

Running head: FINANCIAL CRISIS

The Role and Responsibility of Human Resource Manager during the Financial Crisis

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ABSTRACT

This study will examine the importance and abilities of competencies of human resource (HR) managers in their strategic roles and responsibilities during the financial crisis. The role of a human resource manager is not just to hire and retain employees but this role now has a more dynamic meaning. However, this dissertation will discuss in detail personality traits of a HR manager and the changing role of an HR manager. Thus, this study will provide in depth information about a very important and current issue. The study also provides information on whether personality traits play an important part in the ability of an HR manager to do his job and realise and accomplish his responsibilities. Moreover, the ability to lead a change in the organisation is an important element of any human resource manager. A human resource manager who is overburdened with various responsibilities might not be able to accomplish and fulfil his or her job requirements. Realistic goals and responsibilities given to a human resource manager can help him perform effectively. Furthermore, human resource managers have to play leadership roles too. The main aim of this research is to study the role and responsibilities of a human resource manager during financial crisis, and find out whether the importance of a human resource manager increases or decreases during a financial crisis. This study also explores new roles and responsibilities such as Business partnering, administrative expert, employee champion and change agent which are very essential in facing not only the financial crisis but also the changing trading environment. The study also explores the problem of downsizing during financial crisis times. In addition this study discusses the effects of financial crisis on employee satisfaction and motivation as evidenced in the reduction of their job security. For this reason the research will make use of both primary and secondary research method. A qualitative interview will help in the in-depth study of the topic.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>ABSTRACT.....</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>1.0 Introduction</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>1.1 Key objectives of the study.....</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>1.2 Significance of the study.....</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>1.3 Rationale of study.....</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>1.4 Research questions.....</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>CHAPTER TWO.....</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>2.0 Critical Literature Review</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>2.1 Human Resource Leadership.....</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>2.1.1 Importance of HR leadership to organisational outcome.....</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>2.2 Human Resource Emotional Intelligence.....</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>2.3 The Role and Responsibility of a Human Resource Manager.....</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>2.3.1 The role of business partnering.....</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>2.3.2 The role of administrative expert.....</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>2.3.3 The role of employee champion.....</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>2.3.4 The role of change agent.....</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>2.4 Human Resource Manager during Financial Crisis.....</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>2.4.1 Financial crisis and down sizing.....</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>2.4.2 Financial crisis and job security: motivation & commitment.....</u>	<u>27</u>
<u>CHAPTER THREE.....</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>3.0 Research Design and Methodology.....</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>3.1 Research Question</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>3.2 Research Design.....</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>3.3 Research Methodology.....</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>3.3.1 Purpose of the research.....</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>3.3.2 Process of the research.....</u>	<u>32</u>
<u>3.3.3 Outcome of the study.....</u>	<u>32</u>
<u>3.4 Sources of Data Collection.....</u>	<u>33</u>
<u>3.4.1 Primary sources.....</u>	<u>33</u>
<u>3.4.2 Secondary sources.....</u>	<u>34</u>
<u>3.5 The Questionnaire for Interviews.....</u>	<u>35</u>
<u>3.6 Population and Sample</u>	<u>37</u>
<u>3.7 Planned Method of Data Analysis.....</u>	<u>37</u>
<u>CHAPTER FOUR.....</u>	<u>38</u>
<u>4.0 Research Findings and Discussions.....</u>	<u>38</u>
<u>4.1 Findings of the Primary Research (Interviews)</u>	<u>38</u>

4.1.1 Findings of the interviews with the HR managers.	38
4.1.2 Findings of the interviews with the GMs.	41
4.2 Data Analysis	43
4.2.1 Leadership.....	44
4.2.2 Mental intelligence.....	44
4.2.3 HR roles.....	45
4.3 Answering the Research Question.....	46
CHAPTER FIVE.....	47
5.0 Conclusion	47
5.1 Research Summary.....	47
5.2 Research Limitations	48
5.3 Suggestion & Recommendations	49
5.4 Conclusion	51
References.....	54
Pareek, U. (2002). Training instrument in HRD & OD, 2nd Edition. New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hell.	63
Interview questionnaire.....	73
Interview questionnaire.....	75
Finally, it is easy to be distracted by short term pressures. Companies must continue to consider longer-term strategies. Hence the second most important task is (3) organisational development. Even when the chips are down.....	78
Interview questionnaire.....	78
Interview questionnaire.....	81
Interview questionnaire.....	84
It is clever to take advantage of the business slowdown to concentrate on leadership development, people development and work on succession planning in order to retain talents.....	86
Interview questionnaire.....	86
Interview questionnaire.....	89
Retention.....	92
Interview questionnaire.....	92
Interview questionnaire.....	95
Interview questionnaire.....	99
Interview questionnaire.....	102
Interview questionnaire.....	105
Interview questionnaire.....	107
Interview questionnaire.....	110
Interview questionnaire.....	113

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

The role of Human resource management is constantly changing and in these unstable and difficult times this role has been transformed in a more unique, value adding, and strategically functional purpose. The role of a human resource manager is not just to hire and retain employees but this role now has a more dynamic meaning. This transformation has now put on more pressure on the human resource department of every business. The need to 'do more with less' has become the method of business operating for many organisations, and hence they put more pressure on their human resources to have a more strategic and planned approach rather than having an administrative thinking. This makes the human resource department more like a strategic partner providing important and useful expertise to the company (Lengnick-Hall & Lengnick-Hall, 2005, p. 47-49).

Even though the transformation of HR role has been the main priority of many businesses since the past decade (Reddington et al., 2005, p. 9), this 'role transformation' has remained more of a theoretical kind and many businesses are not able to transform it practically. However, during this global downturn of the economy, human resource managers have learned to deal with crisis situation and have played a better role than before. This paper makes use of secondary research data and interviews in order to have an in-depth understanding of this topic. The paper focuses around the role and responsibility of human resource managers during financial crisis. Additionally, it will discuss what qualities a good human resource manager should possess; this will include leadership qualities, effectiveness communication and also emotional intelligence. These qualities will help us understand the role and responsibilities of a HR manager and how he fulfils them.

Human resource Managers play a very important and vital role in risk management or in a crisis situation (Lowendahl, 2005, p. 191). The first thing which comes under risk during such situations is capital and human resource itself. Shortage of

employees and an increase in the inefficiency of the workers is a common problem. Many employees leave jobs for better opportunities where there is lower risk and hence other employees have to take up more responsibilities. Therefore, in a crisis situation not only the capital gets scarce, the human resource of the company also gets affected. Therefore, the role a human resource manager plays and the responsibility he takes up during such situation is very important to ensure that the organisation is able to survive under any crisis (Erven, 2008, p. 2-5) or be better able to support organisation's crisis management efforts and respond to any challenging situation to recover fast (Mckee & Guthridge, 2006, p. xvi).

As mentioned earlier, the role of a human resource manager is changing and developing constantly (Briscoe & Schuler, 2004, p. 417-418). Earlier they were considered as people who administered and systemised the entire business. They worked along with the executive management team of the organisation to manage the administrative functions such as recruitment, selection, retention and paying of employees. Most of the work the human resource managers did revolved around the employees and the workers. Working on the policies, employees' benefit etc was the priority. However, with the changing needs of the organisation, the responsibilities of the human resource department have changed too (Sims, 2006, p. 4-13). However, organisations are becoming more customer-centred and so are the human resource managers. The HR departments of many businesses now have a strategic approach and take actions based on the needs and demands of the customers. Therefore, before hiring any HR personnel, the management makes sure that the candidate has certain characteristics which are essential for an employee working in the human resource department in order to support the organisation's business strategy, maximise employees performance and achieve success (Armstrong, 2006, p. 8), increase capacity and meet effectively the challenges of changing environment (Deb, 2006, p. 77).

The ability to lead a change in the organisation is an important element of any human resource manager (Rothwell et al., 2008, p. 42-43). The role and responsibilities of a human resource manager are constantly changing today, whoever and important role

of a human resource manager is to have a strong belief in his employees. However, in today's crisis situation, every employee fears the risk of losing his / her job and usually switches jobs even if there is a slight increase in the job security. An important job of a human resource manager is to keep his employees satisfied so that the organisation does not lose skilled workers due to dissatisfaction (Grantham & Hook, 2009, p. 1-2). Due to global competition, human resource managers now have to focus more on strategic issues rather than simple hiring and payroll problems. The recent global downturn of the economy has involved the Human Resource Managers with issues related to financial crisis. They now have a very unique role acting as a liaison between employees and executive management of the organisation. Not only are they involved in the recruitment and selection process as earlier, but also take part when important decisions have to be taken. (Price, 2007, p. 279-300). As human resource managers act as a liaison between the employees and the executive managers, they have a bird's eye view of the entire organisation (Wielemaker & Flint, 2005, p. 259-265). In this way an HR manager helps an organisation achieve its objectives with the help of its workers and employees, and improve its efficiency by aligning the employees' efforts with the strategic objective of the organisation in order to increase its competitiveness and achieve success (Amos et al., 2008, p. 292).

There are various things which play a very important role in the managing abilities of a human resource manager. One of such things is the type and extent of responsibilities he is asked to take. A human resource manager who is overburdened with various responsibilities might not be able to fulfil his job requirements. Therefore, realistic goals and responsibilities given to a human resource manager can help him perform effectively and make important contribution to the success of the organisation (Bohlander & Snell, 2010, p. 31- 33). Another important thing is emotional intelligence and according to Goleman (1998) individuals with high emotional intelligence are able to function better in various situations. Emotional intelligence is a word given to the ability of a person to monitor his emotions and feelings and not let his personal feelings or emotions hinder his job responsibilities. How a human resource manager reacts to a certain situation, how he tackles problematic situations and how he reacts to crisis (Swart et al.,

2005, p. 178 – 179), particularly financial crisis are important questions and are discussed in detail in this report. HR managers have to play leadership roles too. Hence as mentioned earlier, this research will be a consolidated study of all the above mentioned points. Furthermore, the main research questions and key objectives of the study are given in the below section.

1.1 Key objectives of the study.

The main aim of this research is to study the role and responsibilities of a human resource manager during financial crisis. However, how a manager responds to such situations depend on his attitude, behavior, interpersonal skills, leadership skills etc. Therefore, in order to study the role and responsibility of a human resource manager during a crisis, there is a need to study the behavior of a manager and the types of responsibilities he has to take during such situations. Below are the main aims and objectives of this research.

- To find out whether the economic downturn of the economy /financial crisis has had any effect on the responsibilities of a human resource manager.
- To find out whether the management fired any employees during this crisis and how were the HR managers coping with the shortage of skilled workers.
- To find out whether the importance of a human resource manager increases or decreases during a financial crisis.
- To find out whether the ability of an HR manager to perform effectively has anything to do with his personality traits.
- To find out (such as leadership qualities, commitment to the organisation, emotional intelligence, etc.) have any affect on a human resource manager's ability to take decisions.

- To find out various challenges an HR manager has to face during a crisis situation.
- To find out whether the HR managers were able to fulfil these challenges and overcome the obstacles of the current downturn of the economy.
- To find out how an HR manager keeps people motivated during such crisis situation.
- To find out the changes brought in the role of an HR manager during the current financial crises.
- To find out what personality traits the recruitment and selection committee considers before hiring an HR personnel.

1.2 Significance of the study.

The possible outcome of the paper provides comprehensive information and authentic data about the topic gathered from different reliable resources. Thus it will be valuable contribution to the existing literature and research studies conducted around the topic. Moreover, the dissertation will discuss in detail personality traits of a HR manager and the changing role of an HR manager. Thus this study will provide in depth information about a very important and current issue. The study also provides information on whether personality traits play an important part in the ability of an HR manager to do his job and fulfil his responsibilities. Thus the outcome of the dissertation will be very significant and valuable from the business point of view as it will clarify the ways for the companies through which they can improve their effectiveness and the effectiveness of their employees. The students of human resource will also find this information valuable. They can have a deep understanding of the topic. The data and the information provided in the dissertation is collected from the authentic and reliable

resources so the students or the businesses can use this information for further reference or for understand and solving any particular issue related with the topic of the dissertation.

1.3 Rationale of study.

Human resource managers play a very important and vital role in the organisation. They bring together the workers and managers together. This is important as without a good understanding between the two it would be difficult for both the parties to operate. HR managers play a very important role in decision making and act as strategic partners to the executive managers (Marchington et al., 2002, p. 264 - 274). The rationale behind this research is to study in detail how the role and responsibilities of a human resource manager change during a financial crisis and how these managers cope and deal with this changing business environment. Moreover, personality traits of a manager also play an important role in decision making and leading activities (Lussier & Achua, 2009, p. 297 - 301). For example; a manager needs to have leadership qualities in order to guide and motivate the employees. It is the job of an HR manager to see that the employees do not get de-motivated or else the company will lose its skilled workers. Therefore, the main rationale behind this research was to find out how the role and responsibility of an HR manager has changed during the past decade, and how have these managers met the challenges of the global downturn of the economy and financial crisis which most of the business fail today. Moreover, it provides a comprehensive strategic approach for the businesses and managers who have not been able to meet the challenges of the new and changed HR management. The research makes use of interviews with 8 human resource personnel and 7 higher management people to find out how the HR managers have been able to cope with the changing businesses situations. Accordingly, these interviews provide an in-depth knowledge on the topic and fill the gap of the previous researches. Even though there have been many studies about the changing role of HR managers, however there have been almost none which discuss this changing role in light of the current financial crisis. This paper does not focus on any particular industry and presents

a general overview of the topic. In addition, this research is beneficial for all types of industries and does not focus particularly on any geographical location as well.

1.4 Research questions.

The research questions focuses on the assumptions, attitudes and beliefs surrounding HR managers' role and responsibility as related to the financial crisis. However, as shown in the interview questionnaire for HR managers (Appendix A) and in the interview questionnaire for general managers (Appendix B) it focuses on the following questions:

- Does the personality trait of an HR manager affect the way he fulfils his job responsibilities?
- What are the challenges faced by the human resources managers during the current financial crisis?
- Is there any change in the role and responsibilities of a human resource manager during the past decade?
- Are leadership qualities and emotional intelligence an important aspect of an HR manager?

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Critical Literature Review

2.1 Human Resource Leadership

Leadership is considered as a very important factor in Human Resource Management. It would not be untrue if said that the success of an organisation depends on the HR leadership (Bass & Bass, 2008, p. 20). Moreover, Bass (1995, p. 463 - 478), stated that the multifactor leadership theory was paid attention during past two decades by the researchers. A number of leadership theories and other viewpoints were included in this theory (Bass, 1990, p. 19 -36). It intersected leadership into two main constituents:

- Transactional leadership styles
- Transformational leadership styles

Furthermore, Duke (1998, p. 165– 195) explained leadership in an entirely different manner, he figured out leadership as “watching a parade”. He argued that while watching a parade individuals might have two perspectives of the view that is, proximal i.e., watching from front or the “Street View” and distal i.e., watching from a height or the “Rooftop View”. One who watches from a height is able to see all directions whereas one watching from the street might relinquish the broader and precise view (Gunter, 2001, p. 65). However, in the field of leadership both types of views are important and must be given due attention by the leaders. Daily routine picture may be treated as the proximal or street view whereas rooftop scene is also of great importance to have broader understanding. Below are the two types of leadership styles as identified by Bass (1985) (Bass & Bass, 2008, p. 41; Rickards & Clark, 2006, p. 83-86).

Transformational Leaders: While a leader attains complete awareness using the rooftop view he is in a position to demonstrate distinctive approaches of transformational leadership by directing his efforts and pains for comprehending the foresight of the process, perceiving prospective trends, and is thus able to impediments. However, according to James Burns (1978, p. 20) transformational leadership "occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality".

Transactional Leaders: On the contrary, the transactional leader concentrates his pains towards the conditional reward that is performance- reward exchange, recommending his limited vision because of using the mere street view (Western, 2008, p. 109). He thus requires watching very well even the slight hinting needs of task performance-reward relationship. In whatever manner, it is most essential to understand the collisions of leadership styles upon the perceptions of the workforce regarding the fairness of leaders. Up to now, there is a little substantiation that may properly connect organisational justice and leadership styles.

2.1.1 Importance of HR leadership to organisational outcome.

The leadership style of any HR manager is very important as it determines the organisational outcome. Moreover, the way of how an HR manager leads a situation will affect the future performances of the employees (Black et al., 2009, p. 295). Hence, HR

managers have to be very fair and apply the right kind of leadership style in order to ensure best organisational outcome. However, a fair work environment plays an important role in the organisational outcome (Jackson et al., 2009, p. 113-152; Gibson & Quick, 2008, p. 98). During the last forty years significant amount of attention has been given to the impacts of organisational atmosphere on employees conduct and behavior (Pritchard & Karasick, 1973, p. 126-146). Specifically in the mid of the decade from 1980 to 1990, organisational observers carried out mark able research to investigate the notion practically under the thought of what they called “organisational atmosphere”. The concept of organisational atmosphere was perceived as more of an ethical concept and which was said to be determined by behaviours, values, perceptions and norms of an organisation’s members. There were various atmospheric factors which couldn’t be differentiated from the managerial conditions, according to some theorists there were factors which could only be allocated under the heading of organisational composition i.e. span of control or size or chain of command (Hasenfeld, 2010, p. 234). However, according to James and Jones (1974, p. 1096-1112) and Zohar (1980, p. 96-97) organizational atmosphere was defined as follows:

Workforces build up consistent arrangement of perceptions and prospects, established on an assortment of cues present in their job surroundings, concerning their performance-result possibilities and behave consequently. When mutual and abridged for individual workers, these articulate sets of managerial perceptions are defined as organisational atmospheres.

In other words, it can be defined as perceived effectiveness of the organisational climate (Pareek, 2002, p. 670). However it has been difficult for atmosphere researchers, with extensive precision, to determine awareness regarding the workplace and express the connection between organisational results, leadership and perceptions. A study was undertaken by Litwin and Stringer (1968, p. 66-80), which was referred to as the Organisational Climate Questionnaire, and which was meant to assess various factors present in determining the organisational conducts (Forte, 2007, p. 108). Schneider & Reichers (1983, p. 19- 39), identify three perspectives on organisational climate and which are: structural; selection; attraction; and symbolic interaction. However, a number

of distinctive emotional atmospheres can be found in an organisation, each forecasting behavioural conclusions which are theoretically applicable (Rotb, 1995, p. 77).

2.2 Human Resource Emotional Intelligence

The term Emotional intelligence describes the ability of a person to control or use his emotions in order to manage himself or others (Bradberry & Greaves 2009, p. 23-50). However according to John Mayer and Peter Salovey (2004, p. 1-28) emotional intelligence is: "a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action". Moreover, various models of emotional intelligence have been proposed with various disagreements existing (Mayer et al., 2008, p. 503-517).

Emotional Intelligence is a new terminology whose roots can be traced back to Darwin's theory of survival and adaptation (Bar-On, 2006, p. 13-25; Wood et al. 2009, p. 66- 68). Moreover, the theory was based on importance of emotional expression (Darwin, 1872/1965). During the 1900s, several researchers started studying emotional expressions, how managers behave in certain situations, what is the background, does their personal problems have any association with this and so on. Even with quite many disagreements in case of Emotional Intelligence, it is still an important aspect of an HR manager's personality Traits. However, according to Diener (1984, p. 542-575) intelligence is a highly valued trait in modern societies. By developing our emotional intelligence we can become more productive and successful at what we do and how we interact with others (Wharam, 2009, p. 11; Wall, 2007, p. 150). Furthermore, in 1920 Thorndike used the term Social Intelligence which was described as a skill to manage people (ThornDike, 1920, p. 227-335). However, during the past few decades the term Emotional intelligence began to gain importance and many researchers came up with new studies. David Wechsler, Howard Gardner and Greenspan all tried to study Emotional Intelligence and came up with various EI models (Gardner, 1983; Phifer, 2007, p. 17; Petrides, 2000, p. 313-320). However, for the first time this term EI was used by Wayne Payne in his thesis 'A study of Emotion: Developing Emotional Intelligence' (Payne, 1985/1986, p. 203; Barrett et al. 2003, p. 431).

As mentioned earlier, it was Goleman (1995) who brought the concept of Emotional intelligence and was later used in organisations. (Goleman et al., 2002, p. 12). Emotions play an important part in one's life. However, sometimes emotions can disrupt work. Mood swings can affect not only an HR manager's performance but also other employees' performance (Lane, 2007, p. 27). There are various models of Emotional intelligence however the ones which affect the leadership, decision making ability and commitment of an HR management will be discussed here.

According to the ability based model, emotions can actually help a person in taking various decisions in his life and at workplace (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 185-211; Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 3-31). According to this theory, different individuals take different decisions when brought up with a situation which needs emotional intelligence; hence different individuals have different abilities. There are four types of abilities:

1. Perceiving emotions; in this type of ability the individual is able to collect emotional information from pictures, voices, videos and faces. This is the most basic type of emotional intelligence. This ability is possessed by usually all human beings and managers essentially have an advanced form of this ability. They are able to make judgment calls and decisions based on perceiving emotions.
2. Using emotions; as the name suggests, in this ability of emotional intelligence, the person can take decisions based on what he saw in the perceiving emotions. It is essential for a person to perceive first and then take an action based on his perception.
3. Understanding emotions; this is a more advanced ability of a person. In this he is able to understand more complex nature of emotional languages. For example; emotions can evolve and change over time. A good HR manager is able to understand emotions and see how his employees react on a certain action. This reaction can be slightly changed over time and the ability of a manager to notice even this slight change is very important.
4. Managing emotions; this is the most advanced level of emotional intelligence. this comes back to the very basic definition of Emotional Intelligence, where a

person who possesses this kind of intelligence is not only able to monitor his own emotions but is also able to monitor the emotions of others. This is a very important element of HR management. An HR manager should know how to manage emotions in order to achieve intended goals.

Apart from the ability model, the emotional competencies model has also been studied greatly. This model was introduced by Daniel Goleman (1998). According to Goleman, emotional intelligence competencies drive the leadership performance of an HR manager (Goleman, 2001, p. 27). These include:

1. Self-awareness; this is the ability of a person to use and recognise his own emotions. These emotions or gut feelings are later used to guide the person into taking action.
2. Self-management; as the name suggests, self management means to control one's emotions. External factors which affect a person's emotions push him to take impulse actions which a person might or might not regret later. Self management helps a person control his emotions.
3. Social-awareness; in this the person has the ability to understand other people's emotions as well as his own. This is a very important element for a person in order to exist in a society.
4. Relationship-management; this is an advanced level of social management. In this the person tries to influence and inspire the emotions of other beings. Not everyone has an ability to do so.

Furthermore, it has been noticed that emotional intelligence has a great effect on the project performance. It also contributes to a project manager's transformational leadership style. A project manager's transformational leadership style has a positive impact on actual project performance (Leban & Zulauf, 2004, p. 554-564).

2.3 The Role and Responsibility of a Human Resource Manager

Every HR manager plays a critical role in managing the human asset of an organization for the realization of the objectives set within the business framework. The human resource manager plays various roles and fulfils different responsibilities. However, traditionally human resource management consists of eight set of activities or

steps (Bratton & Gold, 2003, p. 15). The first four steps consist of the planning done by the HR managers. These include recruitment and de-recruitment decisions i.e. the managers have to take a decision whether to hire or lay-off the employees. The selection process selects which employees have to be hired or which have to be fired. The HR managers make the selection for recruitment from a pool of candidates who have applied for the job. Out of these candidates the candidate best for the job, with good expertise, knowledge and skills is selected (Gatewood et al., 2008, p. 73-110). Once these people are hired the HR managers then help them adapt to the organisation and make sure that their skills and expertise are kept current, help in development activities and keep them motivated with the help of training and reward system. All of this is done with the help of orientation, training, career development and compensation and benefit programs developed by the HR department. The last step of the HRM process is to identify problems in the performance and correct them (Mathis & Jackson, 2008, p. 2-32; Sims, 2002, p. 222). Human resource is considered as the most important element of making an effective organisation. It would not be false if said that an effective workforce can make a business. Therefore, it is important that the selection of these employees be made carefully. Furthermore, one of the most exhausting duties of the management is to put the right candidate in the right job (Deb, 2006, p. 162; Secord, 2003, p. 151; Agarwala, 2007). However, this is not the only duty an HR manager has to fulfil.

It should be noted here that the entire human resource management process is influenced by the external factors. In our case the external factor is the global downturn of economies which has put many businesses in a financial fit. However, there are various other environmental factors which affect the human resource management activities. For example, almost 16 million U.S workers close to 13% of the US workforce are involved in some sort of union activities (Boone & Kurtz, 2010, p. 318). A union usually seeks to promote its workers and protect the interest of these workers. All members collectively take decisions and act upon it. These decisions are dependent on the interest of the workers, which can vary from firing and recruitment policies, to gender discrimination issues, criteria for promotion, and disciplinary practices among others. If the HR managers are able to keep good relations with the union members, this relationship can produce a significant number of positive outcomes (Chandler & Waud,

2003, p. 145-154). On the other hand government constraints are also a part of these environmental considerations which have a deep impact on HR management. Earlier, there were not many laws and policies and the human resource management could take any decision based on what was right for them. However, after the 1960s the US federal government gently expanded its influence on the HRM decisions by enacting new laws and regulations (Russell, 1998, p. 388-394; Guerin & DelPo, 2009, p. 402-416).

The global downturn of the economy is yet another environmental consideration which has affected many organisations and many decisions taken by the HR managers. HR managers now have to think strategically, instead of just focusing on the administrative issues in the business; now have to put forward strategic options in front of the executive managers (Guest, 1987, p. 503-521; Buyens & De Vos, 1999, p. 39- 42). This corroborates Legge (1989, p. 19- 40) idea that emphasized the importance of human resource management being involved in the senior management decisions. Furthermore, and as mentioned earlier, HR managers play a very critical role in the success of the business. The most difficult responsibility that any manager has to fulfil is managing people. Even if it a homogenous group, many problems can arise which have more than one solution and the manager then has to make a judgment call. The concept of personnel management has evolved to the point where it is intimately related to general management (Martin & Jackson, 2007, p. 166- 197; Farnham, 2000, p. xxiii). Human Resources management is a field in transition, just as the organisations are in transition (Bach, 2005, p. 3). However, the transition has mostly been to Human Resources' role in planning, strategy and reshaping of policies and procedures. HR is actively involved in any organisational change whenever there any plan to improve the employees' workplace effectiveness (Lawler et al., 2004, p. 43- 60). Therefore it can be seen that the role of an HR manager is more of a value adding role. For example when an employee enters an organisation, he/she is new and knows nothing about the norms of the business. Therefore the HR managers have to provide him with training and developmental exercises to enable him/her add value to what he does and maximise his/her commitment and quality of work. In other words, the employee is able to do the same work more effectively and efficiently. Additionally, the productivity of the employee is enhanced

which is beneficial for the business (Coopey & Hartley, 1991, p. 18 -32; Baron & Armstrong, 2007, p. 154- 157).

Also the business environment keep on changing making the roles and responsibilities of HR managers' very dynamic but firmly held by the vision and mission of their organization. Therefore HR managers cannot focus on the people only but they have to focus on the business aspect of their organization in an extensive manner. Credible Human resource managers are reliable and active. They are listened to and are respected and are known to make decisions to which they stand by and are responsible for (Ulrich, 1998). With regards to operational execution the HR has administrative tasks which need to be addressed such as pay, recruitment, training among others. In addition the HR managers are charged with the responsibility of drafting and implementing personnel policies and guidelines. Proper execution of these responsibilities strengthens the credibility of the HR managers. HR managers know that how an organization creates revenue, the customers they serve and they also have a good knowledge of the various parts of the company such as the research department, the finance department and how they work together to make profit for the organization. Therefore proper understanding and ability of meeting challenges proactively forms the core of the HRM and its success (StatoilHydro, 2008, p. 45).

A proficient HR manager helps to formulate, communicate and create a positive organizational culture that drives employees towards achieving the set objectives. These HR proficient managers coach other organizational managers on how the organizational culture is affected by the managers' actions. The HR managers translate the organization culture into HR work and demonstrate the culture and its importance to the employees. As earlier stated the HR managers contribute to implementing any changes within the organizational culture or any other facet of the organization in the organization (Ulrich, 1998; StatoilHydro, 2008, p. 45).

HR managers possess high level of competencies in terms of employee development such as employee competence and career development. Moreover the HR managers possess high levels of competencies in terms of the enterprise should be organized to meet both the internal and external requirements which are highly interrelated in the performance of organizational tasks that contribute to organizational

development. In addition the HR managers have the vision as to how the organization can attain success in the future. HR managers are therefore very crucial in drafting the enterprise overall strategy that fulfils the organization's vision. The HR tries to understand market patterns and their importance to the business operations. Similarly the HR managers work and prepare themselves for future challenges by drawing up strategies able to meet any such challenges (Timberman, 2005).

During difficult times Human Resources and the businesses need to team up, act and cooperate decisively. Recession calls for proactive response to both known and unknown external forces with great caution and focus to ensure survivability (Bennett, 2009). HR engagement and commitment is very pivotal in developing and retaining talents, containing and reducing costs and aligning the HR activities with the overall business strategy. Nevertheless according to Bennett (2009) in the Economist Intelligence Unit HR faces a variety of obstacles in the organization, technological and financial aspects. Moreover the HR confronts a perception challenge in terms of how its function is viewed by many organizations as a service provider rather than a critical business partner. HR department employees and managers view HR functions in a more positive way than managers and employees in other departments of the organization (Bennett, 2009).

HR delivers organizational excellence using four methods. The HR becomes a partner with the organization to help in strategy execution (Timberman, 2005). Ulrich (1997) identified four important roles that HR professionals must fulfil in order to make business partnering a reality. In strategic partnering the HR professionals align the HR and the business strategy to effectively undertake an all-round organization problem diagnosis. In the administrative expertise the HR professionals have to reengineer organizational processes to allow or the sharing of services. With regards to employee championing the HR listens and responds to employees and provides the necessary resources to the employees to perform their tasks effectively. Change agent management constitutes managing transformation and change within the organization by ensuring that the organization has the capacity to change. This is further elaborated hereunder.

2.3.1 The role of business partnering.

The role of business partnering encompasses a number of partnerships. These are HR services and operations, management partner, employee partner and strategic partner. The HR services and operations option is focussed on designing the staffing, hiring, compensating, training among other systems to ensure that they are aligned with goals, culture and strategy of the organization. The management partner role involves helping the executive management partners to apply the HR services effectively and coaching the executive managers on their effectiveness and that of their organization and employees as they work hard to achieve the organizational goals (Timberman, 2005). The employee partner role ensures that the HR business partners facilitate and support employees' access to the HR services and coaching the executives on their effectiveness and development. The role of strategic partnering involves working closely with the senior organizational leaders to execute strategies particularly those that involve designing HR systems and process that are able to address long term strategic business issues (Ulrich & Eichinger, 1998; Ulrich 1997). In addition the HR role of strategic partner need to be more business focused by ensuring that costs are efficient, innovative and structured in a proactive way able to respond to changes in the priorities. HR roles as identified by Ulrich (1997) overlap such that fulfilling one requires the consideration of other roles. For instance putting together a business case for implementing a shared service requires administrative experts to play their role because if something is not implemented effectively it will damage the employee relationship. Research by CIPD into the HR function indicted that Ulrich (1997) model was a popular structure in many organizations but with less than 30% of the surveyed respondents having introduced it in full. This indicates that HR structures and roles are not static but change with business priorities. The CIPD research also found out that several larger organizations had adopted the Ulrich (1997) model known as the three legged stool model when restructuring HR functions. These functional areas include shared services, centres of excellence, and strategic business partners. The shared service is a single large unit that handles all routine transactional services across the business. The shared services provides resourcing, payroll, absence monitoring and advises the employer on simple employee

relation issues while the shared service provides low-cost and effective HR administration (CIPD, 2010).

The centres of excellence are usually small teams of HR experts in possession of specialist knowledge of leading-edge HR solutions. The centres of excellence deliver competitive business advantages through HR innovations in different areas of employee management such as reward, learning, engagement and talent management via attracting and retaining (Ulrich, 1997). The strategic business partners constitute senior HR experts working directly with business leaders to influence and steer strategy and strategy implementation. The role of the strategic business partners vary depending on the organization size and the business priorities adopted. Activities that strategic partners are involved in include organization and people capability building, longer term resource and talent management planning, use of business insights to initiate change in people management practices and intelligent gathering of good people management practices inside and outside the organizations so that issues unknown to the executives may be raised (CIPD, 2010). Overlap of these functional areas occurs when there is no clear boundary between the areas. For business partnering to be effective good working relationships between HR professionals placed in different functional teams. The close working together of the HR practitioners and the seniors enable them deal with any negative feedback about the HR function (Ulrich, 1997).

Embracing business partnering as part of the broader HR transformation agenda requires cost efficiency, accelerating competition and rising expectations of HR. Cost efficiency aims at achieving savings and cutting back on costs. However for cost efficiency to be attained other HR roles must be working efficiently and widespread HR services restructured. Accelerating competition require the HR to retain its competitiveness. Organizations require Human resource functions that are able to deliver skilled, creative, motivated, flexible and committed employees (Ulrich, 1997; Timberman, 2005). The growth of centres of excellence in knowledge based sectors requires expertise and energy of employees brought about by the innovativeness of the HR functions. In the recent past organization are expecting more from the Human Resources. Business leaders observe that HR in other organizations contribute immensely to strategy, enables the execution of business plans and delivers tangible commercial

benefits and require the same from their HR. strategic partners form the basis of what the business does and what the HR does ensuring that the HR meets new expectations of the business leaders (CIPD, 2010).

Implementing business partnering in the HR transformation agenda is not a simple endeavour several considerations have to be done. First the organization should ensure that there exists a clear rationale for any proposed changes which must be a joint decision between the Business and the HR. Clear rationale and vision allows for cost efficiencies, a critical aspect in embracing business partnering, to be realized. Secondly the organization should assess and prepare the ground for change. The adoption of new roles by the HR and the organization receptiveness to the HR's new roles determines the success of the business partner's role (LSA Global, 2007, p. 1). Thirdly sufficient time for discussing the partnering, its meaning and the adjustments required within the HR and across the business and to prepare those most affected by the changes. Fourthly the organization should assess the skills required for effective performance of the business role to avoid making of any assumptions on the available skills and lead to ineffectiveness of the business partner role. Fifthly the organization should think through the expected barriers to achieving a smooth transition such as line managers' reluctance to take up more people management responsibilities, poor or slow transactional HR services and intranets and absence of a consistent business strategy which HR will work with (CIPD, 2010).

2.3.2 The role of administrative expert.

Every HR manager embraces the role of becoming an administrative expert as they acquire more skills and capabilities. These new skills and capabilities enable the HR manager change from the traditional rule making policy to becoming an excellent administrator (Panayotopoulou & Papalexandris, 2004). Despite the change of role, the responsibilities of HR manager of ensuring that the work is done and excellently done has to be continued but in a restructured way. In order to make the new role of administration expertise a success, HR managers ensures that efficiency in their organizations is improved and that every employee is fully engaged in ensuring the organization succeeds (Ulrich, 1998).

2.3.3 The role of employee champion.

In addition HR role in this dynamic trading environment encompass the HR becoming the champion of the employees. HR managers aspire to inspire employees in their organizations to ensure that they are engaged and are giving their all in the performance of the organization's tasks (Ehrlich, 1997). Employees who are engaged and who believe in the organizations because they feel they are valued work hard and share ideas that leads to better service to the customers. In addition engaged employees are able to relate well with the customers therefore playing their new role of employee championing in the organization to inspire the employees is a great development during financial crisis times when downsizing is an option (Ulrich, 1998). To achieve employee engagement in an organization, the HR managers must take up the responsibility of orienting and training line managers on how to inculcate the values of the organization in the employees from recruitment onwards. Moreover the line managers must be able to improve the morale of the employees ensuring that it is sustained both in the good times and in the challenging times (Sonnie, 2006). Simply stated HR managers should become the voice of the employees in management discussion to enable them carry on their role of employee championing easily (Ulrich, 1997).

2.3.4 The role of change agent.

Many HR managers are faced with changing work environments where much is required of them (Greene, 2001). Therefore they should be able to manage change in a positive manner (Conner and Ulrich, 1996; Ehrlich, 1997). In achieving this they must build the organization to a level where change is embraced positively and where possible capitalized on. Change comes with resistance, fear and incessant planning. Therefore the role of the managers is to replace fear of change with excitement about its responsibilities, resistance with resolve and planning with results. To realize an effective change agent role in an organization HR managers must define and clarify key concepts involve in change, articulate clearly the importance of any change, define the process of assessing present operations and the desired changes and must always identify alternative options for effecting a change in the organization (Ulrich, 1998).

Therefore the role and responsibilities of HR managers keep on evolving necessitating the HR managers to be continuously alert and proactive. The success of the HR management is greatly seen in the success of the organization. Additionally the success of a manager is a factor of attributes inherent in the HR manager. This implies that the roles and responsibilities of a human resource manager are affected by the personality traits of an individual i.e. his leadership style, emotional intelligence and commitment. However, how each affects the ability of an HR manager to take decision depends on the situation and HR skill, competency and capability.

2.4 Human Resource Manager during Financial Crisis

Any kind of change be it positive or negative, induces a fear amongst the employees. The reaction to change usually comes in the shape of a resistance (Lewis et al., 2008, p. 17). However, organisations bringing change have to deal with anticipated resistance from their employees. This resistance usually comes in the form of anxiety, reduction in productivity levels and fear of losing job (Trader-Leigh, 2002, p. 138- 155). In many cases the change within an organization is unavoidable. Therefore the stability of the economy is not to be taken for granted. Any business has to be ready to manage performance during times of good business and times of crises such as the current financial crisis. For instance the current financial crisis which, many businesses had to face was due to the global downturn of the economy which was unavoidable.

An organization experiencing financial crisis has to draw out various measures to effectively cope with the problems. It is also important to note that during financial crisis employees feel insecure and need re-assurance that their job will not be taken. It is the job of an HR manager to make sure that the employees are satisfied with their job and that their job responsibilities are adequate and goals presented to them are realistic. Employees should not at any time feel that there is a security risk with their job. In the 1960s and 1970s job security was no issue. However today administration has to deal with changes every two to three years and hence the problem of job security arises. It is the duty of administration to communicate well why the new employee is being hired and assure seniors that they will be allowed to serve till the time of their retirement. Job

security issues can lower the productivity and efficiency levels of the employees (Daseking et al., 2004, p. 17).

2.4.1 Financial crisis and down sizing.

During a financial crisis organization implement strategies and plans aimed at reducing the impact of the hard times. The foremost challenge that faces organizations during a financial crisis time is liquidity crunch. During financial crisis times organization suddenly find themselves in cash deficient situations as available funds start drying up and the debts start climbing up. This therefore places most organization in a situation that needs cost cutting measures within the organization operations. Cost cutting measures take a number of forms and they require proper scrutiny of present and expected condition. These measures consider the areas to be prioritized for cost cutting so as to efficiently and effectively manage cash flows. One of the strategies and plans many organizations use to cut costs in managing a financial crisis is down sizing. In down sizing, an organization reduces the number of employees in engages in the performance of the organization activities in order to reduce costs. Managing human resources during financial crisis and down sizing times is very essential as it plays a critical role in ensuring the remaining employees remain engaged committed and willing to give their extra effort (AKS-Labs, 2010, p. 1). This being the role and responsibility of the Human resource manager requires adequate information for effective decision making. Although it may be seen going against the requirement of job security, down sizing may take form of performance management whereby non-performing employees are released and the organization is left with performing employees (Bennet, 2009, p.10).

During financial crisis as the organizations plan for down sizing proper attention should be given to staff turn over possibility as no one likes to be part of a sinking ship. Communicating things precisely and speedily to avoid the excessive turn over is critical. Moreover firms should arrange times to train the remaining staff on the potential of taking extra responsibility and boosting their morale. A constant eye however, should be kept on the liquidity ratio so that any deviations can be corrected speedily and correctly. Tools for measuring performance such as Balanced score card are very helpful in

quantifying performance during a financial crisis thus providing a basis for releasing or engaging employees (AKS-Labs, 2010, p. 1).

2.4.2 Financial crisis and job security: motivation & commitment.

Poor level of employee engagement due to uncertainty brought about by the current financial crisis affects the performance of an organization. Employees' sense of job security diminishes with global financial crisis. Financial crisis creates a stressful environment for both the employees and the HR managers as they face differing eventualities with employees struggling with a number of stressors such as the loss of laid off colleagues, heightened stress, increased workload, de-motivation, financial problems at home, conflicts and intolerance within the work environment, and fears arising from mergers and acquisitions (Kochhar, 2009).. The HR faces financial crisis by shifting operations from excess to essential and from routine and comfort to survival. The HR designs new priorities, relationships and strategies to sail the organization through the tough times (Ulrich, 1997). New role of the HR includes expansion of employee recruitment, corporate organization and training and institutional learning. In the expansion of employee recruitment the HR is expected to provide innovativeness, expansion capabilities, enlarging the organization's capability and vision. During crisis times the HR are tasked with developing, initiating and assessing the appropriateness of organizational culture so as to enhance international communications and speed up development and production of new product offering to the market to retain customers. Employee training about the redefined roles and their place in attaining the organizational objectives are done with considerable emphasis on the creation of new and mutually profitable relationships. To successfully accomplish these process there is required high level of cooperation and support that is able to attract, engage and retain innovators, communicate effectively, negotiate, motivate team building and minimize the effects of gossips, anxieties and worries (Kochhar, 2009).

During recession the HR professionals must step up and lead the people associated with the organization to better performance (Ulrich, 1997). Strategies embraced must be viewed from a positive perspective by the employees. Among the HR strategies that are consistent with recession trends are as enumerated below (Bennett,

2009). The HR must embrace the need to change, to lead and to embrace the opportunities at hand. Attitude change and commitment levels must be changed and also embrace the opportunities that arise during hard economic times without the fear of the consequences. HR professional must embrace the need for evaluative mechanism for observation, correction and change during the tough economic times (Kochhar, 2009). According to Bennett (2009) successful leadership during an economic down turn involves the ability to find new and creative ways of retaining programmes that are crucial to the organization. Businesses need performance management strategies that are able to foster accurate alignment and responsiveness ensuring that individuals are placed in the right roles commensurate with their competencies and abilities. With the continuity of the global financial crisis period human resources leaders have the responsibility of re-thinking and shifting priorities as they face slashed budgets and decimated departments. The HR managers have to attract and retain talent in a very uneasy environment (Ulrich, 1997). A well executed performance management program is very important during unfavourable economic times as it helps in managing employees effectively (Bennett, 2009, p.8). Similarly according to Bennett (2009, p. 8) career and leadership development well formulated in an organization assists in reducing employee turn over during lean times. Succession planning is considered as one of the two most crucial HR processes the other being performance management. HR ought to greatly emphasize on efficiency, performance improvement and cost control for the organization's survival during hard economic terms. This leads to better workers understanding thereby enhancing cooperation. The HR helps employees to bind emotionally to the company both in the good times and in the bad times (Ulrich, 1997; Bennett, 2009, p.10).

According to Ulrich (1997) the HR manager has a critical role in improving employee morale and retaining top talent during hard economic times by continuous investments in training. Apart from engaging the workforce trained employees are more productive. More productive employees are said to be satisfied with their jobs and this in turn increases employee loyalty even during hard economic times. Frankness in internal communication by HR managers about the status of the economic times results into cost cutting measures and fosters credibility with the workers (Bennett, 2009, p. 10).

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Research Question

The research questions focuses on the assumptions, attitudes and beliefs surrounding HR managers' role and responsibility as exemplified during a financial crisis period.

3.2 Research Design

This chapter describes the research methodology upon which the entire research study is based. There are different research approached that are commonly used by the social scientists for the attainment of their research purposes and it is important to select from these research methods the most appropriate and the most suitable research methods in accordance with the topic and objectives of the research. Thus in this chapter the different research approaches, purposes and types of expected outcomes are discussed and then the research study is judges on the basis of this description to find out that what is the purpose of the research, what would be the best way to attain this purpose and what would be the nature of the expected outcome of the study. Moreover, the chapter explicitly explains the entire process through which the entire research work is conducted including the selection of the sources of information, survey sampling, data gathering, and questionnaire construction and result calculation methods etc. (Aaker et al., 2004, p. 73).

3.3 Research Methodology

There are three important issues that must be clearly understood while formulating the research design and methodology. First of all the researchers have to decide what would be the purpose of the research, what would be the process of conducting the entire research and finally what would be the outcome of the research. Therefore, before describing the research design, these three issues are discussed in details to decide the "Purpose, Process and Outcome" of this research".

3.3.1 Purpose of the research.

While deciding the purpose of the research the research types must be understood very clearly so that it could be explained that which of the research type will mostly suit the research purpose. There are basically four types of research purposes including “exploratory, descriptive, analytical and predictive” (Monsen, 2003, p. 370; Drew, 1980, p. 75-77; Murdick & Cooper, 1982). In order to understand that this research study will strive to fulfil which of these research purposes, these four research types are explained as under.

The “Exploratory Research” is one of the important methods of conducting the research study (McNabb, 2004, p. 134-148; Stebbins, 2001, p. 17- 30). The social scientists always give proper attention to this research type in order to find out the answer of their research question. It is explained by the social scientists that the exploratory type of research is a significant research type that stands for the investigator just to look around regarding the needed phenomenon, for developing suggestive ideas. This research type is beneficial for conducting research study because the main objective of this research type is to collect maximum information related to a specific problem. However and according to McNabb (2004, p. 137) this type of research type is selected for uncommon problems or when the available information is not much reliable and absolute. This technique is most suitable for conducting interviews. This type of research is also chosen where there are no or very few researched done in the same direction for reference. In this research the social scientist generally look for the ideas and patterns to gain insight and deep familiarity with the subject matter. If we analyse the current research study in the light of the exploratory research then it is found that our research is also exploratory in nature as it will explore various issues that are not unfolded yet in the previous researches. As identified in the literature review, there are some gaps found in the literature available around this topic and this research study strived to fill those gaps by exploring the issues that are undiscovered yet.

The second type of research is the “Descriptive Research”. It is another important type of conducting the research studies that is frequently employed by the social

scientists for conducting research studies on variety of topics (McNabb, 2004, p. 149-165). Moreover, the purpose of this type of research is to provide a description of different phenomenon related to different individuals, events and situations. The main objective is to build up practical generalisations. It is commonly used for searching secondary data for the solution of different problem statements. Thus, it can be noticed here that this research type mostly deal with the qualitative issues and there is involvement of data and literature in conducting this type of research study (De Vaus, 2002, p. 18-19). The descriptive research also involved the data collection through the quantitative methods like statistical techniques that are employed for summarising the gathered information. While looking at the research study, it is realised that the current study is not entirely descriptive in nature as it is mostly aimed at examining, analysing and exploring the issues rather just describing them.

The third type of research is the “Explanatory Research” that possesses great importance in the context of the social scientific researchers because the main purpose of the explanatory researches is to build up precise theory that is utilised to describe the empirical generalisations (Boeijs, 2010, p. 89- 91). Mostly this type of research is based on the practical studies and tested hypotheses that are formulated by the researchers in order to find out the solution to their problem statement. This type of study is effective to focus cause and affect relationship. The explanatory research is also called the analytical research in which the researcher generally goes for the description of the characteristic and the analysis and explanation of the entire situation to find out the reasons behind the happening of any incident (Gilsing, 2005, p. 87-88). Moreover, this type of research strives to understand and explain the phenomena through the discovery and measurement of the casual relationship between different factors. It is clear that our research study is also an explanatory research as it is aimed at explaining different issues and topics in details in order to conduct the analysis and examination of the situation.

The fourth type of research is the “predictive research” in which the social scientists generally go further for making certain statements and comments by forecasting the likelihood of a similar situation occurring elsewhere (Dane, 2010, p. 9). In this type of

research, the social scientist mostly give the answers of the questions like how why and where and these questions are related with the future of the subject matter of the research and the research will provide the possibilities in the light of the findings that what will happen in case of any occurrence in future. However, although this research study will also give some suggestions for the future of HR management, it is not based on making predictions for the issues and the research is not going to be a predictive research

3.3.2 Process of the research.

After clarifying the purpose of the research the next step is to find out that which research process will best suit the purpose of the research. As discussed above the explanatory and exploratory research studies can be conducted by employing both the research approaches including qualitative and quantitative research. However this research mainly makes use of qualitative information. According to Howard Becker (1996, p. 53-71), qualitative research “is a field of inquiry that crosscuts disciplines and subject matters” (Frangos, 2009, p. iii). The main aim of any qualitative researcher is to get a deep understanding of the topic under discussion. Moreover, such researchers also aim to define human behavior which result in such activities or phenomenon and also determine various reasons for such behavior. Qualitative researchers find out why and how of any activity, unlike other researchers who try and determine when, where and what of activities. This why and how helps this type of method gain its name of qualitative research method. Another important difference between a qualitative researcher and other researchers is the fact that qualitative researchers focus their energies on a smaller sample rather than large vague samples such as in a quantitative research method.

3.3.3 Outcome of the study.

The third important decision which has to be made before hand, before conducting the research, is determining the nature of the outcome of the study. However, there are almost three kinds of outcome of any study, “applied, basic or pure and action” (McDaniel & Gates, 1998, p. 10).

According to Miller & Salkind (2002, p. 3) in the applied outcome, the researcher tries to find a solution to any problem. In this case the solution can actually be applied in real

case and can really be helpful in solving that problem. The recommendations made in such studies not only help in resolving the issue, but the recommendations are actually helpful in the future too.

The next type of research outcome is basic or fundamental research outcome. In this type of research the main aim of the research is not to put forward any recommendations for future use, or to solve any problem, but the main aim of such researches is to study a topic in depth. Moreover, the general issues regarding any topic are studied and the study does not put forward any immediate recommendations. As this type of research mainly adds knowledge to the existing literature, therefore it might have some useful insights and inventions in the topic area and can outline some discovery. The third type of research outcome is action. As the names suggest in this type of outcome the social scientists are able to interfere with the environment and make certain changes, therefore the outcome of this research is certainly not 'action' based.

3.4 Sources of Data Collection

The research makes use of both primary and secondary sources of data collection.

3.4.1 Primary sources.

The research makes use of qualitative interviews to gather information from primary sources. In depth interviews can whether be for a qualitative or a quantitative research. Qualitative interviews are quite different from quantitative interviews. In a qualitative research the approach of the research questions is much less structured than in a quantitative interview. In a quantitative research as there is a need of collecting specific information, therefore there is a need for the questions to be more specific and order to authenticate the data being collected (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 304-305). The key concepts have to be validated accordingly too. In a qualitative research on the other hand, there is a need of generalisation and the interviewees' point of view instead of the facts and figures (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 630). Another point which differentiates the quantitative interview from a qualitative interview is the fact that in a qualitative interview going off in tangents during the questions answers session is encouraged more as this gives more space to the interviewee to give his points of views and suggestions.

There are two major types of qualitative interviews and depending on the type of study either one is chosen (Myers, 2009, p. 124):

1) - Unstructured interview: It is just like a conversation where the interviewer learns a few areas of the topic and asks questions made up at the very moment.

2) - Semi structured interview: Where the interviewer has an interview guideline which all the questions are listed. A qualitative interview cannot be all structured and conducted in a yes or no session. Therefore, in this type of interview the interviewer picks on things from the answers of the interviewer and then applies it on the next questions.

However, in our case a well structured questionnaire for the interview will be developed to conduct an in depth interview. This semi structured interview questionnaire will help the interviewer ask the questions to the expert in a semi structured fashion. Due to limitations of time and as precise information is needed; this interview cannot be totally unstructured. However, the structure of the interview has to be semi structured because in such case the interviewer wants to discuss more specific issues related to the topic and also provides some flexibility to the interviewee to express his comments (Wright & McCarthy, 2010, p. 88).

3.4.2 Secondary sources

There are various sources where all this data can be collected. However the most authentic and reliable source of information should be chosen in order to make the research authentic and useful. Furthermore, secondary sources include; Official statistics and which is collected by the government; technical reports; scholarly and online journals; literature review articles; trade journals and reference books such as encyclopaedias, manuals and dictionaries. The social scientists use to conduct the studies on wide range of topics by employing secondary analysis of data as the research method because this method has proved its significance as one of the most useful qualitative research method. Hence in the light of the significance of secondary analysis of data as a qualitative research method, it is selected as the research methodology for the paper. Janet Heaton (2004, p. 16) also threw the light over the significance of the secondary analysis of data and explains that it is a significant research method that is used for the

description of various analytical practices using the pre existing data. This could be done either for the investigation of the new research question or for the re examination of any of the primary study for the purpose of collaboration. She further explains that in order to conduct the secondary analysis of data there are the literature review conducted of the available material in order to describe and appraise the ways in which the social scientist have found the answers of the research questions. However, this review of the literature is also helpful in considering the future implications and development of the issues related with the topic of the research.

3.5 The Questionnaire for Interviews

Questionnaires are used by researchers as when administering them to the respondents whether online, face-to-face or post delivered. Questionnaires are best used with a sample from which to collect data from and the information required by the researcher is straightforward. In addition, a questionnaire is best used when standardized data from identical question is being sought. According to Dennis (1998), questionnaires are useful when the researcher is more interested in what occurs rather than why or how. There are two types of questionnaires namely the closed ended questionnaire and the open-ended questionnaire. The closed ended questionnaires contain multiple choices where the respondents select the probable response while the open-ended questionnaires allow the respondents to input their answers depending on their understanding of the questions in the questionnaire (Loughborough University Library, n. d.). These questions obtain predetermined responses as compared to open-ended questions, which allow the respondent to give their version of understanding. Moreover, closed ended questions are easy to count, analyse and interpret (Dennis, 1998).

3.5.1 Questionnaire design.

A questionnaire was used to collect a variety of information. This ranged from collecting information on knowledge by asking the respondents what they know to collecting information on opinions, attitudes, beliefs, values that encompassed seeking response on peoples' thoughts about the different employee motivation issues. In addition, information on behaviour was sought by seeking peoples' actions. Peoples'

attributes were sought by seeking to find out their characteristics (Dennis 1998). All these to a greater degree depended on how easy the respondents could remember and evaluate themselves. Questions in the questionnaire were clear, simple and precise to avoid ambiguity and misunderstandings. Moreover, the questions tried as much as possible avoid biasness and were stated with plain language. A questionnaires' wording was short and easy to understand to maintain the motivation of the participants. Questions were framed in such a way that they aimed for neutral responses in embarrassing aspects. In designing a questionnaire, the researcher ensured that there was logical sequence as respondents move from one question the next. Where possible the questions were allowed to flow from general to specific, from impersonal to personal or from easy to difficult. Easy and non-threatening questions, which encourage respondents to carry on with responding in a questionnaire, were put at the start of the questionnaire (Loughborough University Library, n. d.). The researcher designed the questionnaire in such a way that results obtained were valid and measured what it claimed to measure (Dennis, 1998). In addition, the researcher ensured that questions were able to produce reliable results, which were reproducible and were to have a high level of consistency when administered to similar group of respondents over time by same or different persons. Good design of the questionnaire incorporated fonts, which could be read with little strain. Moreover, it incorporated consistent and clear instructions and the questions or responses were not split across pages as advised by Oppenheim (1992) and Foddy (1993). Similarly, the questionnaire design ensured that options given were mutually exclusive in that they did not overlap (Loughborough University Library, n. d.).

3.5.2 Advantages of a questionnaire.

A questionnaire is advantageous in that it is easy to administer and it captures the highlighted aspects, which are considered important. Data collection using a questionnaire is faster as there is no unnecessary questioning when being guided by the content of the questionnaire. Moreover, a questionnaire is very useful in avoiding the collection of irrelevant data as the respondent is guided in a structured manner.

3.5.3 Disadvantages of a questionnaire.

A questionnaire is inflexible and rigid in that the interviewer guides the direction of the interview. Moreover, it is hard to change any unrelated questions leading to

collection of irrelevant data. Furthermore, if in the course of data collection crucial information error of omission is detected it becomes hard to include it. Similarly, questionnaires can be superficial thus making it difficult to capture the richness of meaning from the selected questions and respondents.

3.6 Population and Sample

The study makes use of interviews as a primary research method. Two set of interview questions were prepared. One was used for the HR managers and the other one was used for GMs. HR managers were interviewed to find out how their role and responsibilities have changed during the current financial crisis. However the GMs were interviewed to find out what personality traits they looked at a candidate before hiring them as managers and if HR manager's roles and responsibilities have increased or decreased during the financial crisis. So, altogether 15 interviews were taken all of which are included in the research.

3.7 Planned Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis is done using the Van Kaman method. In this method Van Kaam lists six steps to be followed for an effective data analysis. In the first step the researcher lists all relevant experiences in what is termed as 'horizontalization' and attaches the relative importance of the experience in given sets. Secondly the researcher eliminates any information that is abstract, vague, extraneous and not fully understandable and not easy to categorize. Thirdly the researcher clusters the remaining information and identifies the themes, which are essential in analysing and articulating the subject under study. Fourthly the researcher develops a textual description of the identified information themes. Fifthly the researcher creates a textual description of the identified information themes. Finally the researcher creates a composite of the text and structural descriptions to obtain and synthesize the essence of the experience. This method enables the researcher to filter unnecessary information that may be generated during an interview (Moustakas, 1994)

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Research Findings and Discussions

4.1 Findings of the Primary Research (Interviews)

The interviews were conducted in two sections. The first interview which was conducted with the help of the first questionnaire was with 8 HR managers who had been facing financial crisis due to a downturn in the economy. Moreover, the second questionnaire was with 7 GMs who had also been facing the challenging crisis.

4.1.1 Findings of the interviews with the HR managers.

In the first question the HR managers were asked whether the economic slowdown has had any effect on their organisation, moreover whether they faced any negative impact of this financial crisis while fulfilling their responsibilities as an HR manager. Most of the HR managers believed that the financial crisis has lowered the amount of capital they can use on a project. Due to this reason many projects, mostly which were in a pre construction stages had to be terminated. No capital could be invested in training or development of the workers. Moreover, many HR managers said that quite a few employees had to be fired in order to cut back on the costs. Therefore, it can be seen that the financial crisis has had a lot of negative impact on the businesses and employees downsizing. As lesser number of employees was now left therefore, there was an increase in the job duties even though no pay increase was noticed.

However, in the next question the respondents were asked whether they had any increase in their responsibilities. Many HR personnel believed that their certainly was, however some disagreed. The ones who said that there was an increase in the responsibilities said that as the number of employees working in the organisation has decreased, they had more job load than before. Others believed that there was not much change in their responsibilities or the role they played in the organisation.

In the next question the respondents were asked whether they had fired any employees due to the financial crisis which has engulfed almost all the businesses in various economies and whether they had any plans of hiring new employees during this situation. A few HR managers said that their business was not much affected by the financial crisis and that they were managing it okay. According to them, none of the employees were laid-off in their organisation due to financial reasons and that if any new vacancies opened up (which did open up after time to time), they were ready to take up new employees. However, these were only two HR managers out of 8 who said that there was not much change in their organisation due to financial crisis. Moreover, 80% of the HR managers replied that they certainly laid-off as much as 10% of their employees and would be hiring soon through In-House hiring.

In the fourth question the respondents were asked if they had noticed any changes in their organisation and whether any restructuring activities took place. All the HR managers said that restructuring was very important for any organisation if it is facing financial crisis. A lot of restructuring activities were noticed; employees were re-deployed and assigned new activities.

In the next question the respondents were asked whether their importance as a human resource manager increased or decreased during this economic downturn and whether it had anything to do with their personality traits (such as leadership qualities or emotional intelligence). All of the HR managers believed that their importance had definitely increased during this financial crisis. The manager's now have to motivate the employees to stay at their jobs as most of them fear the risk of losing their jobs and trying to find newer jobs. Employees are de-motivated and it is the job of an HR manager to motivate their employees. HR manager's also believed that personality traits played a very important role in a manager's life, be it at work or off-job.

In the next question the respondents were asked whether they thought that the personality traits (such as leadership qualities, commitment to the organisation, emotional intelligence etc) has any affect your role as a human resource manager. All of the human

resource managers believed that it was important for managers to have certain abilities, such as the ability to take decisions and lead people. It makes the job of an HR manager easier and helps in effective communication.

The eighth question asked the HR managers about the challenges they had to face during this financial crisis. The main problem was to keep up the expected performance. A decrease in resources, capital and funding definitely changed how they did work and it was a challenge to keep up the pace of work. In the later question the respondents were asked how they overcame these challenges. To which the respondents replied that by enhancing the work environment, following the company policies and practices and finding solutions to maintain a stable environment, they were able to keep up their performance and overcome the obstacles.

In the next question the respondents were asked how they limited their budget in the financial crisis. Most of them said that firing employees was the easiest thing to do. However, many of the businesses closed down their offices and worked with fewer offices, others put budget constraints on projects etc.

Additionally, HR managers were then asked how they kept people motivated during such crisis situations. To which they replied that leadership qualities play a very important role in motivating the employees. A good HR manager is able to inspire his employees and help them stay motivated.

In the last question the respondents were asked which task they thought was most important during a financial crisis; Recruitment and selection; Retention; organisational development; leadership development; health and safety; knowledge transfer; succession planning; job design; organisation structure; change management or workforce planning. The most important task during a financial crisis was identified by the respondents as; Retention: Retaining valuable employees is important, as the business can not afford to recruit new employees, therefore the older more experienced and skilled workforce is an asset to the organisation.

Moreover, workforce planning is important task that we plan ahead for our employees as due to lay-off workload might increase and there might be a need to re-plan the workforce and reassign job description. Additionally, it is important to educate the staff for future advancement in order to have Knowledge Transfer.

4.1.2 Findings of the interviews with the GMs.

The next questionnaire was for the GMs (Appendix 4). In the first question they were asked about the characteristics of a human resource manager they seek before hiring an employee. To which the respondents replied that they considered a few characteristics to be very important, which included; ability to communicate, persuade, influence and lead people; ability to win employees' trust and honesty; ability to listen to employees' problems and solve within capacity and role; full knowledge of country rules and regulations; and high management skills and dedication to the company. However, the next few questions were about personality traits of the HR managers. General Managers who are responsible for hiring HR managers, believed that;

Commitment is required by all employees of the company because people are the real assets of any company. In case of HR, he/she is directly communicating with the employees from the top management, and can have the real pulse and transfer to heads of departments. Similarly, leadership is also essential. HR has to lead and direct a team of people working for the company and should be able to manage successfully. Emotional intelligence and rapport are essential when dealing with people. Employees usually have their own fears or frustrations, and in many cases there's the idea that top management or owners of the company do not listen or sympathize with their employees. The HR can play an important role in this area.

Moreover, when they were asked about the risks they faced during financial crisis, the respondents said that they considered staff productivity, increased expectations from the board and more budgetary constraints as risks associated with the goal economic downturn. These are risks because each one includes multi sub-risks that might hit the company hard and might lead to losing the business in the absence of the market.

Overcoming them will be through managing them either individually and simultaneously to dilute their impact, prepare for optimum solutions, and control their consequences as much as possible.

From the interviews with the GM the diverse nature of their responses indicated that the business objectives and priorities played a critical role on how they viewed the roles and responsibilities of the HR managers. General Managers had their share of experiences during the current financial crisis because together with the HR managers they had to undertake layoffs and undertake massive benefits reduction to minimize costs so as to enable the organization survive with the little revenue generated. The GM's had increased responsibilities due to the need to come up with creative ways of managing the financial crisis. In cooperation with the HR the GMs had to manage the morale of the employee so as to increase their commitment and engagement and thus improve the business performance. Responsibilities for the GM increased as they were expected to drive the business through the uncertain future by involving the HR managers in talent management whereby the unproductive employees were laid off and new experienced and qualified employees were to be recruited.

Taking the hard decision of closing sectors and deleting some departments to minimize operation costs was undertaken by a number of General Managers. Other managers opted for mergers and responsibility increase for employees through the HR managers to cushion against the hard economic times. Moreover different GMs had to inculcate and cultivate strong personality traits and commitments in HR managers to enable them influence the employees and drive the business to success even during the prevailing financial crisis. Moreover the GMs had to ensure that the emotional intelligence of the HR managers gave them an upper hand in dealing with employee worries, frustrations and associated problems to enable the employee perform better and improve the organizational performance in the lean times. Most of the GMs interviewed indicated that to keep the HR engaged they adopted an open communication channel where the HR managers were involved in any development changes and were involved in planning the organization survival activities even assuring them of their job security. According to most GMs organization structure make use of available resources and avoids massive lay offs therefore they focussed on it during the financial crisis period

coupled with employee recruitment and retention plans, leadership training and overall organization planning comprising of workforce planning. Despite the prevalent financial crisis the GMs understood very well that organizational development assured the business survivability and this was done via change management training, effective selection of competent workforce being displaced by the financial crisis and cultivating employee commitment and engagement.

4.2 Data Analysis

From the data, collected triangulation of the findings was done to come up with a well-articulated data analysis. Both the critical literature review and the interviews are used to analyse the data. The purpose of this study was to find out the role and contribution of the HR managers during the current financial crisis as viewed by the general managers and the HR professionals themselves. As articulated in the literature, review the role and responsibilities of HR managers vary and keep on being added particularly as evidenced during the prevailing financial crisis. The normal roles of analysis and design of work, HR planning, recruiting, selection, training and development, compensation, performance management and employee relations has been reshaped to accommodate more important changes such as business partnering and change agent within an organization (Bratton & Gold, 2003, p. 15). Moreover, new roles of the HR, which includes expansion of employee recruitment, corporate organization and training and institutional learning, have been seen. In expanding employee recruitment, the HR managers are expected to offer innovativeness, expansion capabilities, which have been identified as very critical in enlarging the organization's capability and vision. In addition, during financial crisis times as being experienced, the HR managers are charged with developing, initiating and assessing the appropriateness of organizational culture to increase international communications and speed up development and production of new product offering to the market to retain customers. Similarly, employee training about the redefined roles and their place in attaining the organizational objectives are done by the HR managers with considerable emphasis on the creation of new and mutually profitable relationships. Therefore to successfully accomplish these processes, high levels of cooperation and support that is able to attract,

engage and retain innovators, communicate effectively, negotiate, motivate team building and minimize the effects of gossips, anxieties and worries is required and must be cultivated by the HR managers (Kochhar, 2009, p. 1).

4.2.1 Leadership.

Successful leadership of a team like that of HR department requires the utilization of effective leadership capabilities, which are able to influence and lead the subordinates to be committed and contribute to organizational success (Bass & Bass, 2008, p. 20). Having a better view of the crisis as advocated by Duke (1998, p. 170) enable a HR manager get all the perspective and thus plan well for any eventuality and therefore minimize the impact of many problems that face the organization. Having the ability to influence others to raise beyond their present motivation levels requires commitment and strong engagement (James Burns, 1978 p. 20). Commitment by all parties involved in the organization is very critical in ensuring that tasks are accomplished and that costs are reduced.

4.2.2 Mental intelligence.

Emotional aptness and rapport building enables a HR manager deal with own and employee emotions. High level of emotional intelligence is required by HR managers, as they are involved in controlling and using emotions from a diversified workforce to attain the organizational objectives in lean times. Solving the problems of the employees requires HR managers to be able to interact well with others (Wharam, 2009, p. 11). HR managers make a diversified number of work-related decisions and therefore they require different abilities to face different problems and make long lasting and effective decisions. Proficient HR managers should be able to perceive, understand and effectively manage own and employee emotions as they influence the commitment levels and thereby affects an individual performance and organization performance which is not required during financial crisis times.

Goleman (2001, p. 27) stated that a number of emotional intelligence competencies drive the leadership performance of a HR manager. These competencies comprise self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. Data from the interviews support that HR managers must have the ability to

recognise own emotions and use it to influence others by making decisions that drive organization performance higher. Moreover the interviews and the literature review recognises that a HR manager faces external factors that affect emotions and if not well controlled may push the HR manager to make impulse decisions whose impact may turn out to be disastrous. Therefore, GMs opted to recruit HR managers who are able to control their emotions and make decisions based on facts and thorough analysis of the issue at hand. During financial crisis times, HR managers must be experienced in managing relationships as responsibilities increase so do the relationship challenges increase. They must be able to influence and inspire the emotions of the subordinates to contribute to the best of their ability.

4.2.3 HR roles.

Traditional HR roles have evolved to include new set of roles which seem to drive business performance to higher levels than previously experienced. The global financial crisis requires creativity to guarantee survival. Formulating of strategic decision once the favourite of the senior managers has now been defragmented to include the input of HR professionals. Interestingly the field of HR is in the transition mode (Bach, 2005, p. 3) and this as stated earlier is re-shaping the HR roles in planning, strategy formulation and implementation and policy drafting and adoption.

4.2.3.1 Business partnering.

As the global crisis continues the HR managers are shifting their focus from pure people management to business aspect of the organization. This is aimed at delivering organizational excellence through the involvement of the HR managers in strategy execution. HR managers are now working closely with the senior managers to design HR systems that are able to deliver superior performance during lean times by being able to address different strategic business issues (Ulrich, 1997, p. 10). Involving the HR in strategic planning have created the new HR role of strategic partnering which is more business focused to ensure cost efficiency, innovativeness and employs proactive ways to respond to changes in the priorities. Global crisis brings about rising expectations for HR which cannot be attained within the traditional framework of HR roles thereby necessitating the embracing of the new HR roles. Organizations facing global financial

crisis require centres of excellence endowed with expertise and energy to perform tasks and creatively and innovatively perform HR functions.

4.2.3.2 Administrative expert.

Efficient HR processes for staffing, training, appraisal, rewarding, promotion and employee flow management requires expertly designed infrastructure. Administrative expertise requirement faces every organization moving from traditional HRM to modern Strategic HRM (Panayotopoulou & Papalexandris, 2004).

4.2.3.3 Employee champion.

Every HR manager must strive to understand the needs of the employees. Once these needs are identified, the HR manager must provide an opportunity for the employee to improve their commitment. In addition the HR manager must enable the employee create value in the business by continually advocating the interests of the business and of the employees. The HR must also create an employee friendly environment which enables the employees to be committed to the success of the enterprise that employs them. The HR manager should therefore ensure that employee problems, concerns and needs are dealt with successfully.

4.2.3.4 Change agent.

Changes are inevitable in organizations particularly during financial crisis times. Changes encompass staff lay off, department deleting organization restructuring among others. Therefore HR manager must be able to assist the organization to build the capacity to undertake any change. The employees should also be well educated in facing organizational changes as the organization places itself in the survivability mode.

4.3 Answering the Research Question

This study aimed at critically evaluating the Human Resource roles and responsibilities during financial crisis and answering the question of what challenges the HR faces during the financial crisis and how the financial crisis creates new roles for HR managers. From the study, that the financial crisis greatly affected the roles of HR managers as they were faced with challenges such as how to minimize costs, how to drive the business higher in the competition among many others. The study found out that the

HR managers and the General Managers cut costs by lay offs of unproductive workers, deleted some departments, and closed some sectors. This increased the responsibilities of the remaining work force and lead to the HR roles shifting to not only employee management but also business development and organization issues. New roles such as employee champion, change agent and administrative experts emerged. Other new roles of HR identified include expansion of employee recruitment, corporate organization and training and institutional learning.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Research Summary

The role of a human resource manager is not just to hire and retain employees but this role now has a more dynamic meaning. The paper focuses around the role and responsibility of Human resource managers during financial crisis. It also discusses what qualities a good human resource manager should possess; this includes leadership qualities, effectiveness communication and also emotional intelligence. These qualities will help us understand the role and responsibilities of a HR manager and how he fulfils them.

Human resource Managers play a very important role in risk management or in a crisis situation. As mentioned earlier, the role of a human resource manager is changing constantly. Most of the work the human resource managers did revolve around the employees and the workers. Organisations are becoming more customer-cantered and so are the human resource managers. The ability to lead a change in the organisation is an important element of any human resource manager. The role and responsibilities of a human resource manager are constantly changing today, whoever and important role of a human resource manager is to have a strong belief in his employees.

The human resource manager plays various roles and fulfils different responsibilities however, traditionally human resource management consists of eight set of activities or steps. There are various other environmental factors which affect the

human resource management activities. As mentioned earlier, HR managers play a very critical role in the success of the business. The role of an HR manager is more of a value adding role. The role and responsibilities of a human resource manager has already been discussed above. How each affects the ability of an HR manager to take decision is discussed below.

Leadership is considered as a very important factor in Human Resource Management. However, mood swings can affect not only an HR manager's performance but also other performance. A good HR manager is able to understand emotions and see how his employees react on a certain action. An HR manager should know how to manage emotions in order to achieve intended goals. According to Goleman, these Emotional intelligence competencies drive the leadership performance of an HR manager. During crisis, the role of HR increases to business management issues from the management of people. To drive the organization performance higher, the HR management are involved in the designing effective HR systems that enable the organization recruit experts.

Information gathered from primary sources indicate that most business have been affected by the financial crisis. Both the General Managers and the Human resource managers are facing the financial crisis reactively by lay offs, department deleting, sector closing to reduce operation costs. On the other hand, the interviews discovered that HR managers were utilizing the financial crisis to recruit competent and experienced individuals displaced by the crisis. GMs and HR managers are facing increased responsibilities, as they have to plan their work force so that business processes do not stop. Moreover, the HR managers and the General Managers have to manage change and talent despite the presence of the financial crisis to enable them retain the required talent and maintain the performance of the employees as they deal with the new changes, responsibilities and their related stresses.

5.2 Research Limitations

The key objectives of the research study are all achieves successfully through the employment of a mixed methodology research approach however there are some limitations and problems also faced during conducting the research study. It was difficult

to find even 5 managers who could give the interview for this research. The busy schedule of HR managers also made it difficult to get interviews. The questionnaire of the interview was too long that many of the personnel show their unwillingness to fill them due to shortage of time and their engagements in some important matters but the questionnaire for the interview could not be cut down in to lesser questions because there was intention to get detailed opinions of the respondents regarding different issues related with the topic of the dissertation and for the attainment of this objectives. As questionnaire could not be made short as per the requirement of the research study and only the completely filled questionnaires received by the respondents are included in the research for the calculation of the interview results.

5.3 Suggestion & Recommendations

As mentioned Earlier, HR management plays a very important role in any organisation. The recruitment and selection team should make sure that when they hire Human resource personnel, they assess their personality traits too as it is done in General electric where every employee hired must possess certain skills and competencies important in the operations of the companies tasks. Personality traits play a very important role in how a manager takes decisions, solves problems etc. For example, the leadership style of a human resource manager determines how he will lead his subordinates. A better leadership style might help the manager in motivating the employees and can act as a good communication process too. On the other hand emotional intelligence can also play tricks on the abilities of a manager. A manager should be able to control his emotions and also manipulate the emotions of those around him. A manager's main aim should be to inspire and influence people to give their all in the performance of the organization activities and thus lead to improved and enhanced performance. A Human resource manager should be committed to his organisational and should work for its best despite their being personal conflicting goals and objectives.

Being in a financial crisis and managing the business effectively during those tough times is a difficult thing. However HR managers who have patience, good leadership skills and good emotional intelligence tend to cope with any financial crisis

better than the others. A HR manager acts as a role model for other employees, if he/she gets frustrated and annoyed easily, due to budgetary expenses etc, this can have a negative impression on the employees. Moreover a human resource manager who is overburdened with various responsibilities might not be able to fulfil his job requirements properly. Realistic goals and responsibilities given to a human resource manager can help him/her perform satisfactorily. HR managers should be given administrative responsibilities as they have a bird's eye view of the entire business and can provide the high management team with strategic options.

HR managers should assist in operation meetings as is done in General Motors to enable them become proactive in dealing with operation matters. This apart from improving their understanding in operation it will assist in the execution of HR strategies effectively leading to efficiency in operation. Moreover HR professionals should continue acquiring knowledge regarding key business disciplines, customer understanding, and competitor analysis to formulate strategies that meet these needs proactively and competitively increasing customer loyalty even during lean times as it is done in Microsoft and Google. Also HR professional must conduct extensive research and invest in softwares that improve the efficiency of the organization irrespective of the times as it is done in Toyota Manufacturing Company where up to date systems are installed to not only predict market demand but also to design change requirement. The HR professional must work together with other department managers to understand the key process skills so that they can recruit the appropriate individuals for effective organization performance in production and service delivery.

Importantly Human resource functions should strengthen business partnering through the following methods. The HR should take interest in key business performance measures, make sure the business partners are involved in the business planning process from the onset, and set personal objectives of strategic HR partners so that they are aligned to those set by managers in the business in their areas of assignment. The HR should also build teamwork through joint project knowledge sharing, away days among other ways (Ulrich, 1997). Additionally the HR should be made a role model for other functions by benchmarking the organizational HR team performance with the HR teams

in the competitor organizations as it is done in Eco-bank, Dell Corporation and Shell companies leading to the organization aspiring to be the best (CIPD, 2010, p. 1)

Furthermore HR should encourage managerial initiated employee dialogue as is done in Qatar Airlines and Tata Manufacturing companies to better understand the employee needs so as to effectively manage them and lead to increased employee engagement. Also HR should adopt central development of HR strategies as it is done in Dell Corporation where the effect of any strategy in the organization is checked to see its effect on the HR strategies and the employee performance. The HR should be able to tap the people's talents in their ability to learn so as to enable the company capitalize on opportunities as they arise as is done in Microsoft Company, this enables it to face financial crisis times with victorious zeal (Chew and Horwiz, 2004, p. 49).

5.4 Conclusion

HR manager is considered one of the most important key in opening the lock that hangs on the success of any organization. Proficient HR managers are able to handle the employee needs and take the best out of the teams leading to the achievement of the target goals and eventual organizational goals and success. Taking into consideration the diverse nature of the responsibilities placed at the hands of the HR managers and their proper execution organisations are achieving good performances even in lean times. Performance management is one of the responsibilities of the HR and it's very widely interlinked with other responsibilities making them a package that every HR manager must possess. Starting from the recruitment, engagement, training and development, coaching and eventual termination the HR deals directly with the employees inspiring and influencing them to aspire to give their all. In doing all these they ensure that human policies are well designed and formulated in a way that ensures effective utilization of available human resources.

The main aim of the paper was to identify the role and responsibility of human resource manager during financial crisis. It was found out that the role of a human resource manager has constantly been evolving and major changes were brought in this role during the past decade. No longer are HR managers considered as people who would just hire and retain employees and formulate HR strategies to take care of the organizational

employees. Today, human resource managers take part in very important activities of the business and give strategic suggestions to the executive managers' team. Even though the transformation of HR role has been the main priority of many businesses since the past decade, this 'role transformation' had remained more of a theoretical kind and many businesses could not transform it practically. However, with the current financial crisis, HR managers have been forced to take up more responsibilities than before. Among the new HR roles that have come up include business partnering role that ensures that there exists a favourable environment for advancing the business goals. In addition there is the role of administrative expert where the HR professionals have to reengineer organizational processes to allow or the sharing of services. The other new role of HR is identified as employee championing where the HR listens and responds to employees and provides the necessary resources to the employees to perform their tasks effectively. Change agent management HR role constitutes managing transformation and change within the organization by ensuring that the organization has the capacity to change. This has had an important link with their personality traits. HR manager who have a positive link between leadership qualities and emotional intelligence are better managers and than the ones who do not have leadership qualities and have trouble controlling their emotions as needed.

To effectively deal with financial crises organization need to adopt proactive measures such as maintaining the required number of employees and ensuring that performance targets are adhered to. In addition the business operation must be critically evaluated to ensure that productivity at all levels is satisfactory and where possible exemplary during good times. Moreover communication during financial crisis times need to be open so as to allay employee fears of the unknown. Communication on the impact of the financial crisis to pay and benefits is crucial. Communication not only allays fears but also improves employee engagement and productivity (Watson Wyatt 2008:3, 7).

Human resource managers bring the higher management team and the workers together. They act as a liaison and help bridge the communication gap between the managers and the workers. However, with their emotional intelligence the HR managers can inspire and influence workers for the betterment of the company. A good HR

manager is able to manage emotions. This is the most advanced level of emotional intelligence. It has been noted that emotional intelligence has a great affect on an HR manager's performance. It also contributes to a HR manager's transformational leadership style. However, a HR manager's transformational leadership style has a positive impact on actual organisational performance.

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Appendix A: Interview Questionnaire for HR Managers

Interview questionnaire (For HR Managers)

Section A (Personal Questions)

Name

Gender

Company Name

Designation

Work Experience (yrs).....

Email address

Section B (Questions related to the Research)

1. Do you think the economic slowdown has had any effect on your organisation? What are some of the negative affects you had to face?
2. Did your responsibilities as a human resource manager increase during this economic downturn?
3. Did you organisation lay-off any employees during this downturn? Does your organisation have any plans of hiring new employees during this crisis situation?
4. What changes have you noticed in your organisation during this crisis situation? Was there any restructuring?
5. Has your importance as a human resource manager increased or decreased during this economic downturn? DO you think it has anything to do with your personality traits?
6. Do you think personality traits (such as leadership qualities, commitment to the organisation, emotional intelligence etc) has any affect your role as a human resource manager? How?
7. Do these personality traits help make one human resource better than the other? How?
8. What are the challenges faced by any HR manager during these crisis situation?
9. How can any HR manager fulfill these challenges and overcome the obstacles of economic downturn?
10. How do you try to restrict costs associated with Human resource management (apart from salary reduction and layoffs)?
11. What are main risks a human resource manager faces during this economic downturn? Why are these considered as risks and how can a HR manager overcome them?
12. How does a HR manager keep people motivated during these crisis situations? Does leadership qualities and commitment of the HR manager to the organisation help in this case?
13. What is more important task of a HR manager during the economic downturn? Recruitment and selection, Retention, organisational development, leadership development, health and safety, knowledge transfer, succession planning, job design, organisation structure, change management, workforce planning. (Please mention why one or more of the above is important).

Appendix B: Interview Questionnaire for General Managers

Interview questionnaire (For General Managers)

Section A (Personal Questions)

Name

Gender

Company Name

Designation

Work Experience (yrs).....

Email address

Section B (Questions related to the Research)

1. What are the main characteristic of a human resource manager which you consider while hiring?
2. Do you think leadership qualities are an essential personality trait for a HR manager? Why?
3. Do you think commitment to the organisation is important for any HR manager? Why?
4. Do you think apart from the above mentioned traits, an HR manager should also have emotional intelligence? Why is it important?
5. Do you think the economic slowdown has had any effect on your organisation? What negative affects do you and your HR managers had to face?
6. Did your responsibilities as a GM increase during this economic downturn?
7. Did you organisation lay-off any employees during this downturn? Does your organisation have any plans of hiring new employees during this crisis situation?
8. What changes have you noticed in your organisation during this crisis situation? Was there any restructuring?
9. Has your importance as a GM increased or decreased during this economic downturn? Do you think it has anything to do with your personality traits?
10. Do you think personality traits (such as leadership qualities, commitment to the organisation, emotional intelligence etc) has any affect your role as a GM? How?
11. Do these personality traits help make one human resource better than the other? How?
12. How do you try to restrict costs associated with Human resource management (apart from salary reduction and layoffs)?
13. What are main risks you face during this economic downturn? Why are these considered as risks and how do you overcome them?
14. How do you keep you HR managers motivated?
15. What is more important task of a HR manager during the economic downturn? Recruitment and selection, Retention, organisational development, leadership development, health and safety, knowledge transfer, succession planning, job design, organisation structure, change management, workforce planning. (Please mention why one or more of the above is important).

Appendix C: The Interviews with the HR Managers

6. Do you think personality traits (such as leadership qualities, commitment to the organisation, emotional intelligence etc) has any affect your role as a human resource manager? How?

Yes, I think

7. Do these personality traits help make one human resource better than the other? How?

Yes, for sure

8. What are the challenges faced by any HR manager during these crisis situation? Achieve Business targets, keep employees motivated, reduce manpower, layoff extra employees.

9. How can any HR manager fulfill these challenges and overcome the obstacles of economic downturn?

HR Manager must be committed to his organisation, keep management and staff aware of the whole impact of this economic downturn, involve employees in the decision he takes,

10. How do you try to restrict costs associated with Human resource management (apart from salary reduction and layoffs)?

Cost Cutting, get some loans to cover the loss of market, sign new contract, give some employees long leave without pay.

11. What are main risks a human resource manager faces during this economic downturn? Why are these considered as risks and how can a HR manager overcome them?

Lacking of cash flow, shutting business down, losing the reputation, losing good employees,

12. How does a HR manager keep people motivated during these crisis situations?

Does leadership qualities and commitment of the HR manager to the organisation help in this case?

HR Manager can encourage employees, send appreciation letters, announce their names as employee of week, give special gifts or leaves etc..

13. What is more important task of a HR manager during the economic downturn?
Recruitment and selection; Retention; organisational development; leadership development; health and safety; knowledge transfer; succession planning; job design; organisation structure; change management; workforce planning. (Please mention why one or more of the above is important).

The most important task is Retention, because keeping good staff while your market is not growing is not an easy task. Good employees will look for another job and the company is not gaining new projects, no salary increment no bonus, no overtime so most probably Retention is the highly importance ranked task in my view.

Interview questionnaire

(For HR Managers)

Interview (2).

Section A (Personal Questions)

GenderFemale.....

DesignationHR Manager.....

Work Experience (yrs).....As HR manager (5yrs)...

Section B (Questions related to the Research)

1. Do you think the economic slowdown has had any effect on your organisation?

What are some of the negative affects you had to face?

Definitely, my organisation was affected.... Ambiguous Vision, low morale, tight budget, are some of the most important negative affects.

2. Did your responsibilities as a human resource manager increase during this economic downturn?

Yes, enormously.

3. Did you organisation lay-off any employees during this downturn? Does your organisation have any plans of hiring new employees during this crisis situation?

Downsizing was our first remedial step...And yes we are planning to recruit. One advantage of this downturn is that recruiting qualified employees becomes easier.

4. What changes have you noticed in your organisation during this crisis situation?
Was there any restructuring?

Low morale thus lower productivity and lack of motivation. We did some restructuring due the factors mentioned earlier.

5. Has your importance as a human resource manager increased or decreased during this economic downturn? DO you think it has anything to do with your personality traits?

6.

In such circumstances, HR m's responsibilities increase consequently increasing his/her role importance. If I did not possess the necessary personality traits, I wouldn't be here from the first place.

7. Do you think personality traits (such as leadership qualities, commitment to the organisation, emotional intelligence etc) has any affect your role as a human resource manager? How?

HR is the strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organisation's PEOPLE are the most valued assets of any organisation regardless of its size , mission and so on therefore - is to contribute to the achievement of the organisation's objectives

8. Do these personality traits help make one human resource better than the other?
How?

Rapid changes in technology and job design, along with the increasing importance of learning- and knowledge-based organisations demands a strategic role of HRM, hence a hr manager with leadership qualities, commitment to the organisation, emotional intelligence etc...

9. What are the challenges faced by any HR manager during these crisis situation?

Besides budget tightening, cutting costs, new measures for performance management are to be considered challenges during a crisis, along with downsizing, restructuring departments ,creating desirable person/job and organisation fit, but the lack of vision and low employee morale can be the most challenging.

10. How can any HR manager fulfill these challenges and overcome the obstacles of economic downturn?

Giving employees the numbers behind company performance clarifies where the business needs to change and how their jobs connect to the bigger picture. But transparency can be abused if you did not take the necessary time to teach employees about how the business works.

11. How do you try to restrict costs associated with Human resource management (apart from salary reduction and layoffs)?

As an alternative to bonus or incentive, If promotions or raises aren't possible, give good workers the chance to make a lateral move or to take on a struggling department.

Switch from costly seminars to in-house training and allow star employees to transfer their knowledge and expertise.

On the other hand, Empower Employees by simply using their collective wisdom to eliminate clumsy (and costly) procedures across divisions.

12. What are main risks a human resource manager faces during this economic downturn? Why are these considered as risks and how can a HR manager overcome them?

Besides what I have mentioned earlier in my answer to Q # 8, setting new criteria on many levels of HR practices & mgt, in other word resorting to situational leadership is how an HR manager can overcome the crisis.

Another risk I would like to highlight that many managers underestimate throughout an economic recession is RETENTION. Many talented employees might consider moving on considering the organisation's blurry future.

The depressed market sees organisations preying on competitors' highly skilled and experienced talent, who are difficult to recruit during better economic times..

13. How does a HR manager keep people motivated during these crisis situations?

Does leadership qualities and commitment of the HR manager to the organisation help in this case?

Very simple: When showing up to the smaller meetings and by simply making an effort to be more visible and available to employees, can spark productivity and bring the team together.

Furthermore, It's a great time for [your employees] to realize that they can play a role in discovering opportunities for the company.

14. What is more important task of a HR manager during the economic downturn?

Recruitment and selection; Retention; organisational development; leadership development; health and safety; knowledge transfer; succession planning; job design; organisation structure; change management; workforce planning. (Please mention why one or more of the above is important).

Most of the above mentioned are important but the most tackled task is (1) **Right-sizing'** in other words, Doing More with Less.

Right sizing leads to (2) Leadership development .So from a HR perspective, HR managers should help leaders to really step up and role model .

Finally, it is easy to be distracted by short term pressures. Companies must continue to consider longer-term strategies. Hence the second most important task is (3) organisational development. Even when the chips are down....

Interview questionnaire

(For HR Managers)

Interview (3).

Section A (Personal Questions)

GenderFemale

DesignationHR Manager.....

Work Experience (yrs).....12 Years.....

Section B (Questions related to the Research)

1. Do you think the economic slowdown has had any effect on your organisation?

What are some of the negative affects you had to face?

Yes, for example it did limits our training activities

2. Did your responsibilities as a human resource manager increase during this economic downturn?

Yes

3. Did you organisation lay-off any employees during this downturn? No, we had regular resignations which do not consider as a lay-off Does your organisation have any plans of hiring new employees during this crisis situation? Yes for the needed vacancies

4. What changes have you noticed in your organisation during this crisis situation?

Was there any restructuring?

Mostly in the budgets (expenses)

5. Has your importance as a human resource manager increased or decreased during this economic downturn? It has been increased

DO you think it has anything to do with your personality traits?

Yes in addition to position and work punctuality

6. Do you think personality traits (such as leadership qualities, commitment to the organisation, emotional intelligence etc) has any affect your role as a human resource manager? How?

Yes, it helps in understanding and work with the current situation.

7. Do these personality traits help make one human resource better than the other? How?

yes, it helps in the way of fixing and solving work issues

8. What are the challenges faced by any HR manager during these crisis situation? to keep up the good expected performance of the employees

9. How can any HR manager fulfill these challenges and overcome the obstacles of economic downturn?

By enhancing the work environment, following the company policies and practices and finding solutions to maintain a stable environment

10. How do you try to restrict costs associated with Human resource management (apart from salary reduction and layoffs)?

Cutting costs and limiting budgets

11. What are main risks a human resource manager faces during this economic downturn? Turnovers Why are these considered as risks and how can a HR manager overcome them?

Sometimes it could costs in losing some of good performance employees, be clear with our employees regarding our situation in the market and financial conditions

12. How does a HR manager keep people motivated during these crisis situations?

Giving them more responsibilities and involve them in finding solutions to overcome this crises Does leadership qualities and commitment of the HR manager to the organisation help in this case? Sure

13. What is more important task of a HR manager during the economic downturn?

Recruitment and selection(looking for the major needed vacancies); Retention (cutting cost); organisational development (focus more on in-job training); leadership development(creating teams and assign them with special projects) ; health and safety(circular some of major health issues to the employees); knowledge transfer(having a mentor in each department); succession planning(focus on key players and give them more attention and on -job training); job design(review and modify job discretions); organisation structure(review and modify it if needed); change management(develop potential managers); workforce planning. (Please mention why one or more of the above is important).

- The most important issues are:
 - Recruitment and selection
 - organisational development

Interview questionnaire

(For HR Managers)

Interview (4).

Section A (Personal Questions)

Gender: male.

Designation: HR Manager

Work Experience: 13 Yrs

Section B (Questions related to the Research)

1. Do you think the economic slowdown has had any effect on your organisation?
Yes what are some of the negative affects you had to face? Terminations, creating new rules on the benefits of the employees

2. Did your responsibilities as a human resource manager increase during this economic downturn? Yes, as mentioned in item no. 1, this requires time in preparing the final documents, final settlements and cancellations of the visas & other documents.
3. Did you organisation lay-off any employees during this downturn? Does your organisation have any plans of hiring new employees during this crisis situation? Yes, just as other companies who were affected by the economic crisis, this cannot be averted, as much as we wanted. As for hiring new employee, hopefully we will soon.
4. What changes have you noticed in your organisation during this crisis situation? Was there any restructuring? Streamlining is imperative as during crisis....
5. Has your importance as a human resource manager increased or decreased during this economic downturn? Do you think it has anything to do with your personality traits?

Not affected

6. Do you think personality traits (such as leadership qualities, commitment to the organisation, emotional intelligence etc) has any affect your role as a human resource manager? How? Yes, makes my job easier
7. Do these personality traits help make one human resource better than the other? How?

Yes, having these qualities makes the relationship smoother between employees and company
8. What are the challenges faced by any HR manager during these crisis situation?

First of all facing the employees with the termination letter ,and help them to organize the residence ,insurance ,bank situation

9. How can any HR manager fulfill these challenges and overcome the obstacles of economic downturn?

Understand by listening to the employees but at the same time bearing in mind the interest of the company.

10. How do you try to restrict costs associated with Human resource management (apart from salary reduction and layoffs)?closure of offices as the result of termination of staff, benefits such as tickets, car allowances, telephones allowances, training courses for staff, annual retreat , celebrations, occasions

11. What are main risks a human resource manager faces during this economic downturn? Why are these considered as risks and how can a HR manager overcome them? Turnovers

12. How does a HR manager keep people motivated during these crisis situations? Does leadership qualities and commitment of the HR manager to the organisation help in this case? Keeping the employees motivated during these crisis

13. What is more important task of a HR manager during the economic downturn? Recruitment and selection; Retention; organisational development; leadership development; health and safety; knowledge transfer; succession planning; job design; organisation structure; change management; workforce planning. (Please mention why one or more of the above is important).

Retention: Retaining valuable employees is important

Workforce Planning: It is important that we plan ahead for our employees as termination is not always the solution. This can be avoided by means relocation or reassignment.

Knowledge Transfer: it is important to educate the staff for future advancement.

Interview questionnaire

(For HR Managers)

Interview (5).

Section A (Personal Questions)

Gender **Female**.....

Designation **HR Director**

Work Experience (yrs)...**24**.....

Section B (Questions related to the Research)

1. Do you think the economic slowdown has had any effect on your organisation?

What are some of the negative affects you had to face?

Staff termination and restructuring

2. Did your responsibilities as a human resource manager increase during this economic downturn?

Yes, as HR should deal with the effect of layoff on the survivors and work on training and development to enhance efficiency, productivity and performance.

3. Did you organisation lay-off any employees during this downturn? Does your organisation have any plans of hiring new employees during this crisis situation?

Yes.

No plan at the moment, we focus on staff mobility.

4. What changes have you noticed in your organisation during this crisis situation?

Was there any restructuring?

Yes restructuring was considered for all companies under the group.

5. Has your importance as a human resource manager increased or decreased during this economic downturn? DO you think it has anything to do with your personality traits?

HR professionals are able to propose best practices related to change management.

6. Do you think personality traits (such as leadership qualities, commitment to the organisation, emotional intelligence etc) has any affect your role as a human resource manager? How?

Yes definitely, by having a perception of fairness, and the ability to lead by example.

7. Do these personality traits help make one human resource better than the other? How?

With their capability to listen to employees and enhance their engagement.

8. What are the challenges faced by any HR manager during these crisis situation?

Rewarding and retaining good performers job security, salary increase

9. How can any HR manager fulfill these challenges and overcome the obstacles of economic downturn?

Through clear communication and adopting a helping relationship. Good HR should be always available to listen and support.

10. How do you try to restrict costs associated with Human resource management (apart from salary reduction and layoffs)?

Through enhancing ownership and involvement, as motivation is not always monetary.

11. What are main risks a human resource manager faces during this economic downturn? Why are these considered as risks and how can a HR manager overcome them?

Dealing with the layoff survivors to treat their emotional blockage.

12. How does a HR manager keep people motivated during these crisis situations? Does leadership qualities and commitment of the HR manager to the organisation help in this case?

Leadership is the key to get loyal and dedicated workforce.

Good leadership enhances employee motivation making him satisfied, engaged and committed that will increase in turn his participation, efficiency affecting positively his performance. People leave managers and not companies so good manager will for sure be able to retain his loyal staff members.

13. What is more important task of a HR manager during the economic downturn? Recruitment and selection; Retention; organisational development; leadership development; health and safety; knowledge transfer; succession planning; job design; organisation structure; change management; workforce planning. (Please mention why one or more of the above is important).

It is clever to take advantage of the business slowdown to concentrate on leadership development, people development and work on succession planning in order to retain talents.

Interview questionnaire

(For HR Managers)

Interview (6).

Section A (Personal Questions)

GenderMale.....

Designation ... HR & Admin. Manager

Work Experience (yrs).....11.....

Section B (Questions related to the Research)

1. Do you think the economic slowdown has had any effect on your organisation?
Yes what are some of the negative affects you had to face? We are experiencing stoppage and suspension of some projects, in particular those in the pre-construction stage.

2. Did your responsibilities as a human resource manager increase during this economic downturn?

The reduction in few positions led to increase the responsibilities.

3. Did you organisation lay-off any employees during this downturn? Yes
Does your organisation have any plans of hiring new employees during this crisis situation?

This depends on the improvement of the crisis situation and gets new projects

4. What changes have you noticed in your organisation during this crisis situation?
Was there any restructuring?

Transfer some employees from one territory to another and from one job to another and freeze all recruitment activities

5. Has your importance as a human resource manager increased or decreased during this economic downturn? DO you think it has anything to do with your personality traits?

Increased and personality has a major role when dealing with crisis and its effects on the staff.

6. Do you think personality traits (such as leadership qualities, commitment to the organisation, emotional intelligence etc) has any affect your role as a human resource manager? How?

Yes, how to deal with staff and keep motivating them.

7. Do these personality traits help make one human resource better than the other? How? Yes, his personality can help the organisation to stay surviving under the challenging crisis and keep its staff motivated.

8. What are the challenges faced by any HR manager during these crisis situation? The freezing of salary raises & most of the extra benefits and allowances for the employees

9. How can any HR manager fulfill these challenges and overcome the obstacles of economic downturn?

The creation of social relations between the employees, and to give great importance to the development of those relations, as this is an asset to the company.

10. How do you try to restrict costs associated with Human resource management (apart from salary reduction and layoffs)?

reduce overhead cost & unnecessary expenses

11. What are main risks a human resource manager faces during this economic downturn? Why are these considered as risks and how can a HR manager overcome them?

Turnovers & staff cutoff

12. How does a HR manager keep people motivated during these crisis situations?

Does leadership qualities and commitment of the HR manager to the organisation help in this case?

Develop effective employee assessment and training processes - The training will increase capability, reduce the poor quality outputs.

Yes, it did.

- c. Maximize the use of manpower to reduce the expenses.
- d. Check the actual needed employees for each department to lay-off the redundant.
- e. Communicate more with the employees to motivate the efficient ones.

3. Did you organisation lay-off any employees during this downturn? Does your organisation have any plans of hiring new employees during this crisis situation?

Yes, we did.

We terminated 10% of the employees who were inefficient and unproductive.

Our plan is to recruit trainee engineers under In-house training courses.

4. What changes have you noticed in your organisation during this crisis situation?
Was there any restructuring?

We have process of restructuring at the departmental level particularly in the finance and administration department.

5. Has your importance as a human resource manager increased or decreased during this economic downturn? DO you think it has anything to do with your personality traits?

It has increased as the HR manager is the one who is mostly involved in defining the needs for each department in the company.

I felt that I have to communicate more with the employees to let them feel more secure in order to retain them.

6. Do you think personality traits (such as leadership qualities, commitment to the organisation, emotional intelligence etc) has any affect your role as a human resource manager? How?

Yes, sure.

During that crisis situation I got more emotional with employees and communicated more with them.

7. Do these personality traits help make one human resource better than the other?

How?

Yes, it makes employees more involved in solving problems.

8. What are the challenges faced by any HR manager during these crisis situation?

- f. Motivation of efficient employees.
- g. Termination of redundant and unproductive employees.
- h. Modification of benefits plan in order to implement cost-cutting plan.
- i. Employees' retention.

9. How can any HR manager fulfill these challenges and overcome the obstacles of economic downturn?

By defining the actual manpower needed for all departments and projects.

10. How do you try to restrict costs associated with Human resource management (apart from salary reduction and layoffs)?

Change in benefits plan.

11. What are main risks a human resource manager faces during this economic downturn? Why are these considered as risks and how can a HR manager overcome them?

- j. Shortage of cash.
- k. Losing productive and efficient employees.

HR manager can overcome these risks by reducing the expenses related to employee's affairs and communicate this temporary situation with them.

12. How does a HR manager keep people motivated during these crisis situations?

Does leadership qualities and commitment of the HR manager to the organisation help in this case?

HR manager can convince employees that these crisis situations are temporary.

- l. Implementation of In-house training.
- m. New designation which affect the job title without affecting the salary.

13. What is more important task of a HR manager during the economic downturn?

Recruitment and selection; Retention; organisational development; leadership development; health and safety; knowledge transfer; succession planning; job design; organisation structure; change management; workforce planning. (Please mention why one or more of the above is important).

Retention

Knowledge transfer

Organisation structure

The most important task is Organisation Structure which affects all other functions.

Interview questionnaire

(For HR Managers)

Interview (8).

Section A (Personal Questions)

Gender :Male

Designation :HRD head

Work Experience (yrs) : 10+

Email address:

Section B (Questions related to the Research)

1. Do you think the economic slowdown has had any effect on your organisation?
(yes) What are some of the negative affects you had to face? Cut down training budget, development budget, recruitments, and communication events.
2. Did your responsibilities as a human resource manager increase during this economic downturn? Yes.
3. Did you organisation lay-off any employees during this downturn? Yes Does your organisation have any plans of hiring new employees during this crisis situation?
On a very strict level
4. What changes have you noticed in your organisation during this crisis situation?
Cutting down most of the expenses. Was there any restructuring? Yes
5. Has your importance as a human resource manager increased or decreased during this economic downturn? Increased DO you think it has anything to do with your personality traits? Somehow
6. Do you think personality traits (such as leadership qualities, commitment to the organisation, emotional intelligence etc) has any affect your role as a human resource manager? How? Yes, such competencies help the HR specialist to know how to tackle the new problems, and work with both employees and employers at the same level.
7. Do these personality traits help make one human resource better than the other?
Of course How? HR member act like a business partner in the organisation, and to

do so personality traits needed, and whom has better personality traits would last, as well as trusted with business more.

8. What are the challenges faced by any HR manager during these crisis situation?
Acting like a Human, and an employer at the same time. As well as finding different methods and sources to keep training employees and develop them with no or less cost.
9. How can any HR manager fulfill these challenges and overcome the obstacles of economic downturn? Best Practice is much recommended, and having the best human assets in the organisation would help very much.
10. How do you try to restrict costs associated with Human resource management (apart from salary reduction and layoffs)? Reduce the training, reduce the development, reduce communication events, and PR events. Restructure the benefits.
11. What are main risks a human resource manager faces during this economic downturn? Layoff staff, and cutting off the HRD BUDGET. Why are these considered as risks and how can a HR manager overcome them? Because this will need to re-hire staff, and shake the moral within the organisation. And development will reach to a weak point, where your key staff will be attracted by others.
12. How does a HR manager keep people motivated during these crisis situations?
Boost the moral; restructure the bonus scheme and salary increase on the key staff where they are more effective. Keep the line of communication level open between employees and employers through HRD. Does leadership qualities and commitment of the HR manager to the organisation help in this case? Yes,

although leadership doesn't pay the rent for the staff, by the end of the day employees come to work to earn their living.

13. What is more important task of a HR manager during the economic downturn?

Recruitment and selection; Retention; organisational development; leadership development; health and safety; knowledge transfer; succession planning; job design; organisation structure; change management; workforce planning. (Please mention why one or more of the above is important). They all are important, and ranking them it depend in different factors, such as the size of the organisation, the type of business, the type of operations, the aggressiveness of competition, the market, and some others.

Appendix D: The Interviews with the GMs

Interview questionnaire (For General Managers)

Interview (1).

Section A (Personal Questions)

Gender **Male**

Designation **General Manager /Managing Partner**

Work Experience (yrs) **14 years**

Email address

Section B (Questions related to the Research)

1. What are the main characteristic of a human resource manager which you consider while hiring?

Organisation

Ability to communicate, persuade, influence and lead people

Ability to win employees' trust and honesty

Ability to listen to employees' problems and solve within capacity and role

Full knowledge of country rules and regulations

High management skills

Dedication to the company

2. Do you think leadership qualities are an essential personality trait for a HR manager? Why?
Of course leadership is essential; HR has to lead and direct a team of people working for the company and should be able to manage successfully.

3. Do you think commitment to the organisation is important for any HR manager? Why?
Commitment is required by all employees of the company because people are the real assets of any company. In case of HR, he/she is directly communicating with the employees from the top management, and can have the real pulse and transfer to heads of departments.

4. Do you think apart from the above mentioned traits, an HR manager should also have emotional intelligence? Why is it important?

Emotional intelligence and rapport are essential when dealing with people. Employees usually have their own fears or frustrations, and in many cases there's the idea that top management or owners of the company do not listen or sympathize with their employees. The HR can play an important role in this area.

5. Do you think the economic slowdown has had any effect on your organisation?
What negative affects do you and your HR managers had to face?
Economic slowdown has hardly affected companies, mainly the cutting of benefits and laying off people.

6. Did your responsibilities as a GM increase during this economic downturn?
Yes, the increase responsibilities include creating more scenarios to deal with downturn, cutting down costs, managing the morale of employees, trying to create more or different sources/ideas to run the business, relocating resources, securing employees and jobs, deciding on whether to keep or layoff employees, choosing which employees to keep

7. Did you organisation lay-off any employees during this downturn? Does your organisation have any plans of hiring new employees during this crisis situation?
Yes employees were laid off, and currently there are no plans for hiring new employees. Cost need to be to the minimum.

8. What changes have you noticed in your organisation during this crisis situation?
Was there any restructuring?
It was restructured; deleting some departments, closing some sectors, or give more duties to certain employees and laid of others.

9. Has your importance as a GM increased or decreased during this economic downturn? Do you think it has anything to do with your personality traits?

It has increased definitely, because when it is good, it is good. But in bad situations or crisis optimism, creative or radical ideas, and hard decisions have to be made. And they are all related to personality traits.

10. Do you think personality traits (such as leadership qualities, commitment to the organisation, emotional intelligence etc) has any affect your role as a GM? How?
Yes indeed, all these traits are essential for all top management levels as they have to deal with subordinates, and make work done to lead a successful business.
11. Do these personality traits help make one human resource better than the other? How?
These personality traits will help the HR to successfully play his role and achieve his goals.
12. How do you try to restrict costs associated with Human resource management (apart from salary reduction and layoffs)?
Restrict salaries increase, bonus, business trips, copying, printing (maybe shift to electronic system when dealing with some paperwork)
13. What are main risks you face during this economic downturn? Why are these considered as risks and how do you overcome them?
Lost morale, worries and frustration of employees because this will slow down work and efficiency will decrease tremendously. Loss of dedicated and good employees of the company, which are the main assets.
14. How do you keep you HR managers motivated?
Secure their job.
15. What is more important task of a HR manager during the economic downturn?
Recruitment and selection; Retention; organisational development; leadership

development; health and safety; knowledge transfer; succession planning; job design; organisation structure; change management; workforce planning. (Please mention why one or more of the above is important).

I believe organisation structure is more important in this situation to better make use of available resources and avoid lay offs as possible.

**Interview questionnaire
(For General Managers)**

Interview (2).

Section A (Personal Questions)

Gender: male

Designation: General Manager

Work Experience (yrs): 12

Section B (Questions related to the Research)

1. What are the main characteristic of a human resource manager which you consider while hiring?
Part of what makes Coldwell Banker that successful is the highly motivated people who work here and their enthusiasm for Real Estate business. We recruit individuals whose honesty, integrity, initiative and creative approach to problem solving shines through.
2. Do you think leadership qualities are an essential personality trait for a HR manager? Why?
Yes, he or she should be an inspiration to colleagues, he or she should be tenacious, driven and highly motivated professional with a proven record of success, and with a strong empathy for people.

3. Do you think commitment to the organisation is important for any HR manager?
Why?
Yes, because commitment is a major motive behind serving and enveloping the company manpower.

4. Do you think apart from the above mentioned traits, an HR manager should also have emotional intelligence? Why is it important?
Yes, because emotional intelligence is the awareness of and ability to manage one's emotions in a healthy and productive manner.

5. Do you think the economic slowdown has had any effect on your organisation?
What negative affects do you and your HR managers had to face?
Yes it had, major effect is salaries reduction and layoff of incompetent staff

6. Did your responsibilities as a GM increase during this economic downturn?
Yes, more focus on Business Development and opening new horizons and doors

7. Did you organisation lay-off any employees during this downturn? Does your organisation have any plans of hiring new employees during this crisis situation?
Yes, we laid-off 20 %, and we hired competent candidates and aggressive sales team

8. What changes have you noticed in your organisation during this crisis situation?
Was there any restructuring?
No changes in the organisational chart, just turning the operation into survival mode

9. Has your importance as a GM increased or decreased during this economic downturn? Do you think it has anything to do with your personality traits?

Actually it did increase. The major reason is my patience, long term vision, ability to still see the light in the middle of darkness, ability to work under massive pressure, ability to keep the team motivated, and of course emotional intelligence.

10. Do you think personality traits (such as leadership qualities, commitment to the organisation, emotional intelligence etc) has any affect your role as a GM? How?
Yes they have, as a GM you are the source of inspiration and motivation of the whole company. At many occasions, when the team falls into group depression due to work slowdown, I worked hard to keep them productive and interested.

11. Do these personality traits help make one human resource better than the other?
How?

Yes, through ability to work with people, motivate them, lead, manage and organize while keeping everybody committed and interested in the company

12. How do you try to restrict costs associated with Human resource management (apart from salary reduction and layoffs)?

Cancel extra benefits, reduce bonuses.

13. What are main risks you face during this economic downturn? Why are these considered as risks and how do you overcome them?

Financial risks, staff productivity, board increased expectations and demands. These are risks because each one includes multi sub-risks that might hit the company hard and might lead to losing the business in the absence of the market. Overcoming them will be through managing them either individually and simultaneously to dilute their impact, prepare for optimum solutions, and control their consequences as much as possible.

14. How do you keep you HR managers motivated?

Keep them engaged; discuss with them the company vision, plans, operations overviews during the next six months or year.

15. What is more important task of a HR manager during the economic downturn?
Recruitment and selection; Retention; organisational development; leadership development; health and safety; knowledge transfer; succession planning; job design; organisation structure; change management; workforce planning. (Please mention why one or more of the above is important).

All together, not only during the economic downturn but at any given time. Of course during the tough days he or she should focus more on retention, leadership, planning, and workforce planning, but others are also important. The reason is because the staff is the most valuable asset to any successful company, and the HR is responsible for this asset.

**Interview questionnaire
(For General Managers)**

Interview (3).

Section A (Personal Questions)

Gender Male.....

Designation Vice President – Area Manager -

Work Experience (yrs) 27.....

Section B (Questions related to the Research)

1. What are the main characteristic of a human resource manager which you consider while hiring?
Experience, Good knowledge of local labor law, leadership, dynamic personality.
2. Do you think leadership qualities are an essential personality trait for a HR manager? Why?

Yes, definitely, leadership is an essential personality trait for a HR manager as he is dealing with employees problems and implementing the corporate policy which in both cases needs that kind of personality

3. Do you think commitment to the organisation is important for any HR manager? Why?

No doubt , yes it is a must, he will handle all execute all financial related matters to employees indemnities, benefits, additionally, he will be responsible for recruiting new staff which needs someone who is really trusted so hiring new people won't be based on qualifications of the new applicant and not on personal matters.

4. Do you think apart from the above mentioned traits, an HR manager should also have emotional intelligence? Why is it important?

HR Manager deals with employees, with all their personal problems and concerns, he should have that kind of trait but in a balanced way with the company interests.

5. Do you think the economic slowdown has had any effect on your organisation? What negative affects do you and your HR managers had to face?

Definitely, the economic slowdown left a tremendous effect on our organisation, as most of the employees' benefits were trimmed such as bonuses, salary increments, and social functions as retreats, which in a way reflected on the satisfaction of the staff.

6. Did your responsibilities as a GM increase during this economic downturn?

Yes, in particular more focus on cutting the company expenses, and manage different tasks with less staff.

7. Did you organisation lay-off any employees during this downturn? Does your organisation have any plans of hiring new employees during this crisis situation?

Yes, our regional office have no choice to release about 25% of its workforce , the released staff were who working on cancelled projects, but still we could manage to

keep our long service , loyal and distinguished staff, no plans to hire new staff by now until the market recovered, and new jobs are secured.

8. What changes have you noticed in your organisation during this crisis situation?

Was there any restructuring?

The main changes were in cutting the expenses and trimming the staff benefits, unfortunately no major restructuring took place, but that is due to hope of market recovery in the near future.

9. Has your importance as a GM increased or decreased during this economic downturn? Do you think it has anything to do with your personality traits?

I don't think the importance of my role was decreased, on contrary the responsibilities are increased as mentioned above, that has nothing to do with personal traits but just to cope with the current situation.

10. Do you think personality traits (such as leadership qualities, commitment to the organisation, emotional intelligence etc) has any affect your role as a GM? How?

Yes, simply it is important as a GM, a leader position, to let the staff do their utmost efforts and get the optimal performance while they are comfortable and keep the work environment very healthy and comfortable to our staff.

11. Do these personality traits help make one human resource better than the other?

How?

Of course, as described above, personality traits play a leading factor in the HR manager role and performance.

12. How do you try to restrict costs associated with Human resource management (apart from salary reduction and layoffs)?

By reducing extra expenses such as social functions, travel costs, in addition to extra benefits to staff such as fuel costs, bonuses, and training.

13. What are main risks you face during this economic downturn? Why are these considered as risks and how do you overcome them?

The main risks we are facing during this recession is the fear of losing contracts due to financing difficulties our clients have, which will lead to a turbulent cash flow required to pay our company expenses and staff salaries, that is beside the difficulties we are facing in getting our payments on time and in some cases no payments are available from some clients.

14. How do you keep you HR managers motivated?

By keeping him up-to-date with the challenges our business is facing and by getting the various HR reports on time.

15. What is more important task of a HR manager during the economic downturn?

Recruitment and selection; Retention; organisational development; leadership development; health and safety; knowledge transfer; succession planning; job design; organisation structure; change management; workforce planning. (Please mention why one or more of the above is important).

All the tasks above are important but with different grade and sequence, I will list below the most important ones:

- a. Organisation Structure
- b. Organisation development.
- c. Workforce planning.
- d. Successful planning.
- e. Leadership.

Interview questionnaire
(For General Managers)

Interview (4).

Section A (Personal Questions)

GenderMALE.....
DesignationAREA MANAGER.....
Work Experience (yrs).....25+.....

Section B (Questions related to the Research)

1. What are the main characteristic of a human resource manager which you consider while hiring? **PERSONALITY**
2. Do you think leadership qualities are an essential personality trait for a HR manager? Why? **YES. TO MAKE HIM SETTING UP RULES**
3. Do you think commitment to the organisation is important for any HR manager? Why? **YES. TO MAKE HIM DILEVER WHAT HE IS SUPPOSED TO.**
4. Do you think apart from the above mentioned traits, an HR manager should also have emotional intelligence? Why is it important? **YES. THIS WILL HELP HIM DEALING WITH VARIOUS PERSONS**
5. Do you think the economic slowdown has had any effect on your organisation? What negative affects do you and your HR managers had to face? **YES. RELOCATION OF RESOURCES AND MAINTAINING GOOD STAFF.**
6. Did your responsibilities as a GM increase during this economic downturn? **YES**
7. Did you organisation lay-off any employees during this downturn? Does your organisation have any plans of hiring new employees during this crisis situation? **YES. SHORT PLANS YES**
8. What changes have you noticed in your organisation during this crisis situation? Was there any restructuring? **RESTRUCTURING AND CONSOLIDATION**
9. Has your importance as a GM increased or decreased during this economic downturn? Do you think it has anything to do with your personality traits? **INCREASED. I BELIEVE SO.**
10. Do you think personality traits (such as leadership qualities, commitment to the organisation, emotional intelligence etc) has any affect your role as a GM? How? **FOR SURE YES. GAIN TRUST OF THE TOP MANAGEMENT AND MY STAFF.**

11. Do these personality traits help make one human resource better than the other?
How? **YES, AS ABOVE.**
12. How do you try to restrict costs associated with Human resource management (apart from salary reduction and layoffs)? **FREEZE STAFF BENEFITS AND MINIMIZE ADMINISTRATION COSTS.**
13. What are main risks you face during this economic downturn? Why are these considered as risks and how do you overcome them? **MAIN RISK IS TO KEEP OUR BUSINESS MODEL IN THE UPTURN AND AVOID DOWNTURNS. IN ORDER TO OVERCOME WE STARTED LOOKING FOR ALTERNATIVE BUSINESS MODELS AND NEW FIELDS.**
14. How do you keep you HR managers motivated? **KEEP THEM IN RESPONSIBLE LEVEL AND SHOULD BE SHARED ON ALL RELATED SUBJECTS.**
15. What is more important task of a HR manager during the economic downturn?
Recruitment and selection; Retention; organisational development; leadership development; health and safety; knowledge transfer; succession planning; job design; organisation structure; change management; workforce planning. (Please mention why one or more of the above is important). **ALL WHAT MENTIONED**

**Interview questionnaire
(For General Managers)**

Interview (5).

Section A (Personal Questions)

Gender **Male**.....

Designation **Managing Partner**.....

Work Experience (yrs) **29 Years**.....

Section B (Questions related to the Research)

1. What are the main characteristic of a human resource manager which you consider while hiring? **Very well experienced in dealing with persons, very strong personality, & very creative.**
2. Do you think leadership qualities are an essential personality trait for a HR manager? Why? **Yes**
3. Do you think commitment to the organisation is important for any HR manager? Why? **Yes it is since commitment generates creativity, dedication, & enthusiasm.**
4. Do you think apart from the above mentioned traits, an HR manager should also have emotional intelligence? Why is it important? **It is important to overcome the psychological matters of the employees through proper employees training & planning.**
5. Do you think the economic slowdown has had any effect on your organisation? What negative affects do you and your HR managers had to face? **Yes it did. The lack of budget for training & development will reduce efficiency & progress eventually**
6. Did your responsibilities as a GM increase during this economic downturn? **Yes.**
7. Did your organisation lay-off any employees during this downturn? **Yes.** Does your organisation have any plans of hiring new employees during this crisis situation? **We always look for good quality people to hire whenever we feel that such people will increase productivity.**

8. What changes have you noticed in your organisation during this crisis situation?
Was there any restructuring? **NO changes were noticed in our organisation**
9. Has your importance as a GM increased or decreased during this economic downturn? Do you think it has anything to do with your personality traits? **It has increased since it is my responsibility to ensure that the company's productivity is maintained.**
10. Do you think personality traits (such as leadership qualities, commitment to the organisation, emotional intelligence etc) has any affect your role as a GM? How?
NO
11. Do these personality traits help make one human resource better than the other?
How? **Of course they do. If you have good people you have good work and vice versa**
12. How do you try to restrict costs associated with Human resource management (apart from salary reduction and layoffs)? **By ensuring the best resources are chosen & utilizes very well.**
13. What are main risks you face during this economic downturn? Why are these considered as risks and how do you overcome them? **Maintaining the very good & well trained staff. This is overcome by spending cuts in areas not related to their salaries and benefits and channeling those cuts as extra incentives to them.**
14. How do you keep you HR managers motivated? **By making him involved in each and every decision of the company's activities.**

15. What is more important task of a HR manager during the economic downturn?
Recruitment and selection; Retention; organisational development; leadership development; health and safety; knowledge transfer; succession planning; job design; organisation structure; change management; workforce planning. (Please mention why one or more of the above is important). **Organisational Development, Recruitment and Selection, & Retention. By organisational development efficiency can improve & increase at NO additional costs. Recruitment & selection are very important during economic crisis since it is a very good chance to attract very well experienced and trained staff from other companies. Retention of course is very important to maintain the company's human assets.**

**Interview questionnaire
(For General Managers)**

Interview (6).

Section A (Personal Questions)

GenderMale.....

Work Experience (yrs).....21 years.....

Section B (Questions related to the Research)

1. What are the main characteristic of a human resource manager which you consider while hiring? A leader with flexible character in addition to political and psychological skills
2. Do you think leadership qualities are an essential personality trait for a HR manager? Why? Yes, since HR capital is the most essential complex factor for a company

3. Do you think commitment to the organisation is important for any HR manager? Why? Yes, HR manager makes the balance of the company by affecting the behaviors of employees
4. Do you think apart from the above mentioned traits, an HR manager should also have emotional intelligence? Why is it important? Yes, to know how to deal effectively and support the staff when needed especially during this crisis.
5. Do you think the economic slowdown has had any effect on your organisation? What negative affects do you and your HR managers had to face? Minimization of cost by laying of most of the employees while keeping focus on the business processes not to be affected negatively
6. Did your responsibilities as a GM increase during this economic downturn? Yes, any decision I will take will be very critical for the current situation, so I have to foresee what could be the future results on the short and long term run.
7. Did you organisation lay-off any employees during this downturn? Does your organisation have any plans of hiring new employees during this crisis situation? For the time being, the major focus is more on the company and the employee since it is facing going concern issue. Once the restructuring process is finalized, we may plan to hire new employees.
8. What changes have you noticed in your organisation during this crisis situation? Was there any restructuring? The major changes include restructuring of the business activities some of which are discontinued due to current market conditions.

9. Has your importance as a GM increased or decreased during this economic downturn? Do you think it has anything to do with your personality traits? My responsibility increased because I am currently the one playing the role of the captain boating to lead the ship and secure it from sinking.

10. Do you think personality traits (such as leadership qualities, commitment to the organisation, emotional intelligence etc) has any affect your role as a GM? How? Most of the employees are threatened by termination. Therefore, it is very important for me as GM to hold the above mentioned qualities in order to keep the staff I need around me and not losing them for any coming job opportunity.

11. Do these personality traits help make one human resource better than the other? How? Yes, when you are able to read the person in front of you and know how to react, this issue will give you more power than the other.

12. How do you try to restrict costs associated with Human resource management (apart from salary reduction and layoffs)? Travel, overtime, medical insurance level, vacations and other allowances.

13. What are main risks you face during this economic downturn? Why are these considered as risks and how do you overcome them? Liquidity, operational, and going concern are major risks to be considered in this economic downturn. Furthermore, we considered them as major risks because we need liquidity to be able to settle our financial commitments, and we need to be able to proceed with our operations with the remaining number of employees after lay off. In addition, all decisions must add more security to the going concern of the company.

14. How do you keep you HR managers motivated? What a question in the current situations?!!!!

15. What is more important task of a HR manager during the economic downturn?
Recruitment and selection; Retention; organisational development; leadership development; health and safety; knowledge transfer; succession planning; job design; organisation structure; change management; workforce planning. (Please mention why one or more of the above is important). Retention, leadership, organisation structure and change management are the most interrelated tasks in this economic downturn.

Interview questionnaire
(For General Managers)

Interview (7).

Section A (Personal Questions)

Gender ...Male.....

DesignationExecutive Manager.....

Work Experience (yrs).....14.....

Section B (Questions related to the Research)

1. What are the main characteristics of a human resource manager which you consider while hiring?
Personality – presentation – psyche – attractiveness and leadership
2. Do you think leadership qualities are an essential personality trait for a HR manager? Why?
It is important, but not the first priority though should be of a strong personality.
3. Do you think commitment to the organisation is important for any HR manager? Why?

It is crucial, so that the HR can recruit the right candidates and create the environment at the institution.

4. Do you think apart from the above mentioned traits, an HR manager should also have emotional intelligence? Why is it important?

It is connected to presence and Psyche.

5. Do you think the economic slowdown has had any effect on your organisation?

What negative affects do you and your HR managers had to face?

Keeping the good people, let go with some good people, and hold the confidence at the company

6. Did your responsibilities as a GM increase during this economic downturn?

yes

7. Did you organisation lay-off any employees during this downturn? Does your organisation have any plans of hiring new employees during this crisis situation?

There were layoffs, and some others left. Recruitment will occur as preparation for the upturn.

8. What changes have you noticed in your organisation during this crisis situation?

Was there any restructuring?

Managed re-organisation, planning, merger, re allocating of roles of employees.

9. Has your importance as a GM increased or decreased during this economic downturn? Do you think it has anything to do with your personality traits?

It is connected to knowledge, personality, perseverance, vision, responsibility and other leadership traits

10. Do you think personality traits (such as leadership qualities, commitment to the organisation, emotional intelligence etc) has any affect your role as a GM? How?

Vision and application of mission of the company. Have to understand the mission so that the company could succeed.

11. Do these personality traits help make one human resource better than the other?

How?

Connected to 10 above.

12. How do you try to restrict costs associated with Human resource management (apart from salary reduction and layoffs)?

Efficiency of employees, belief in the mission and work toward achieving the goals.

13. What are main risks you face during this economic downturn? Why are these considered as risks and how do you overcome them?

Keeping costs low, making revenues and keep the good personnel available and believing in the company (we depend on Human resources for services).

14. How do you keep you HR managers motivated?

First they have to believe in the mission and vision, their responsibilities to be well defined and broadened as needed.

15. What is more important task of a HR manager during the economic downturn?

Recruitment and selection; Retention; organisational development; leadership development; health and safety; knowledge transfer; succession planning; job design; organisation structure; change management; workforce planning. (Please mention why one or more of the above is important).

These are details of the work. First they have to believe in the mission and vision. Planning comes later.