibilities of Union” for Collective decision making process, understanding NEEPCO’s business, financial position and Project Plans along with industrial visits.

**4.6. Introduction of Training on “Planning for Superannuation” for Retiring Employees**

Considering the large numbers of employees approaching superannuation in NEEPCO, it was felt that a training programme be organised in order to make them prepared for post retirement life. The programme focusses on

areas viz. Superannuation benefits by NEEPCO, Post Retirement Financial Planning, Post-retirement health management, etc. The programme received positive feedback from the participants who appreciated the initiative for conducting such a programme for the first time in the Corporation.

**4.7. Know Your Department:**

A platform known as “Know Your Department” was created to learn and understand the roles & responsibilities of our various functional Departments. Under this system, the concerned HOD or officer of a particular department gives a presentation highlighting the functions and challenges of the said department. This has helped in bringing cohesiveness, better appreciation of others work and team building initiatives.

**5. Training Impact Assessment Study**

With the purpose of understanding the impact and effectiveness of training initiatives developed in NEEPCO, a Training Impact Assessment Study was conducted by a professional third party for the first time in NEEPCO. This study was carried out to determine efficacy of the training programmes and assess the employees’ feedback on training intervention.

This study was conducted in association with an agency called Percept Research & Consultancy Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi. The study which was carried out in 11 selected offices/Plants/Projects of the Corporation focused on assessing the three broad areas:

- Assessment of Training Needs.
- Assessment of Training Programmes.
- Training Impact Assessment.

From the research carried out, it was found that training initiatives have indeed helped in overall development of the employees. One such finding was that 81% of the respondents agreed that the training imparted to them helped them in increasing their knowledge/ skills and their application in the jobs understanding the topics covered in the program.

**6. Achievement of MOU Targets on HRD Intervention:**

Year	HRM Performance indicators	Status
2014-15	1. Training course on Project Management	target achieved for excellent rating
	2. Formulating a system for identification of Mentors and developing them with appropriate interventions	
	3. Organizing awareness program in XLRI/IIM, Shillong for members of Unionized category of employees on Roles & Responsibilities of Union for collective decision making process, understanding Company’s business, financial position and project plans	
2015-16	1. 15 days advance programme for executives of E-3 level & above on “Sustainable Development, R&R and CSR covering the new guidelines and amendments”	target achieved for excellent rating

**7. Accolades Received :**

- a. NEEPCO was awarded with Greentech HR Gold Award for Training Excellence by the Greentech HR Foundation during its glittering 5th Greentech HR Award held at the hotel Le Meridien, Bangalore on 29th May, 2015.
- b. NEEPCO was also adjudged with the Second Best Team in the “NATIONAL AWARD FOR INNOVATIVE TRAINING PRACTICES, 2014-15” at the 45th Annual National Convention organized by the Indian Society for Training & Development (ISTD) during 10th to 11th December, 2015 at Kochi. Apart from the Training & Development activities as enumerated above, various sub-systems of the HRD were revamped and new initiatives were introduced for overall development at individual, group and organizational levels.

**8. Revamping Performance Appraisal System**

**1. Setting KRA for HR Executives:**

As a new system for setting a Systematic, Measurable, Realistic and Target bound (SMART) annual performance target, every HR Executives signed an MoU with his/her immediate boss on the mutually agreed and shared Key Result Area (KRA) which was quantifiable and achievable. Agreed MoU on KRAs were submitted to the Director (Personnel) as a symbol of commitment to it.

**8.2 Periodic Review Discussion:** A quarterly Periodic Review Discussion is held whereby, each HR group of Corporate HR function and Project/Plant have to make a brief presentation on the activities, HR initiatives undertaken during the last quarter and also what is planned to be achieved in the next quarter. It is a participative process for target setting and monitoring system for group performance which is a new concept introduced in the organisation for learning from experience shared amongst one another and suggestions, solutions generated from group discussions.

**2. Online Performance Appraisal System (APAR)**

APAR of employees are used for various purposes, viz. for assessment by the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) for promotions, for calculation of Performance Related Pay (PRP), for Developmental Need Assessment, etc. However, the decade long practiced pen and paper method through writing of APAR by Reporting, Reviewing and Accepting Officers have many limitations; a major limitation being not receiving the completed APAR before the assessment committees due to delay, misplacement of such reports. In order to address such issues so that timely HR interventions could be undertaken taking inputs from the APAR report, an online APAR system is conceived and implemented from the Appraisal year 2017-18.

**9. Organization Structure and De-layering :**

**1. Clear HR Organizational Structure with Role Clarity and Flat structuring:**

In order to foster role clarity, team spirit and for easy flow of communication in the HR organizational setup, the organizational structure have been made flat and trim. Diverse, multiple and clear definitive roles are assigned to each group with flattened chain of command.

**9.2 Removing Wastage, Duplicity, Unnecessary Process and Procedure**

With an aim to remove unnecessary repetition, avoiding diverging and contradictory noting by different officers in proposals and office communications, a specific guideline for office communication and movement of files as to how a proposal note is to be initiated, vetted & endorsed for obtaining decision; a standard inter office memos for inter office communication were developed and introduced. Many of employees' services claim forms were revamped/ introduced viz., Leave Account Book, Medical Card for serving and retired employees were introduced. Online grievance/suggestion response form was implemented. All communications viz. training nominations, transfer/posting, Updates on HR Policy, etc. had been made online through a dedicated HR Portal.

**10. Career Planning**

**1. Promotion Policy for Non-executives:** A new Promotion Policy for the non-executive employees was framed by carving out from the combined Policy with revision and introduction of some specific systems, viz., to promote employees once a year i.e. on 1<sup>st</sup> July instead of twice a year in the earlier policy, re-skilling, re-musteration and redeployment was introduced to train up employees in redundant category, new Channel of Promotion was introduced as per requirement of the organisation. The policy encourages employees in acquiring job related knowledge with additional/desirable qualifications. It introduced carrot & stick rules whereby the scheme promotes and recognises star performers with additional increments and also it do not consider whose performance is average and below.

**1. Letting Employees Choose Alternative Career Path Through Re-musteration process:**

Employees who are working in redundant and surplus posts, viz., Messenger, Khalasi, Driver, etc. were given the option to choose their career in post which are required in the organization viz., Electrical Operator, Mechanical Operator, Technical Assistants, Computer Assistant, etc. where they are nominated for medium term training courses in association with Industrial Training Institutes. After completion of training and on passing the required trade test they are re-mustered and redeployed giving them a new lease of life which are productive to the organization.

**2. Succession Planning**

A systematic plan for identification of the key positions in all vertical functions of the company *vis-a-vis* the persons holding such post and identification of gaps in availability of Successors in the next 3 and 5 years are carried out. A system for identification of such potential successors, grooming and developing them to take over such key positions keeping in mind the corporate plan is introduced for the first time.

**11. Multi Skill Development**

Due to changed nature of jobs with adoption of new technologies, machineries and methodologies during construction, erecting, commissioning, operation and maintenance of power plants specially in Hydro and Thermal based power plants, the Technicians / Operators and Supervisor need to acquire multi-faceted knowledge in the area to be able to perform their job with confidence. Therefore, in association with

National Power Training Institute, customized training programme encompassing all facets of project life cycle right from the project conception to construction, commissioning, operation and maintenance was devised titled “Competency Development Program for Operators/ Technicians”, and Technicians/Operators were imparted in-campus and project visits training programme.

## **12. Feedback & Counseling**

As a system for obtaining continuous and informal feedback and imparting counseling to new entrants in the organization a system for mentor-mentee bonding have been introduced, whereby each of the new entrants in groups are assigned with a senior officer who is not his/her direct line of reporting so that an informal mentor-mentee relationship could be developed.

## **13. Cultural Development (OCTOPACE value) & OD Interventions**

In order to induce OCTOPACE value as termed by Dr. Rao (1994) which stimulates Openness, Collaboration and Team Work, Trust, Authenticity, Confrontation and encourage Experimentation, some of the HRD initiatives undertaken in the organisation were:

**13.1 Introduction of Inter Project Cultural Competitions** where employees and their family member participate in showcasing their diverse culture and traditions which at the same time create a platform to understand one another and learn to appreciate culture & tradition of employees belonging to other community.

### **2. Employee Day Celebration**

A system to celebrate Employee Day on the 1<sup>st</sup> May of every year was introduced in the year 2014 where all unions jointly raise the NEEPCO Flag, sings NEEPCO song and employees and their leaders have lunch with Senior Officers and Directors and share pleasantries during the interaction. Such gesture from the Management is able to demonstrate openness, trust & collaboration culture in the organization.

### **3. Open Discussions through NNBC**

Periodic and planned intervention to interact in an open discussion forum in the name and style of NEEPCO National Bipartite Committee(NNBC) which consist of few representative from three trade unions and representative of the Management chaired by the Director(Personnel) is able to foster the culture of Openness, Collaboration, Trust, Authenticity and encourage Confrontation even.

### **13.4. Online suggestions and Feedbacks system**

A link in its HR portal for obtaining online suggestion and feedback had been introduced to create the openness, transparency, trust value systems amongst the employees.

## **14. Quality projects**

Many quality projects were undertaken in operating station with aims to encourage team spirit, encourage innovation & creativity which in turn have helped the power plant in streamlining process / procedure thereby encouraging waste reduction, time and resource optimization.

## **II. Conclusion**

Human Resource Development is a process and not merely a set of mechanisms and techniques. The mechanisms and techniques such as performance appraisal, counseling, training, and organization development interventions are used to initiate, facilitate, and promote this process in a continuous way. Organizations can facilitate this process of development by planning for it, by allocating organizational resources for the purpose, and by exemplifying an HRD philosophy that values human beings and promotes their development. The significance, importance and recognition of Human Resources as one of the most valuable assets of the organization is well evident from transformational HRD activities and initiatives undertaken by the Management of NEEPCO. HR Department has taken praiseworthy initiatives in developing the human capacities in terms of their thinking capabilities, knowledge, skills, changing attitudes and behavior through well organized and systematic HRD instruments. One of the employees who was earlier working as Messenger and who had got trained, remustered and redeployed as Liaison Assistant remarked “The customized programme imparted to us, has not only given us knowledge and skills in interacting with people coming to the office, but it has also given us a life’s lesson for managing self in everyday life. I look forward to avail many such training programmes for advancement of my career”. This just proves the effectiveness of the HRD initiatives as adopted by the NEEPCO. The changed attitude and behavior of the employees in dealing with everyday challenges with confidence in the workplaces and beyond and the enhanced level of motivation is quite visible now.

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