Learning and Development Scenario: An Insightful Study

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Abstract:
Purpose: The primary aim of undertaking the research was to gain the insights on learning and development (L&D) scenario in India and USA.

Design/methodology/approach: The researcher has exclusively used the pertinent secondary data regarding learning/training and development, gathered from the authentic sources viz. published/unpublished statistics, reports of the research agencies, and other relevant studies. The results have been discussed and presented using percentage, frequency distribution, charts, and diagrams.

Findings: The results of the study indicated that organizations have been putting in efforts in reskilling and upskilling of employees due to constant and unprecedented technological advancements such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, digitalization etc. in performing functions and operating the business. As per the report, Indian organizations spend 2 percent on their employees whereas the most advanced countries spend approximately 10 to 15 percent on their employees. In India, there are 42 percent organizations having a decentralized L&D policy while China is the only country having 51 percent organizations which have a centralized policy. 'Leadership & management' is one of the top 3 skills prioritized by the L&D professional in 2020.

Originality and Value: The research conducted is original in nature and the study emphasized on offering the useful insights on learning and development (L&D) scenario enabling to understand the present L&D practices in the organizations.

Keywords: *Learning, Training, Development, Reskilling, Upskilling*

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1. Introduction

As a matter of fact, learning is regarded as a lifelong process and it doesn't stop at one point of time but continues till the last breath of a person. No matter how old a person is, there is actually no age barrier to learn and grow. In fact, learning and development (L&D) broadens the horizons of knowledge of an individual. In the era of digitalization and AI (Artificial Intelligence), the process of learning and development has become so easy that one can find it really convenient and economical. Speaking further, systematically acquisition of knowledge and enhancement in skills are the results of grievous learning and development efforts.

Presently, learning organizations put more stress on L&D practices to facilitate their employees' in acquiring competitive advantages and thereby sustainability of such organizations is assured. Interestingly, due to proliferation of digital culture, organizations have been promoting MOOC (Massive Online Open Courses) offered on EdX, Coursera, Udemy, NPTEL, and so on. There are organizations that have launched their own learning platforms.

2. Conceptual Foundation

According to (Banureka, Bharghavi, Balaji, & Baskar, 2021), Leaning and Development (L&D) programs are a fundamental tool of an organization and occupy the significant place in the organization for employees' growth as well as development of the organization. It is defined as the process of increasing skills, competencies and knowledge of human resources in order to make their performance better. L&D is concerned with changing attitude and enhancing the in-depth knowledge so as to accomplish one's development goals. There is a significant different between training and learning and hence they cannot be used interchangeably. Actually, training is a tool through which learning takes place. (Alabdali, 2020) described learning as the source of development and training as part of development. Talking about the difference, training is an act of teaching while learning is concerned with acquisition of knowledge.

3. Review of Literature

(Seth, 1980) long back suggested to have an Action Research Approach in terms of Research-Diffusion-Adoption-Training Model in order to wipe out the inconsistencies between management training theory and practices especially in Indian Context. (Biswas, 1998) found that job involvement and training transfer climate influence the perceived job utility while organizational commitment and career utility have the impact on learning effort. (Dwevidi & Ladiwal, 2011) discussed the unique training and development practices of famous organizations namely IBM, Aditya Birla Group, Accenture, Syndicate Bank, Infosys etc. It was concluded that the application of systematic approach to T&D is more relevant for achieving greater organizational effectiveness. (Srimannarayana, 2011) reported that while measuring T&D, impact measures viz. improvement in performance, learning during training, cost and benefits analysis of T&D programmes are significant. (Salas, Tannenbaum, Kraiger, & Smith-Jentsch, 2012) asserted that every year billions of amounts are spent on training by the organizations in USA. (Vijayasamundeeswari, 2013) stated that in the beginning of the 20th century, training and development emerged as a profession which in turn, gave a birth to the emergence of training associations and societies. During the period of World War II, the American Society for Training and Development (now known as The Association for Talent Development) came into existence. It was concluded that the organization is required to be the learning organization so as to be effective in training and development process. (Rani & Garg, 2014) affirmed that there needs to be a coherent corporate culture supporting an integrated and proactive training and development strategy. (Sultana, Naganandini Devi, & Navyateja, 2014) opined that training is viewed as a prioritized HR agenda in the present time. In most of the Indian Organizations, training is perceived as a strategic function and hence accordingly the resources are being allocated for it. Furthermore, it was stated that the ASTD had also recognized the noteworthy efforts of India based organizations for the excellence in training and development. The researchers discussed about the Gyanodaya initiatives taken by Aditya Birla Group facilitating competence building and leadership building and also offering learning opportunities. (Vnouckova, 2013) explained three approaches to L&D adopted by organizations of Czech Republic viz. educating employees according their own rules and regulations, not supporting their education, and identifying those employees who have a zeal to learn and grow and constantly developing them. (Sung & Choi, 2014) discussed in their findings that the amount spent on training estimates interpersonal and organizational learning practices consequently rise in innovative performance. Surprisingly, there was a negative impact on innovative performance and no significant impact was found on learning practices when employees are developed by providing financial support outside the organization. (Seidle, Perry, & Fernandez, 2016) concluded that leader's performance is improved by the combination of different development methods viz. classroom instruction, feedback, coaching and experiential learning. (Cole, 2017) opined that in most of the organizations, training still influences the learning and development practices at workplace. (Maheshwari, 2017) mentioned that globally fortune 500 corporates have their own learning centres and some of them have dedicated training universities aiming at training the people and inspiring them to join the organization in future. The findings of her research indicated that training is imparted according to the requirement and majority of the respondents thought that technical training is much needed to

excel in their career. (Chadha, 2018) stated that most of the eminent banks in India carry out need assessment before any training program. (Alabdali, 2020) described learning as the source of development and training as part of development. (Banureka, Bharghavi, Balaji, & Baskar, 2021) reported in their research that majority of employees were of a view that before L&D, knowledge about job was challenging and L&D has resulted into rise in practical knowledge and understanding of a job. Similarly, most of them felt satisfied due to L&D.

4. Statement of Research Problem
Today, when the most of the countries of the world are heading towards becoming a knowledge economy, it becomes essential for an organization to thrive on a path of becoming a learning organization. A learning organization is basically engaged in creation, acquisition, retention, sharing and utilization of knowledge. At the same, it is also imperative on the part of employees to learn and develop. Another fact is that the unprecedented advancements have created a buzz in the corporate world which has enticed the people to learn about digitalization, artificial intelligence, data science, machine learning, and so on. In today's time, sustainability of an organization is determined on the basis of its readiness to cope up with this transformation. Therefore, formulating a well-structured learning and development strategy and focusing on upskilling and reskilling is a need of an hour for every organization. The present scenario has prompted a researcher to conduct the study in the similar line and gather and report the insightful information on learning and development.

5. Scope and Coverage of Research
The present research covers the learning and development practices of India and USA only. Moreover, the researcher has provided the insights on L&D based on available statistics in the published reports. In addition to this, L&D practices of few selected organizations have been discussed.

6. Research Objectives
◆To study and offer the insights on learning and development scenario in India and USA.
◆To study learning and development practices of selected organizations.

7. Method and Material
The present study is descriptive in nature and the researcher has exclusively used the pertinent secondary data regarding learning/training and development. These data were gathered from the published statistics, reports of relevant studies and research agencies such as Pearson & Edge Research, Infographic Employer Research, Training Industry Magazine - 2019, LinkedIn Learning – 2020, Training Industry – 2017, Statista – 2023, LinkedIn Learning Workplace Learning Report – 2021, Report of Grant Thornton and 24X7 Learning. The results have been discussed and presented in form of chart, diagram and table.

8. Results and Discussion
LinkedIn Working Report 2023 stated that 83 percent of organizations would prefer to create a people centric culture in order to do so 81 percent of L&D departments are providing the help. 41 percent of L&D professionals predict that their spending would increase while 8 percent expect the decrease in budget in 2023. Furthermore, there are 44 percent of L&D professionals spending more time with chief human resource officers while 50 percent professionals work closely with executive leaders. In fact, the number has significantly been increasing over the period of time. 31 percent of employees belonging to age group of 18-34 years are more inclined towards the opportunities to learn and develop new skills. As reported by Skilling Today in 2020, 77 percent of surveyed organizations of India offered L&D programmes to reskill and upskill their employees.

As per one of the reports, the spending of organizations of the USA on L&D has been rising over 10 percent Year-Over-Year. While, the spending of Indian organizations on L&D is not more than US$15

Billion per year. As per projected statistics, an exponential growth is expected in L&D market in India nearly US$100 Billion by 2030. Besides, Indian organizations spend 2 percent on their employees whereas the most advanced countries spend approximately 10 to 15 percent on their employees. As mentioned by Freifeld (2018), on training and development, the spending of organizations located in the USA is an average 11 percent of their budget. According to the survey conducted by the CompTIA 2020, learning and development is said to be the mostly strategic priority opined by the 35 percent of senior HR staffs. According to Infographic Employer Research, India Stat, 61 percent of employers are of opinion that internal L&D programmes are more effective while 63 percent believe that external L&D programmes are more effective.

As per the global survey conducted by Pearson & Edge Research, in India, there are 42 percent organizations having a decentralized L&D policy while China is the only country having 51 percent organizations which have a centralized policy. According to LinkedIn Learning Workplace Learning Report 2021, there were 64 percent of L&D Professionals expecting to increase their budget in 2021.

Government of India has also put in great efforts by offering skill development programmes such as Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), UDAAN, Polytechnic Schemes, Standard Training Assessment and Rewards Scheme, Vocalization of Education. However, as per the report of National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, there were 4.7 percent of Indian Employees who had taken a formal skill training which was comparatively lower than the advanced countries. 1.97 million people were trained in the first phase of Pradhan Matri Kaushal Vikas Yojana
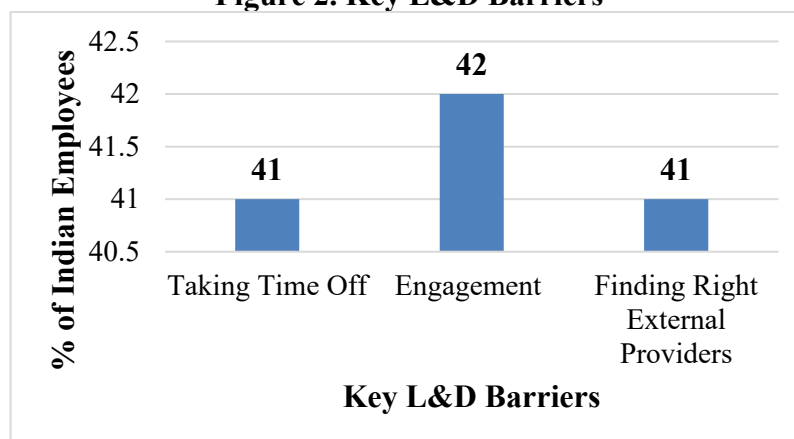
Figure 1. Learning & Development Practices by Indian Employers
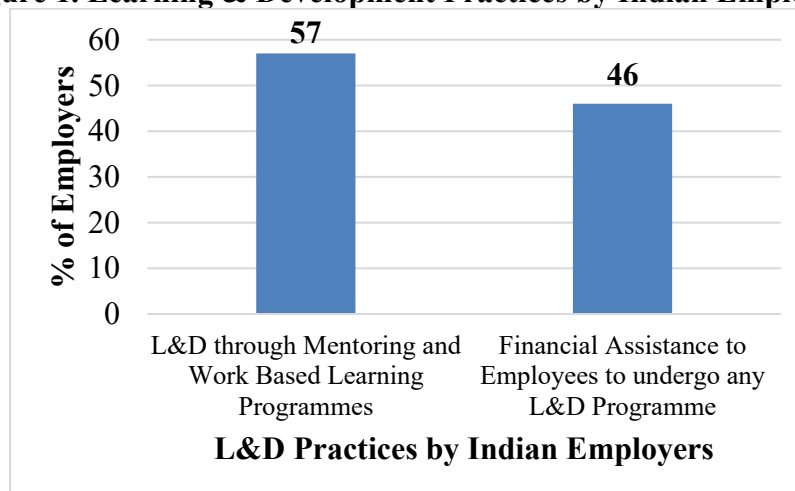
(Source: Global survey conducted by Pearson & Edge Research, Infographic Employer Research, India Stat)

As shown in the above figure, 57 percent of Indian Employers would prefer L&D through mentoring and work-based learning programmes whereas 46 percent would offer financial assistance to their employees to under to any L&D programme. However, there are 41 percent of employees in India who take advantage of financial assistance offered from L&D budget.
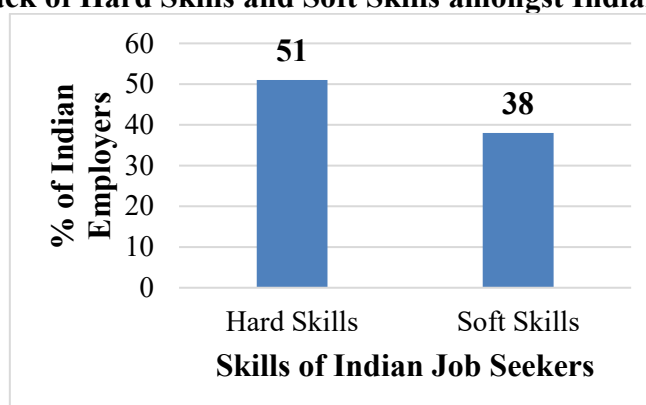
Figure 2. Key L&D Barriers

(Source: Global survey conducted by Pearson & Edge Research, Infographic Employer Research, India Stat)

As indicated in the above figure, according to 41 percent of Indian employees, taking time off is one of the key L&D barriers while for 42 percent of employees, engagement is the key obstacle. Whereas, 41 percent believe that finding right external providers is the major L&D barrier.
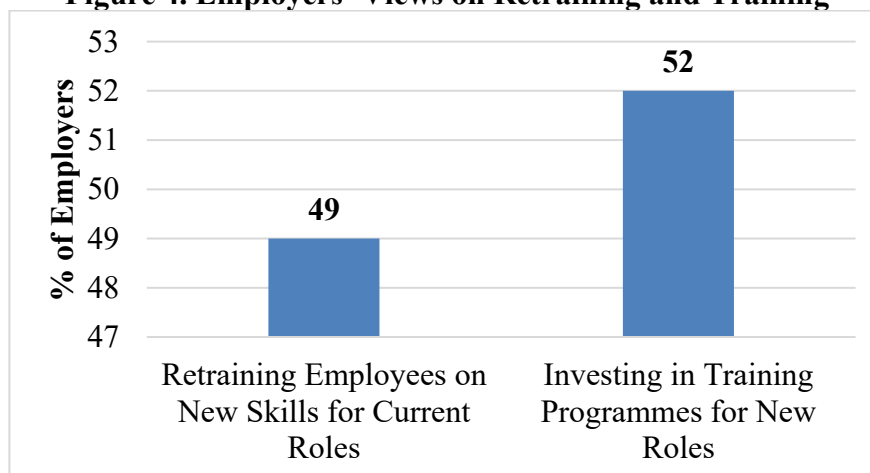
Figure 3. Lack of Hard Skills and Soft Skills amongst Indian Job Seekers

(Source: Global survey conducted by Pearson & Edge Research, Infographic Employer Research, India Stat)

The above figure depicts that at the time of hiring; 51 percent of Indian employers believe that the job seekers do not have the required hard skills while 38 percent think that they don't have the required soft skills.

Figure 4. Employers' Views on Retraining and Training

(Source: Global survey conducted by Pearson & Edge Research, Infographic Employer Research, India Stat)

As shown in the above figure, 49 percent of Indian employers would like to retrain their employees on new skills for performing the present roles while 52 percent would prefer to invest in training programmes for preparing them for new roles.

Figure 5. Learning/Training Methods Utilized by USA based Companies
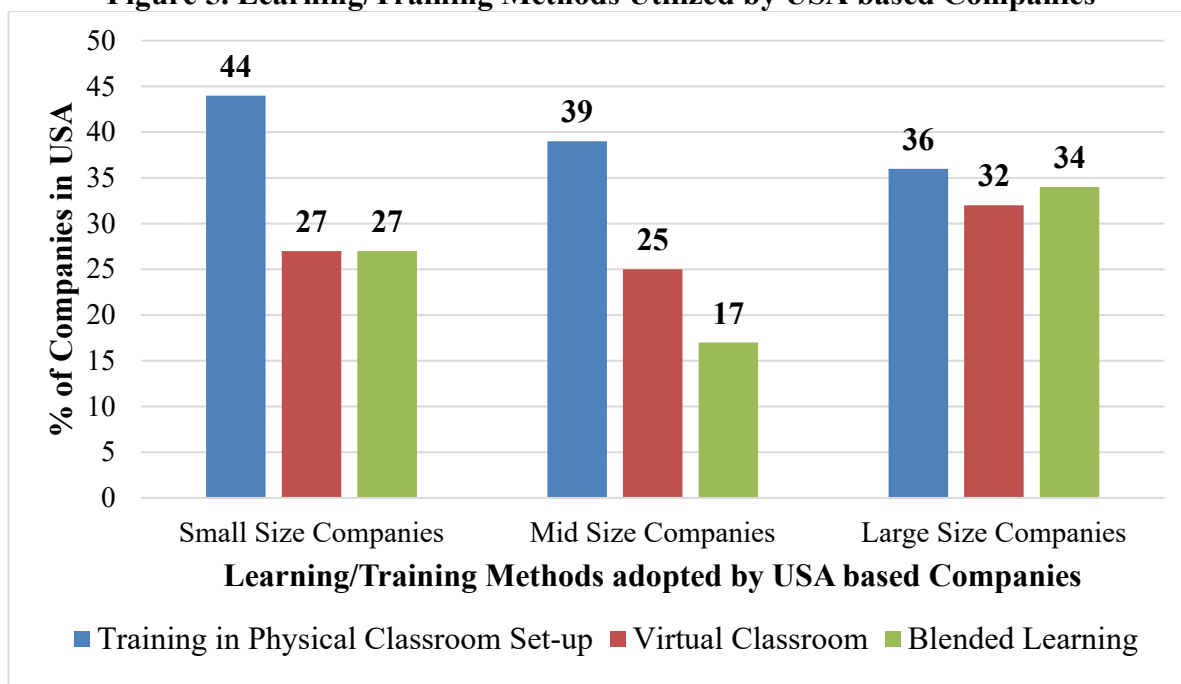
(Source: Training Industry Magazine, 2019)

As cited in Training Industry Magazine, 2019, there are 44 percent of small size companies in the USA which prefer classroom learning led by the instructor while virtual learning and blended learning methods are preferred by 27 percent of USA based organizations. Furthermore, the percent of mid-size USA based companied adopting training in physical classroom set-up, virtual classroom, and blended learning are 39, 25, and 17 respectively. It also becomes clear from the above given figure that there are 36 percent of large companies in the USA which adopt classroom set-up for training while blended learning method is utilized by 34 percent of large companies. Besides, there are 32 percent of companies in the USA using virtual learning method to train their employees.
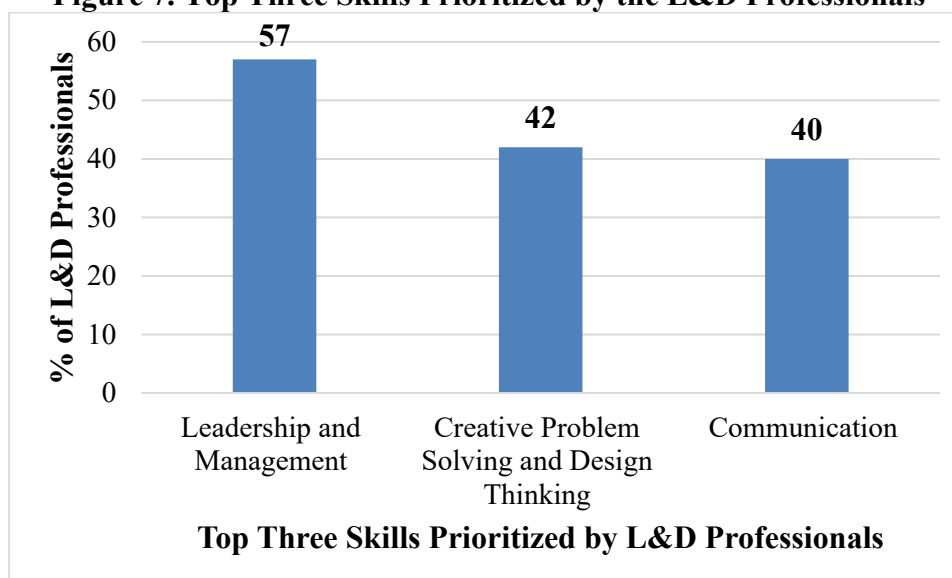
Figure 6. Mobile based Learning Method Utilized by the USA Based Companies
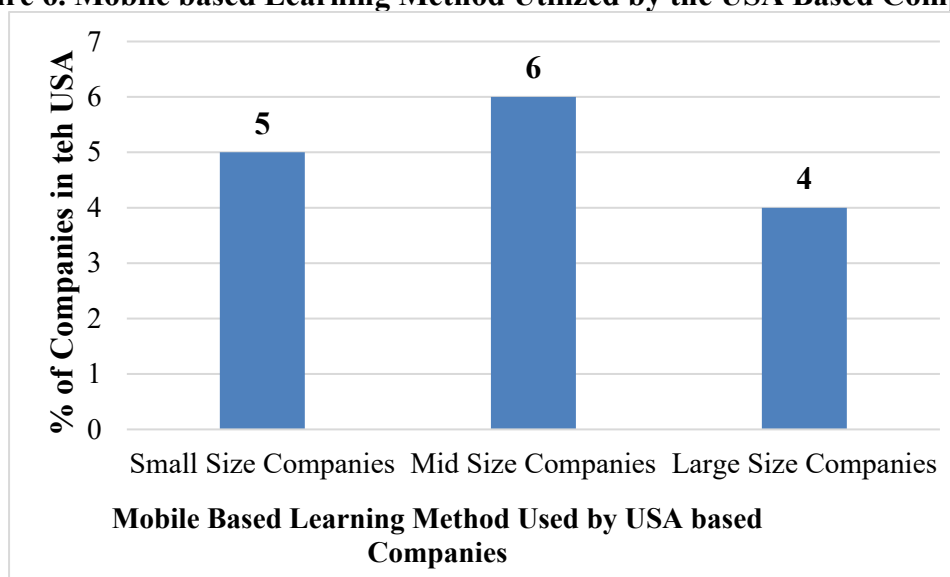
(Source: Training Industry Magazine, 2019)

The above given bar chart describes that the percent of small, mid and large size companies in the USA using mobile based learning method are 5, 6, and 4 respectively.

Figure 7. Top Three Skills Prioritized by the L&D Professionals


(Source: LinkedIn Learning, 2020)

As presented in the above chart, in 2020, 'leadership & management' is one of the top three skills training prioritized by 57 percent L&D professional while 'creative problem solving & design thinking' and 'communication' prioritized by 42 percent and 40 percent of L&D professionals respectively.

Figure 8. Lowest Skills Identified by the L&D Professionals
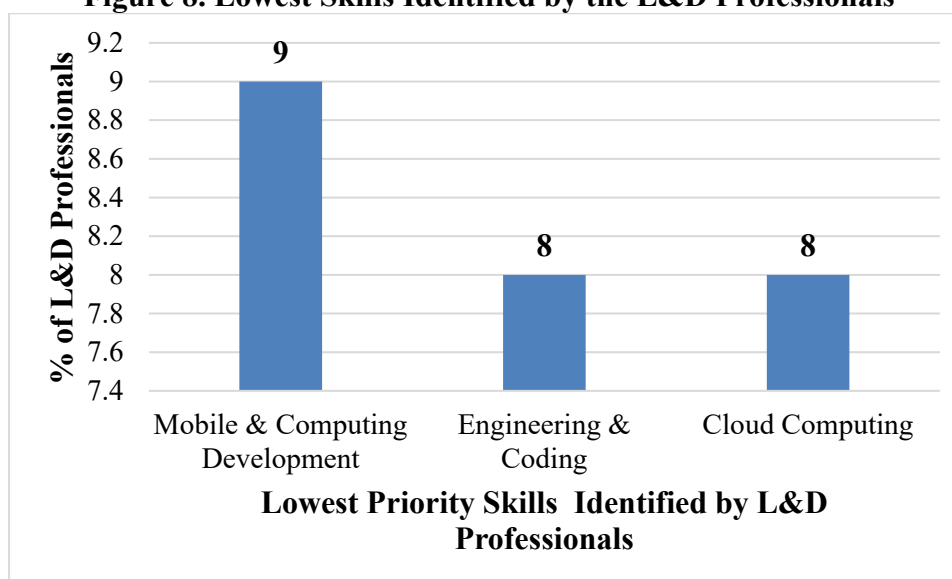
(Source: LinkedIn Learning, 2020)

The above given chart reveals that the lowest priority skills are cloud Computing and Engineering & Coding.

Figure 9. Effective Learning/Training Method in 2016
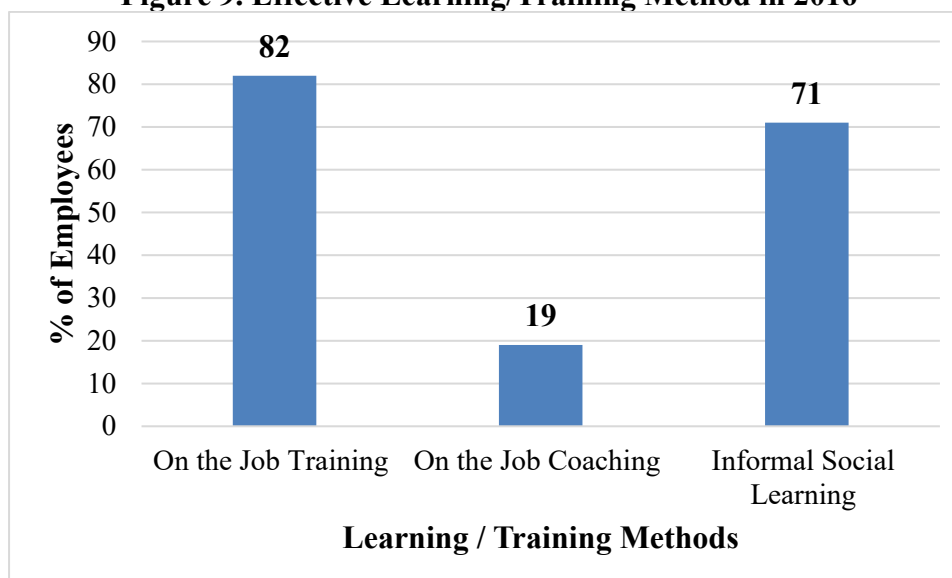
(Source: Training Industry, 2017)

As revealed above, the portions of employees thinking 'on the job training, 'on the job coaching' and 'informal social learning' as effective learning/training methods were 82 percent, 19 percent, and 71 percent respectively in 2016.

Table 1. Worldwide Average Spending on Workplace Training Per Employee

Year	Average Spending on Workplace Training Per Employee (In US$)	Increase / Decrease Over Period of Time (%)
2008	1068	-
2009	1081	1.20
2010	1228	11.97
2011	1182	-3.89
2012	1195	1.09
2013	1208	1.08
2014	1229	1.71
2015	1252	1.84
2016	1273	1.65
2017	1296	1.77
2018	1299	0.23
2019	1308	0.69
2020	1267	-3.24
2021	1280	1.02
Source: Statista 2023 https://www.statista.com/statistics/738519/workplace-training-spending-per-employee/		

The above table shows the average spending on workplace training per employee across the world from 2008 to 2021. It becomes clear that the average spending on training per employee declined by 3.89 percent and 3.24 percent in 2011 and 2020 respectively (as compared to the respective previous year). The highest average spending was reported in 2019 i.e., US$1308.

Figure 10. Learners/Trainees/Employees spending time to learn, who were helped by L&D professionals perform different functions internally
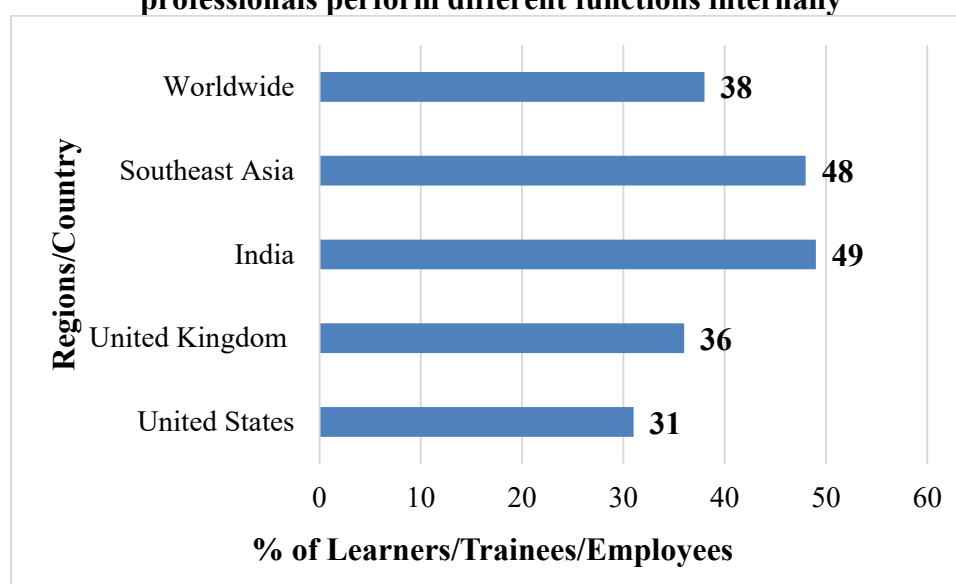
(Source: LinkedIn Learning Workplace Learning Report, 2021)

As per the statistics published in LinkedIn Learning Workplace Report 2021, in India there were 49 percent of learners who were trained internally through skill building and internal mobility programs while across the globe, there were 38 percent learners spending time to learn and were assisted by L&D professional internally.

Learning and Development Practices of Few Selected Organizations

- As the per the recent announcement made by Amazon, 1,00,000 employees are expected to be retrained by 2025.
- To promote Continuing Professional Education, Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd has come out with the concept of a Study Circle at Bengaluru
- In order to foster the leadership, Tata group has initiated capacity and leadership building programs which culminate 'achieving your leadership potential', 'senior leadership development program', 'mycoach' and 'emerging leadership program'.
- In 2012, an inhouse training academy was started by Maruti Suzuki India Ltd. In addition to this, with the aim of offering L&D to staffs, it made a tie up with G-Cub which is an e-learning platform.
- Aditya Birla group has been making sincere efforts in offering learning and development opportunities through functional development program, coaching and mentoring, Gyanodaya (a learning centre), continuing education policy, leadership development program, outreach program, my development plan and so on.
- Cognizant Technology Solutions has an inhouse training centre namely The Cognizant Academy which offers and conducts programs such as lifecycle intervention series (helping a person to transit from one career to another), completely cognizant (dealing with inclusion and diversity program), women empowered program (enabling women to assume and handle managerial and leadership role), and cognizant career architecture (helping one excel his/her career).
- With the purpose of developing leadership among the employees, Infosys Culture workshops are conducted by Infosys where they get to imbibe core values and learn about purpose and process. Besides, job rotation and development assignments are also the L&D practices of it.

9. Suggestions/Recommendations

- A learning culture in the organization facilitates learning and development for which an organization should take interest in the progress of organizational members and adopt best learning and development practices.
- While preparing L&D plan, it is necessary to consider ever changing business environment, development goals of people, and deficiencies (gap) in skills.
- Identify the employees who have a zeal and potential to learn and grow.
- Talent development departments should emphasize on upskilling and reskilling.
- In order to happen fruitful learning, a combination of appropriate training and development methods should be adopted.
- To assure the effectiveness of learning and development, people should participate wholeheartedly and apply the knowledge and skills acquired.
- Collaborating with e-learning providers can also prove to be the effective practice.
- Blended L&D programs should be devised to suit the requirement at work place.
- For the success of L&D programs, a dedicated and enthusiastic L&D team should be there.
- Inviting L&D professionals is also one the best practice.
- There should be a sizable amount of budget sanctioned for L&D.
- Organizations should subscribe quality journals and periodicals relating to management, technology, economics, finance, or any other relevant area and encourage employees to read the same.
- Moreover, L&D programs should be on capacity building, leadership development, career advancement. These programs should be the perfect blend of both soft skills and hard skills. For which management may go for inhouse T&D and/or sponsor such programs.
- If possible, management should have a well-equipped inhouse library promoting the knowledge acquisition. In addition to this, the access of e-library or digital depositories of research articles, and papers will be beneficial to the employees.
- People of an organization should be encouraged to enroll themselves for online courses offered on different e-learning platforms such as EdX, Udemy, NTPEL, SWAYAM, Coursera etc.

10. Limitations of Research and Scope for Future Research

The present research study has been undertaken by taking only secondary data. Besides, the study offers merely the insights on L&D Scenario in India and USA along with L&D practices of few selected organizations and it lacks the information on L&D industry and market. In future, further research on the similar topic including primary data can be conducted. Additionally, worldwide L&D Scenario or that of in the advanced countries can also be studied. Industry specific L&D practices can also be taken as a research study.

11. Conclusion

To sustain in the everchanging business environment and improve organizational effectiveness, L&D is playing a vital role. Today, the concentration of organizations is not limited to only preparing their people for present job requirement, but it is more of making them ready for future roles and challenges. L&D practices should be employees' centric and benefitting to organizational too and more technology should be infused in it.

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