INTRODUCTION

One of the Chinese sayings goes like this:
"If you wish to plan for a year, 'sow seeds';
"If you wish to plan for 10 years, 'plant trees;
"If you wish to plan for a life-time, develop men".

Organizations are composed of people and they represent one of the most valuable assets of the organization. Since an organization claims to own capital and physical assets but not its people, this resource is seldom given proper attention. Thus Human Resource (HR) is the bed rock for any organization to be successful.

The aim of any business is to create customers and of course profit from the business by satisfying the customers with their needs and wants. Thus proper Human Resource with efficiency and effectiveness should shoulder together to do the right things and to do things right. People don't work for companies. They work for people says Philip B.Crosby.¹

Managing people is of course a tough job for there are various permutations and combinations of characters among the people. There are many personnel mistakes that are likely to emerge like:

* Hiring wrong person for a job.
* Experiencing high turnover.

Dr.T.R.Seshadri, Management, Tanikellas Publishers, Hydrabad, India, 1995, p.139
People not doing their jobs properly.
* Unfair labor practices, etc.

To avoid all these we need to have a good Human Resource Management (HRM). People who are just in it for money they usually fail says Robert Holmes.²

WHAT IS HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

If we review what managers do, we can find the answer as to what is Human Resource Management (HRM). The basic functions that all managers in general do is five and this is accepted to a greater extent namely, Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Leading and Controlling.

Thus HRM includes conducting job analyses, planning labour needs and recruiting job candidates, selecting, orienting and training the new employees. Managing wage and salary, incentives and benefits, appraising the performance, communicating, training and developing (T & D) building employee commitment, etc. To handle all these the manager should basically know about three important things:

- Equal opportunity and affirmative action.
- Employee health and safety.
- Grievances and labour relations.³

Ibid, p.134

Effective HRM is a skill and it is the responsibility of the HR Manager or personnel to handle the same. Some of the major responsibilities are:

- Protecting the employee's health and physical conditions.
- Placing the right person on the right job.
- Maintaining morale.
- Training.
- Improving the job performance.
- Gaining cooperation etc.

The HR manager carries out three distinct functions:

- Implied authority.
- Functional control.
- Staff function.⁴

HR management is an integral part of every manager's job. Changes are occurring today in HR management and they play a crucial role in organizations, like:

- Work force diversity.
- Technological trends.
- Globalisation and
- Changes in the nature of jobs and work.

The term "human resource" has been the "pet expression" of many an employer, human resource manager and practitioners in India, who make "talk talks" in various professional fora.⁵

Ibid 14

The Hindu speaks on management, Editor Mr. N. Ravi, Parakkat Venus Press, Kasthuri and Sons, Chennai, Nov. 1996, p. 191
Human resources consists of the total knowledge, skills, creative abilities, talent and aptitude of an organization's workforce, as well as the values, attitudes and beliefs of the individuals involved in it. They are the sum total of inherent abilities, acquired knowledge and skills represented by the talents and aptitudes of the employed.

Many employers who are guided by the basics of Douglas McGregor's Theory X assumptions, are yet to accept fully the philosophy of people as "Human Resources". They do not have any "Holistic Approach" to managed people in the organizations. They manage their organizations very well but their people are very poorly led by them.

In the book titled "A passion for excellence: The leadership difference" written by Tom Peters and Nancy Austin, the latter has quoted the people philosophy of Teleflex, a USA 150 million dollar applications engineering company which is as follows:

1. People are people ..... not personnel.

2. People don't dislike work.....help them to understand mutual objectives and they will drive themselves to unbelievable excellence.

3. The best way to really train people is with an experienced mentor.....and on the job.
4. People have ego and developmental needs and they will commit themselves only to the extent that they can see ways of satisfying these needs.

5. People cannot truly be motivated by anyone else—that door is locked from the inside, they should work in an atmosphere that fosters self-motivation—self assessment—and self confidence.

6. People should work in a climate that is challenging, invigorating and fun and the rewards should be related as directly as possible to performance.

7. When people are in an atmosphere of trust, they will put themselves at risk. Only through risk, is there growth—reward—self confidence—leadership.

People differ from one another, and have different traits in them. Though each of these traits may be separately studied, in the final analysis they are all part of one system, making up a whole person. Employees belong to many social systems other than their employer and they play many roles outside the firm. If the whole person can be improved, then benefits will extend beyond the firm into the larger society in which each employee lives.

There are organizations and managers who still consider employees are of a lower order, and hold a belief that "Management by Maintaining
Distance" (MMD) from employees is a safe rule to manage people effectively than through mixing with them.

If "people philosophy" based on humanistic or democratic values are evolved by the employers in the organization, trusting and authentic relationships will develop among people which will result in increased interpersonal competence. This "people philosophy" will work effectively only if there is commitment, openness, realness and willingness of the employers / managers to promote and practice it.

At the organizational level, HR includes all the component resources of all employees from low level to top management level. Investment in HR refers to the ways and means to acquire, maintain and develop the HR to the present and future needs of the organization and to achieve its end results. And this includes from job analysis to research in HRM.

A right choice of policy elements and corresponding action plan is very important to get high return from the Human Resource. HRM is an approach to the management of people and is based on certain principles like:

- Human Resources are the most important assets of an organization.
- The policies and the procedures need to be linked with the corporate objectives.
- Proper corporate culture, values and good organizational climate with good managerial behaviours.
Human Resource is the only resources which can be developed and moulded as per the needs as against other resources like land and machine. It was Likert (1967) who first used the term "Human Asset Accounting" (a term which has been replaced by Human Resource Accounting).

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Human Resource Management refers to the practices and policies you need to carry out the people or personnel aspects of your management job. HRM is a very essential aspect and HRM is very important to all managers. Peter Drucker answers the question "What is Management and what does it do?". By saying that, "It is a multi-purpose a organ that manages a business and managers and manages worker and work".

The words Administration, Management and Organization are not synonymous. Administration is the function in industry concerned with the execution of policy, the co-ordination of finance, production and distribution, the settlement of compass of the organization and the ultimate control of the executive.

Management proper is the function in industry concerned in the execution of policy within the limits set up by the administration and the employments of the organization for the particular objects set before it. Organization is the process of so combining the work which individuals or groups have to perform with the facilities necessary for its execution that the
duties, so performed, provide the best channels for the efficient, systematic, positive and co-ordinate application of the available efforts.

HRM should aim to;

- Improve the performance of the managers.
- Encouragement.
- Participation.
- Sufficient people with requisite skills.
- How to retain the talented people etc.

Today HRM has become the need of the hour. The technologies we import are most often outdated and inefficient as compared to those currently in use in developed countries. HR plays a vital role on production and development of any enterprise without which no development is possible and / or required. Thus proper organization and administration of the HR is very important.

HRM is concerned with the "People" dimension in management. As management began to mature, more emphasis is being placed on the workers. They found that one of the way to influence their productivity is to recognize workers for their work they have done.

This research deals with Decision Making which is one of the unique and challenging talent for any manager. The previous studies deals with topics like leadership, motivation, communication etc., but not with Managerial Decision Making as a separate research topic. The aim of the present study is to analyse about the Managerial Decision Making in Ashok Leyland. There are various research work done at Ashok Leyland but not in this area. This research will be a base for the future researchers in the area of decision making.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gary Desseler's Book HRM (Human Resource Management) which has nearly 18 chapters, analyses various aspects of HRM starting from the "Strategic role of HRM" to "Managing HR in an International Business". How managers have to develop themselves, the importance of career management, training and development of HR, recruitment and placement, establishing plans and policies, employees safety and health are discussed in brief.

Essentials of Management by Harold Koontz and Heinz Weihrich provides a detailed description about the basics of management, how planning and decision making is done, strategic policies and planning premises, organization development, HRM and selection with many guiding principles and case studies.

Essential Managers, Making Decision by Robert Heller briefs with many topics such as analyzing DM, how to reach a decision, implementing decision, etc.

Dr. S.C. Saksena's Business Administration and Management deals with a revised, trimmed and made up-to-date issues with many charts, diagrams, models, pictograms, tables, etc.

Team Decision Making Technique by S. Keith Kelly is a practical guide to successful team outcomes and he has developed various types of team DM and its uniqueness like Brainstorming, Filtering, Nominal Group Technique
(NGT), the Delhi Technique, Consensus Card Method (CCM) Paired Choice Matrix, Criteria Rating Technique.

The Hindu Speaks on Management by the Editor Mr. N. Ravi, 1996 is a nut-shell of the various features and changes in the various field for the past five years from 1991-1996. It deals with management, HRD, finance, manufacturing and marketing.

John C. Maxwell. The 21 laws of leadership follow them and people will follow you. This book talks about the techniques of the leadership styles while making decisions.

Jawadekar W. S in his book Management Information System (MIS) talks about the unique role played by Information System while making decision.

Asking the right question, a book written by Browne M and Keeley S is a useful guide for critical thinking while making decisions.

Jannis I and Mann, I. Decision Making a psychological analysis of conflicts, choice and commitment is a unique contribution for good decisions to be made.

and W. Dennis, in their book Managing the Human Side of the Enterprise, are all unique collections. In this context, mention should also be made of the following works namely Askar, David A., "How to select a business strategy, Andrews, Kenneth P., The concept of strategy, Porters, Michael E., Competitive Strategy.


Further the Journals of Management, Articles on Need for New Management Philosophy and Culture, A Task for Managers and Management Institutions, Articles on Managing Organization Forcosting, The Corporate Strategy, Journals of Behavioural Decision Making, Self-Framing of risky choice, Journals on Human Resource Management, Journals of MIS has also been referred.
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To study the strategic role of Human Resources Management.
- To elucidate the uniqueness and characteristics of decision-making for an effective decision making process.
- To find out how far the managerial decisions affects the growth of the organization.
- To highlight the strengths and weakness of the managers and different approaches applied by them to arrive a right and timely decisions.
- To enlighten the concept of Delegation of Authority and it’s importance in the area of decision making.

Among the organizational activities, it has been observed in general that the area of decision making or a solution to a particular problem depends on the proper and timely decisions. The course of a right or wrong decisions changes not only the activities inside the department and between the departments, but also the whole organization.

Hence, one of the pre-requisite for any organization is good and acceptable decisions (like the Japanese Management, Decision by consensus). This part of the research study enhances the uniqueness in Decision Making, the strategies being applied, the various methods used,
how decision are arrived at etc., by taking Ashok Leyland as a special reference.

One of the important process in decision making is Delegating the Authority which means, the act of entrusting one with the discharge of the duty. The Manager or the Decision Maker after having clearly understood his own functions and duties, delegates it to their subordiantes.

- But what to delegate?
- When to delegate?
- Why to delegate?
- Where to delegate?
- To whom to delegate?

All these should be taken into account before delegating. Delegation, much depends upon whether the organization is centralized or de-centralized. The challenge of success and challenge of know-how is very much important.

DM helps to recognize a problem. It helps to know the opportunity. What should be included and what should be excluded while making a decision is very important to know. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that the proven quality of any manager is that he must be a good decision maker. The best decision making is the team decision for an excellent and productive decisions.

This research work has dealt with "Ashok Leyland Limited" as a special reference. Ashok Leyland (AL), one of the largest manufactures of commercial vehicles and diesel engine in India, was started as Ashok Motor
Limited at Ennore, Madras on 7th September 1948 by Raghunandan Saran to assemble the well-known Austin Cars. It was acquired in 1987 by a Joint Venture of the Hinduja Group and IVECO, heralding a new chapter in the history of AL.

The organisation of AL is managed by a Board of Directors. The Managing Director is the Chief Executive of the company. The corporate office established in 1982, located at Madras, is mainly responsible for policy making and providing overall directions to the company. The marketing division is head quartered at Nandanam, in Chennai and is responsible for all domestic sales of vehicles and engines as well as spares and after sales services. The Regional Offices are located at Madras, Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta and Nagpur.

Today AL is the second largest manufacturer of commercial vehicles and diesel engines in India. But far from resting on its laurels, AL moves into the future and beyond. Backed by the transnational conglomerate, the Hinduja Group and state-of-the-art technology from IVECO, AL is now geared to continue pursuit of its mission, Global Standards - Global Market.

METHODOLOGY

The research is descriptive and analytical. The study is based both on primary and secondary data. The data for this thesis is collected through administering the questionnaire specially designed for the purpose of this study. The respondents are the managers and above them in the organisation, who were interviewed. Since one of the manager's job is to make decision(s),
a four point scale has been fixed. The data are collected through Simple Random Sampling Technique, as it is found to be suitable and time saving.

The source of secondary data are from books, magazines, journals, manuals and websites.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The primary data collected through questionnaire, was further condensed through tabulation to find out the percentages for each category. The secondary data collected were compiled together and presented in a pattern, which will bring out the uniqueness of Decision Making in Ashok Leyland Limited. In order to find the level of significance various tests and analysis were used.

Kruskal-Wallis Test (K-W-Test), Kruskal-Wallis H Test, Chi-Square (Crosstabs), Chi-Square one Sample Test, Factor Analysis and Cluster Analysis were used to find the level of significance.

LIMITATIONS

- Ashok Leyland being a public limited company and managed by the Board of Directors has its own norms and conditions regarding brand image and corporate issues. The comparative study is not possible here, where as in public sector which is owned by government, the same is possible.
Decision making is possible from top management to the lowest level. But due to time frame and vastness of the firm, it is impossible to include all these segments in this research work.

CHAPTERISATION

The study begins with Chapter I, which is an introduction about management, HRM, the role of manager in DM, the strategies being applied while making decisions, the parameters used, the purpose of the study, how unique is the concept of DM in a particular organization, etc.

Chapter II deals with the profile of the company, Ashok Leyland, its evolution, its organisation and structure, etc.

Chapter III focusses exclusively about Human Resource Management (HRM), why Human Resource Management? what is the uniqueness of HRM? how it helps the organization? the role of HR manager, the policies and procedures while managing the HR, how grievances are handled, pay, incentives, man power planning etc.

Chapter IV deals with Decision Making. Its types, models, rationality in Decision Making, decisions under risk forecasting SWOT and gap analysis etc. Why DM is very important is also dealt in brief.

Chapter V covers about Managerial Decisions in Ashok Leyland Limited. The questionnaire and interviews taken will help us to find what type of
decisions that are taken in Ashok Leyland and how it is practically adopted over there. The tables and its interpretations are also included.

Chapter VI deals with what are the practical problems being faced while making a decisions and how it is handled in general.

Chapter VII is the conclusion and suggestion which sums up the major findings of the study and provides recommendations for the same. At the end of the thesis, a few appendices and exhaustive bibliography are provided.