Chapter II

Research Design
2.1 Statement of the problem

The training and development of employees is becoming an increasingly important and necessary activity of Human Resource Management. Rapidly changing technologies, cultural diversities in the workplace increase the potential obsolescence of the employees more quickly than ever before. Organizations the world over have realized that training and development form an integral part of a successful human resource strategy and they are in fact, spending considerable sums of money on this activity. In India too the training activity is growing at an unprecedented rate. There are a number of new trends sweeping the training scenario which need to be examined. Much has been written about training for employees, but there isn’t much specifically as regards training for the senior and middle level management. Considering this and the background given in the previous chapter, this study has been undertaken with the following statement of the problem:

"Trends in training for senior and middle level managers"

2.2 Objectives

The overall goal of this study is to gain insight into the current state and future trends of corporate education and training in various companies.

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To study some aspects of management training and development particularly for senior and middle level managers, an area that is gaining tremendous importance since the last few years after the arrival of multinationals in the country.
2. To identify various trends related to training of this particular segment.
3. To assess the popularity of various conventional and technology based training delivery methods.
4. To find out how training needs are identified for this group.
5. To find out how training programs for senior and middle level managers are evaluated.
2.3 Research methodology

The research methodology involves primary and secondary research. First of all, various articles, research papers, journals, books and websites were scanned to collect information on the subject. Due to unavailability of material in the local libraries, most of the secondary data was obtained from the libraries at IIM, Ahemdadad and ASCI, Hyderabad, and the Internet also proved to be a very useful source. Based on the review of literature, meetings and interviews with experts and training practitioners, and also a preliminary survey (through questionnaires) that was conducted in the local industries, objectives for the study were decided and hypotheses formulated. The primary data was collected through a questionnaire that was administered to respondents through personnel interviews, through mail and also through e-mail.

The sampling is purposive as training is not a significant area in many companies, so keeping in mind the objectives of the study, only those companies have been included in the sample, where training is a regular activity, e.g. multinationals and large-scale companies where training is given a priority.

The sample included HR/Training managers of various medium scale and large-scale industries, Multinationals in the local industrial areas, a few companies in Mumbai and Pune and also some outside Maharashtra. A couple of companies from the US were also included in the sample for comparison with the training scenario in India.

Tabulation of data and analysis has been done on the PC, for convenience, using various statistical tools like non-parametric methods.

2.4 Review of literature

There is hardly any research work clubbed under the category of training trends especially in India, though there are a number of articles and research papers that deal independently with these individual trends in training. The American Society of Training and Development conducts an annual survey on training trends and publishes a report. There is no such data available in India. A number of papers and articles were read during the course of the
study based on which it was felt that a report should be compiled on what are the various trends sweeping the training industry in India. Some of the literature reviewed is presented below.

- Jeannette Swist, at AMX International, Inc., in her paper on "Conducting a Training Needs Assessment", remarks that training needs assessment is often overlooked in the performance improvement process.

- Fred Nickols, at http://home.att.net, in his paper on "Who needs what training? A look askance at training needs assessment", also says that a great deal of training is offered without the benefit of any diagnosis.

- In “Rediscovering democracy in training” (HUMAN CAPITAL, June 1999), N.Ramanathan, a senior manager at one of the leading companies says that the need identification process used by many companies results in a predictable and standard list of training programs which are not specific to either the individuals’ or the organization’s requirements.

- Trends in Training, 2000 presented by on line magazine THINQ, point towards an increase in Computer based training and a shift in classroom training to mixed modes of learning, i.e., live classroom instruction plus simulations, computer and web based learning. Another trend pointed out is the increase in demand for customized training. An increase in spending on external training programs is predicted.

- In another article, “Migrarion from classroom instruction to e-learning”, on www.thinq.com, it is concluded that as the benefits of e-learning become more well known, corporate training departments have increased their interest in migrating their current instructor led course content to that of e-learning.

- An online survey conducted by Learning Decisions, in July 2000 at www.maciecenter.com, including 1,360 individuals from a variety of industries, shows that most industries use a combination of E-learning and traditional training.
Mark Mendenhall (University of Tennessee) and J.Stewart Black, have presented a paper on “Cross-cultural effectiveness: A review and a theoretical framework for future research” in 1990 in The Academy of Management Review”. They conclude that the increased internationalization in the economic, political, and social arenas has led to greater interpersonal cross-cultural contact. Because much of this contact has not been successful, cross-cultural training has been proposed by many scholars as a means of facilitating more effective interaction. They have presented a review of the cross-cultural literature and have determined that cross-cultural training in general is effective.

Vinod Mahanta and Abha Bakaya, in their article titled “Frequent flyer”, in BUSINESS TODAY, have written about how Indian software companies having there operations scattered in various parts of the world, manage and train their executives to conduct business in these different regions, through cross-cultural training.

Then there are also a number of anecdotal articles on the Net, offering various anecdotes to prove how a successful organization may jeopardize its business in another country if its executives do not have adequate knowledge of cross-cultural interactions.

Christopher J. Bachler in “Outsourcing Training Helps Companies keep Up” in Workforce, June 1997, Vol.76, No.7, says that the tremendous structural changes taking place in most companies are stirring up greater demand for outsourcing training than ever before. Outsourcing, he says, is not only on the rise – it may well be the wave of the future.

Patricia Boverie, Deanna Sanchez Mulcahy, and John A. Zondlo, in their paper on “Evaluating the effectiveness of Training programs”, conclude that in the rush to train and educate people, many organizations have failed to treat the evaluation of such training as a priority. At best, the evaluation of training has been a perfunctory task with little analysis and usefulness.

Clive Sheperd, in “Assessing the ROI of training”, says that training evaluation is the most ignored activity in the training function. And
even if training is undertaken, it is usually the easiest and lowest level – the measurement of student reactions through happy sheets.

➢ Writing on “Evaluation of Training”, Donald L. Kirkpatrick, (known for the most popular evaluation model) in the Training and Development Handbook (ASTD), points out that managers expect their manufacturing and sales departments to yield a good return and will go great lengths to find out whether they have done so. When it comes to training however, they may expect the return – but rarely do they make a little effort to measure the actual results.

➢ The National HRD Executive Survey on Measurement and Evaluation, 1997, by ASTD reveals that training inputs like, training expenditure, number of courses, and number of employees receiving training are much more widely collected than training outcomes like, customer satisfaction, return on investment, and job satisfaction, while evaluating training.

➢ Marguerite Foxon, Coopers & Lybrand present “Evaluation of training and development programs: A review of the literature”, in the Australian Journal of Education Technology, 1989, 5, 2. The review of literature reveals that there is ample evidence that evaluation continues to be one of the most vexing problems facing the training fraternity. They cite a survey undertaken by Catanello and Kirkpatrick in 1968 of 110 industrial organizations evaluating training which revealed that very few were assessing anything other than trainee reactions. Citing similar exercises and surveys conducted at various places and times, in the next twenty years, they conclude that there hasn’t been much improvement since then. In virtually every case the only form of evaluation being done was end-of-course trainee reactions.

➢ A study was conducted by the Corporate Knowledge Center at the University of South California in November 1997 on “Workforce Education: Corporate training and learning at America’s leading Companies.” The study examined the current and future trends in corporate education and training. It details the types of employees receiving training, the means by which training is obtained and delivered, the types of training that companies plan to provide in
future, and the effect of corporate changes on training and development.

2.5 Hypotheses

On the basis of the preliminary survey, interviews with practitioners in the field, and review of literature, the following hypothesis were formulated for the study:

1. Training delivery for senior and middle level managers is becoming technology based.
2. The outsourcing option is preferred for training senior and middle level executives.
3. Cross-cultural training for expatriate managers is gaining importance.
4. Training provided to senior and middle level executives is need specific.
5. Participant reaction is the sole evaluation criterion used for evaluating executive training.

2.6 Bibliographical presentation

The references for each chapter are mentioned as footnotes on each page. At the end of the report I have tried to give a comprehensive compilation of various books and journal articles and websites which have been read and consulted during the study. The bibliography will also aid in further research in various aspects of training. The bibliography is presented in an alphabetical order, separately for each chapter.

2.7 Chapter scheme

The chapter scheme of the report is as follows:

Chapter I: Introduction

Chapter II: Research Design

Chapter III: Training Needs Assessment

Chapter IV: The Adult Learner

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Chapter V: Training Techniques

Chapter VI: Some Current Trends in Training

Chapter VII: Evaluation of Training

Chapter VIII: Observations and Findings of the Study

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Appendix