
UNIT - 6 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Structure

- 6.0 Learning Outcome
- 6.1 Introduction
 - 6.1.1 Requirements of Performance Appraisal
 - 6.1.2 Objectives of Performance Appraisal
 - 6.1.3 Approaches of Performance Appraisal
 - 6.1.4 Need for Performance Appraisal
 - 6.1.5 New Imperatives
- 6.2 Related Ideas
 - 6.2.1 Performance Measurement
 - 6.2.2 Performance Management
- 6.3 Methods of Performance Appraisal
 - 6.3.1 Traditional Methods
 - 6.3.2 Modern Methods
- 6.4 Performance Appraisal of Public Services in India
- 6.5 Proposed Improvements
- 6.6 Conclusion
- 6.7 Key Concepts
- 6.8 References and Further Reading
- 6.9 Activities

6.0 LEARNING OUTCOME

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the meaning, need and significance of performance appraisal;
- Define methods of performance appraisal;

- Explain related ideas of performance appraisal; and
- Analyse performance appraisal of public services in India.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisal entails assessment of an employee's performance on the job. It involves measuring quantitatively and qualitatively, an employee's past and present performance, with reference to his specified role and the potential he imparts to an organisation. What is important is the human factor under judgment. Criteria for adjudging performance have to be carefully devised and employed prudently to ensure a just assessment of employee performance. Needless to assert, there is a difference between checking a machine for repairs and assessing human capacity for work. Performance appraisal is recognised as an important aspect of human resource management.

Scholars use different terminologies to denote it. Meggison (1967) prefers to use the term "employee appraisal" while Cunning (1972) uses the term, "staff assessment". Pertinent questions put in the aforesaid context are: Can performance parameters be objectively laid down or specifically delineated and measured? Can performance be limited to the strict construct of job design? To what extent do workers redefine their roles as per subjective role preferences, imparting their own unique understanding to it the sense of emphasising certain aspects and deemphasising certain others?; To what extent are jobs 'mean' or 'end' with respect to purposive behaviour in an organisational situation?

Does role constitute '*fact*' to the exclusion of *value*? How can value be articulated and assessed for better study of organisational behaviour? To what extent do workers impart 'value' to 'fact'? It is an accepted fact of organisational life that workers do impart personal values to job performance as per their perception of issues. Also, is value imparted by an employee to an organisation measurable? *Fact* and *value* are inextricable in real life situations (purposive behaviour). In the same vein, can 'behaviour' be catalogued along specifically crafted indices? Is it at all possible to have 'scientific' performance appraisal?

Aforesaid questions are some of the challenges for human resource management today. Ideally, performance should be appraised by indices. All aspects of a job should be articulated clearly, as; inter- personal relations punctuality, quality of work etc should be used to allot marks or grade with a view to measuring them. A one shot statement may not make for objective performance appraisal though, disquietingly, forms organisational practice at lower levels in many government organisations.

6.1.1 Requirements of Performance Appraisal

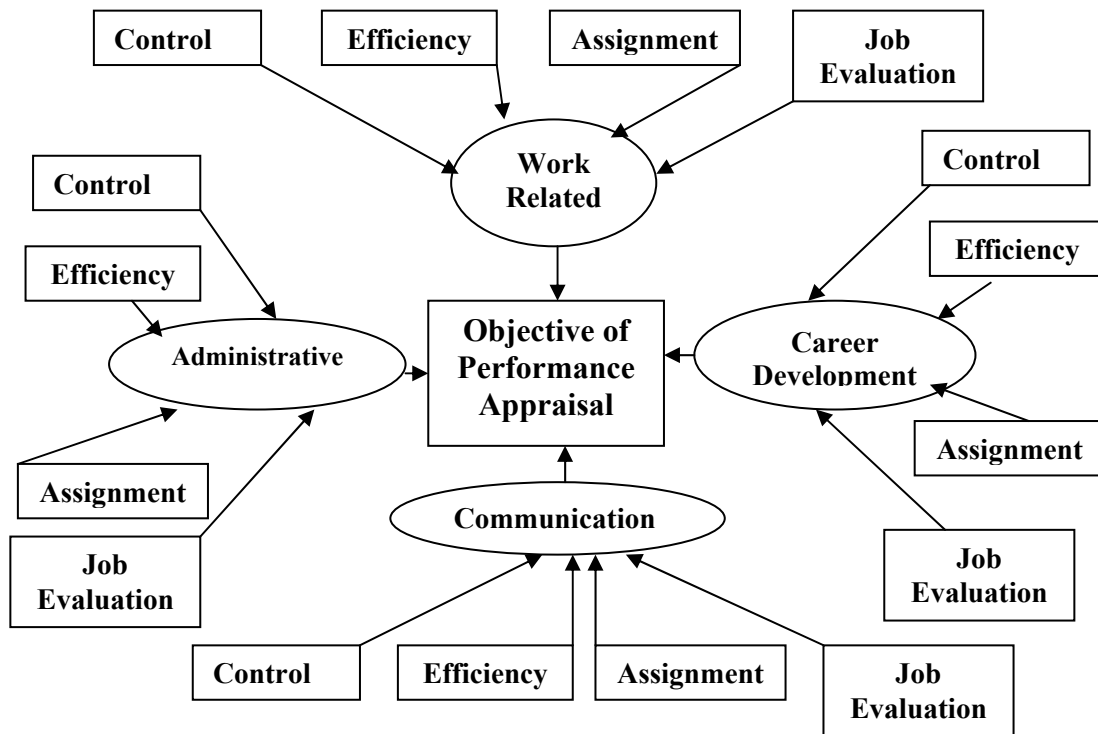
Requirements of performance appraisal could be specifically stated thus:

1. Employees should be apprised of expected standards and level of performance articulated specifically, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in terms of goals, targets, behaviour, etc., expected at their particular levels. This helps them match personal contributions to expected output;
2. Personal equation of trust and compatibility is important for good informal interface between the employer and the employee. There should also be broad agreement over criteria to be adopted for appraisal;
3. Employees should be encouraged to express themselves freely about performance reports;
4. The organisation should ensure that the appraisal system is job-related, performance-based, uniform, consistent, fair, just and equitable and that appraisers are honest, rational and objective in their approach and judgment and have the desirable behavioural orientation for ethical judgment.
5. Supervisors responsible for performance appraisal should be well trained in the *art* and *science* of performance appraisal to ensure *uniformity*, *consistency* and *reliability* of the process. Success of the evaluation ultimately depends on the evaluator and not on any system however perfect a support it may provide;
6. Performance appraisal reports should be examined meticulously, before any action, positive or negative, is proposed to be initiated;
7. To promote consistency and uniformity regarding performance standards, line and staff co-ordination is vital;
8. There should be provision for appeals against appraisals to ensure confidence of the employees and their associations and unions; and
9. Performance appraisal is a continuous activity which also evolves over time. Continuous study and review are therefore a must.
10. If an appraisal system is to achieve objectives academically delineated 'ideal,' the content should include both *work-related* and *trait-related* components. It should highlight significant achievements or any special traits exhibited at work with due emphasis on *ethical behaviour*; *spirit of humanism* and *enquiry*, *demonstrated learning capability* and *enthusiasm* for work shown by the employee. There should be an equal emphasis on the *process* of performance appraisal. Procedural justice is a recognised factor in job satisfaction at the work place. The process should stimulate two way communication of appraisal content between superiors and subordinates;

emphasise on institution of feedback and follow-up action, ensure that appraisal results are taken into account in administrative decision-making relating to placements, career planning and development and finally, appraisal systems should be evaluated from time to time to ensure desired stipulations (both theoretical and practical) are duly properly followed in practice every time.

6.1.2 Objectives of Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal serves the three- fold purpose of *monitoring, evaluation, and control*. It is an imperative exercise to achieve the many objectives of personnel administration. Performance appraisal is more than mere work assessment. It is a management development activity, and is understood as a process, which facilitates development of an organisational climate of mutuality, openness and collaboration towards achievement of individual as well as organisational goals. To quote Heigel (1973), “Performance appraisal is the process of evaluating the performance and qualifications of the employees in terms of the requirements of the job for which he is employed; for purposes of administration; including placement, selection for promotion, providing financial rewards and other actions which require differential treatment among the members of a group as distinguished from actions affecting all members equally.” The primary purpose of performance appraisal is to help each man handle his current job better. (Rowland, 1970). It is the principal medium through which human talent in organisations is most effectively utilised. Performance appraisal’s multifarious objectives need to be clearly classified under the following heads:



(a) Work -related objectives:

- (i) Provision of control over work;
- (ii) Improvement of work efficiency;
- (iii) Assignment of work scientifically, as per specialisations and expressed proclivity of personnel and planning further organisational expansion and diversification as per internal manpower planning; and
- (iv) Job evaluation for compensation administration.

(b) Career development objectives:

- (i) Identifying strong and weak points of personnel and aiding remedial measures for perceived weaknesses through need based training;
- (ii) Encouraging, motivating, controlling, organisational behaviour, identifying training and development needs, and rewarding, correcting or punishing employees;
- (iii) Determining career potential of an employee with respect to his area of specialisation and aptitude and chart future course accordingly.
- (iv) Planning performance development activities for total improved organisational performance; and

- (c) Communication objectives:
- (i) Provide timely feedback on performance, and facilitate informal communication
 - (ii) Clearly establish goals in terms of what is expected of a staff member, possible job enrichment for the future; mutual setting of goals for better interaction through hierarchic tiers;
 - (iii) Provide counseling and job satisfaction, through open and free discussion regarding performance; and
 - (iv) Aiding self-assessment of employees in terms of where they stand in the organisation, by comparing expected and actual performance.
- (d) Administrative objectives:
- (i) Serve as a basis for promotions, rewards and penalties
 - (ii) Serve as a basis for incentive administration. Performance is not a *unidirectional* but a two way *interactional* process, whereby organisational equilibrium is secured by the management balancing *inducements* and *contribution on the part of employees*. Offering an economic analogy, Barnard has stated that 'equilibrium' as attained at a level where negative (contributions through effort put in organisational work) and positive balance (inducements received) with respect to an individual employees equalises. Organisation has to strategise effectively to 'doctor' such balance. To that end, organisation has to reinforce positive behaviour on the part of employees by way of rewards, welfare measures and employee benefit schemes to secure sustained and willing cooperation towards organisational purpose and restore internal equilibrium in case of any divergence;
 - (iii) Serve as a basis for transfer and placement policy with regard to suitability of each employee as discovered through the performance appraisal; and
 - (iv) Serve as a basis for termination in case of imminent staff reduction due to cost considerations.

Key elements of performance appraisal could be summarised as follows:

- Linking individual goals with organisational goals;
- Regular review of job descriptions to keep jobs in tune with changing requirements;
- Organisational Development (OD)

- Performance development plan;
- Continuous monitoring and review
- Establishing causal link between performance and reward;

6.1.3. Approaches of Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal has been significant activity since ancient times. Earlier, performance appraisal was perceived primarily in the negative sense of punishing employees and was restricted to formal remarks used for promotions. Today, performance appraisal is viewed as a positive management development tool intended to help employees develop to their full potential. The trend has changed significantly so much so that almost a paradigm shift is discernable. The main purpose of performance appraisal, as per modern understanding of the concept, is to promote individual excellence in order that employees function better as a collectivity and elevate the general level of organisational performance, while in the process re-energising them and manifesting and rediscovering their latent potentials as partners in collective endeavour. Establishment of conducive climate of mutual trust between the two 'opposing poles' of organisational effort, employees and employer, is absolutely imperative for the efficacy of the process.

There are both formal and informal aspects to the process of performance appraisal in the sense that formal observations and mutual discussions are involved in developing parameters through positive deployment of social capital and de-emphasis of hierarchy. The main purpose is to develop and refine human capital with more emphasis on *intent* and less on *process*.

6.1.4 Need for Performance Appraisal

Need for performance appraisal arises out of sub-optimal performance evidenced, particularly among government employees. The Supreme Court has recently upheld the right of the government to deny two year's extension in service to a civil judge in Orissa on grounds of 'poor performance'. Masses are fed up with the attitude and the work culture of the government and "if things don't improve the public might take the law into its own hands or there could be a mass movement of civil disobedience". (Malhotra, 2000). Even the minister of state for labour, Government of India, publicly alleged that forty to forty five per cent of central government employees are virtual 'non-performers'. There is imminent need for a reliable system of performance appraisal either to weed out under performing and erring officials or improve their work orientation, both work and trait related. (Munni Lal, 2005)

Motivating employees to involve their heart and soul in work is absolutely essential for securing quality output. In government, though the skeleton of performance appraisal system oriented to said end is available, actual practice remains largely farther from the objective. There are prescribed criteria but application differs considerably between departments and superiors. Target articulation and the process of pursuing achievements are often left to the officials for detailing. (Ramaswamy, 2000)

To motivate employees to put in their best effort, performance appraisal system has to be non-discriminatory and objective to the extent possible. Targets and goals to be achieved should not be left to officials for subjective articulation. Instead, they have to be related to the actual work content and all quantitative and qualitative aspects and measurements thereof should be included and worked out in consultation with workers prior to the commencement of the schedule for the year.

6.1.5 New Imperatives

There is the impact of the New Public Management paradigm to administrative theory and practice on performance appraisal. In the entrepreneurial era, the emphasis is on end-orientation, client-orientation, goal-orientation, innovation and customer satisfaction. There is a growing body of evidence suggesting a shift from 'government' to 'governance', in that the emphasis is on the relevance of multi-agency working, public-private partnerships and policy networks. The shift from 'government' to 'governance' referred above, raises new challenges both for democracy as a macro concern and effectiveness and efficiency (govern ability) of individual enterprises (at different levels along the macro-micro scale). The public sector primarily refers to 'the state' (that is, the national, local government). It also includes a large variety of 'other organisations' (Article 12 of the Indian constitution, for example, the health care sector, schools, housing corporations and public utilities), which, although private or non government, perform work of a 'public nature' or are involved in public tasks in varying degrees. The organisational and managerial problems faced by the public sector are a matter of concern in the political arena. The general complaint is that effectiveness, and responsiveness are lacking. The concern is how can public tasks be managed more effectively and efficiently? Since HR is strategically most important in securing organisational effectiveness, these issues are at the heart of the new public management. Civil servants have been accused of lackadaisical performance and evasion of accountability. In the new paradigm, there is an emphasis on 'means' adopted in pursuance of 'ends' in that there is emphasis on ethics in strategy.

New management orientation is encapsulated in the following chief paradigms:

- There is increasing emphasis on the economic dimension; better provision of choice, minimising 'rent seeking' in government operations, measuring by EVA or *economic value added* in that higher EVA means a better level of resource unitisation, assessing training, selection procedures by public choice paradigm, employing decentralised decision making techniques. Result based management (RBM) is the latest paradigm. Instead of result measurement and management by objectives (MBO), emphasis is placed on quality and flexible work processes for achieving desired quality of output. Comparison across jobs or units allows less for comparable standards
- There is encouraging inventiveness in work culture; a realisation that success is a *journey not a destination* and the realisation that "*there is no failure only feedback*" in performance appraisal;

- There is increase in scope of public management. There are new techniques being employed. *Contrastive analysis* involves contrasting similarities and differences between one situation and another to find “what difference makes the difference” *Benchmarking* is the approach of continuously measuring products, services and practices against standards set by competitors or leaders in the field;
- There is attention to detail to maximise efficiency. Method study is involved in performance measurement; and

6.2 RELATED IDEAS

Some of the significant ideas, which are related to performance appraisal, need to be understood for better appreciation of it as a tool for achieving desired organisational effectiveness. These are:

6.2.1. Performance Measurement

Performance measurement is based on the belief that performance can be measured by objective indices. Stress is not so much on ‘behaviour’ and ‘activities’ as ‘ends’ of behaviour and activities. Behaviour or activities are seen rather as ‘mean’ to the important ‘end;’ *results*. Emphasis is on *tangible* value- added measured in terms of tangible contribution to the organisation that can be expressed in numbers. This is known as performance measurement. The chief factor in performance measurement is development of objective measures for quantifying performance.

Performance measurement is necessary to enforce accountability to results. In government, accountability means the responsibility of a civil servant or unit for achieving a mission and the functions to support that mission. They have to be accountable to the tax payer for prudence in expenditure. In other words the civil servants are to be responsible for their results, not just for their efforts.

Osborne and Gaebler (1992) have referred to the following as reasons for measuring performance:

1. What gets measured gets done.
2. If you don’t measure results, you can’t tell success from failure
3. If you can’t see success, you can’t reward it
4. If you can’t reward success, you are probably rewarding failure
5. If you can’t see success, you can’t learn from it
6. If you can’t recognise failure, you can’t correct it
7. If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support.

Limitations of Performance Measurement

Stated below are some of the major problems in performance measurement:

- It may be difficult to measure phenomena as complex as performance. Results could be unreliable;
- Today's organisations are rapidly changing. Results and measures consequently get quickly obsolete;
- Translating human desires and interactions to measurements is impersonal and even heavy handed (Mc Namara, 2005).
- There may be employee resistance on the ground that the
 1. Job is either too creative to be measured; or
 2. Too professional; or
 3. Too diffused;
- As far as comparative performance evaluation of sections inside an organisation is concerned, it should be remembered that inadequate performance does not always indicate a problem on the part of the work unit. Performance standards may be unrealistic or a section showing sub optimal performance may have insufficient resources at its command or there may be other constraints. Similarly, strategies of the organisation or its means may be unrealistic or without the backing of sufficient resources (McNamara, 2005).
- Academics, today, do not avoid about using subjective and descriptive measures in performance evaluation. The guideline seems to create descriptive measures; do not stick to numbers; verifiability and reliability of measures instead of quantification is more important. Instead of avoiding subjective measures, innovative yardsticks could be employed. This is especially relevant in case of service-oriented organisations (such as in government bureaucracy) where measurement by numbers might seem far-fetched. (*ibid*)

6.2.2 Performance Management

Performance management is a result oriented exercise. It brings into focus all organisational and sectional results, links them, brings them into perspective, relates them in terms of the larger picture, measures them, set up monitoring and feedback mechanisms, and finally, institutes development plans to improve upon results procured thus.

The result of the exercise depends on the focus of performance effort articulated through the mission statement and communicated as 'work- related objectives' to employees, the focus differing with the section involved and also with the differing perception of the authority in charge of carrying it out. For example, an economist would identify financial results, such as return on investment, profit rate, etc. as the

focus. An industrial psychologist might identify more human centric results, such as employee productivity and implications for industrial relations, and the like (Mc Namara, 2005)

Result measurement is not an end in itself. Setting up an on- going feedback mechanism with stress on informal work relations and use of positive social capital in performance management and periodic adjustments providing for flexibility of processes are more important than result measurement in numbers. Continuous review of performance, therefore, is understood as performance management. Performance managements is an ongoing activity, more in the nature of a learning exercise, whereas performance review or appraisal involve post-committal assessment of an activity or of the performance at a given task as a whole.

Performance management works by the systemic perspective. Besides focusing on performance of employees, it should also ideally cover:

1. The Organisation
 2. Departments (computer support, administration, sales, etc.)
 3. Processes (billing, budgeting, product development, financial management, etc.)
 4. Programs (implementing new policies and procedures to ensure a safe workplace; or, for a nonprofit, ongoing delivery of services to a community)
 5. Products or services to internal or external customers
 6. Projects (automating the billing process, moving to a new building, etc.)
 7. Teams or groups organised to accomplish a result for internal or external Hence
- systems paradigm is considered most suitable for performance management. customers (McNamara, 2005).

(a) Basic Steps in Performance Management

Performance management activities proceed in a logical continuum. Observing sequential steps may be critical for successful implementation of the process. The focus of performance management function could be the entire organisation, a single process, a sub-system or an employee. Subsystems could be a department, a program, a team or a group organised to accomplish a particular task. Performance is a complex whole which involves integrated effort of all units in a direction, that is, the organisational purpose.

Performance management activities are somewhat similar to several other major approaches in organisations, for example, strategic planning, management by objectives, total quality management, training as mentioned earlier etc. Steps in performance management are similar to those in a well-designed training programme. Trainers today focus much more on results of performance. This has given rise to a new genre of training consultants. Many trainers with this orientation now call themselves performance consultants (Mc Namara, 2005). The steps in performance management include:

1. “To set up the process successfully, steps should be followed as; articulate results objectively in terms of discrete units of performance; as, quantity, quality, cost or timeliness (result itself is a measure);

2. The performance management process often includes translating organisational goals in terms of results, which themselves are described in terms of quantity, quality, timeliness or cost. Therefore, the results of all parts of the organisation should be aligned with the overall preferred results of the organisation;
4. Prioritise desired results; break down results into component units and activities to the extent possible. Weighting results refers to prioritising, often expressed in terms of a ranking (such as 1, 2, 3, etc.) percentage; time-spent, etc;
4. Establish direct causal relationship between immediate ends leading to broader organisational purpose variously understood as 'end' or 'value';
5. Conduct ongoing observation and measurement to track performance;
8. Exchange ongoing feedback on performance;” (McNamara, 2005)

(b) Key Benefits of Performance Management

Some of the key benefits of performance management are:

- 1 Performance measurement focuses on results rather than behaviors and activities of employees. Value added to organisational performance is important. Accountability is enforced through performance management.
2. Alignment of organisational activities and processes in furtherance of the goal of the organisation imparts coherence to an organisation;
3. Cultivates a system-wide, long-term view of the organisation. These measurements have a wide variety of applications. ...in benchmarking, or setting standards for comparison with best practices in other organisations
4. It is a basis for Organisation Change and Development. Performance management provides a consistent basis for comparisons between temporal situations during internal change conflicts;
5. It cultivates a systems perspective in that the focus is on the relationships and exchanges between subsystems, e.g., departments, processes, teams and employees. Accordingly, personnel focus on patterns and themes in the organisation, rather than specific events;
6. It produces specificity in resource commitment and allocation;
7. It provides specificity for comparisons, direction and planning;
8. It improves coordination;
9. It encourages responsible behaviour on the part of employees and facilitates decentralised functioning;
10. Delegation is resorted to more often; and

Performance Development Plan

A performance Development Plan is aimed at plugging the performance gap. It indicates specifically the problems behind below par result accomplishment such as, in what areas what correctives need to be administered, at what level; when performance is to be reviewed again and in what manner, by what methodology and such other relevant information.

(a) Key Features of Performance Development Plan

Performance development plan entails:

- Strategic alignment which communicates strategic direction, goals and objectives;
- Learning oriented mechanism for reviewing and learning from the information provided by the measures adopted;
- Action oriented mechanism that stimulates action from the results of the ‘measures’; and
- Environmental impact assessment, considering value impingement from the environment; specifically government policy or directives emanating therefrom. (Mc Namara, 2005)

6.3 METHODS OF PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

There are two methods of performance appraisal. They are classified broadly, as traditional and modern methods.

6.3.1. Traditional Methods

This classification contains a number of techniques:

1. Graphic Scale
2. Ranking
3. Forced Distribution Method
4. Critical Incident Method
5. Forced Choice Rating Method
6. Group Appraisal
7. Nomination

8. Work Sample Tests
9. Result-Oriented Performance Appraisal System
10. Confidential Reports.

Graphic Scale

It is the most widely used technique of performance appraisal. In this method, articulated traits such as quality of work, quantity of work, dependability, attitudes and so forth are laid down. The rater places a check-mark on a form next to the word or phrase describing the degree of merit for each factor. Many scales designed by different technicians are available which can be modified to suit different situations. For example, J.B. Probst, former chief examiner of the St. Paul Civil Service Bureau adopted a comprehensive list which has been used in a modified form by different organisations. A major problem with graphic rating scales is that words like “excellent”, “poor” and the like are general and do not convey the degree of merit relating to each specific factor with respect to an employee. The following should be kept in mind for selecting traits for merit rating regardless of the method that is adopted:

1. Traits should be *observable*, that is, can the rater actually observe this trait in action?
2. *Universality* of the trait under consideration is important, meaning, is it a relevant characteristic in relation to the job under study?
3. The trait under question should clearly be *distinguishable* as something different from another trait with a different name.

Advantages

- (i) It is less subjective as it considers a number of different traits rather than a subjective whole.
- (ii) Traits are defined and uncertainty is minimised.
- (iii) It also shows the degree to which each desired trait is present; is therefore precise.

Disadvantages

It is difficult to:

- (i) Decide on relative weights of different traits;
- (ii) Validate the opinions arrived at; and
- (iii) Ensure uniformity in trait articulation and consistency in rating, as they are likely to differ with raters.

Ranking

Persons of similar cadre are ranked in the order of merit, for example, if there are eight lecturers in a college, they could be ranked, 1, 2, 3... It entails simple ordering which gets difficult when twenty or more cases are involved. One of the techniques of ranking used is *paired comparison*. In this method, the rater compares each employee with every other in the group. Final ranking is based on the number of times the employee is judged better than the others. The rater must make $n(n-1)/2$ judgments where n is the number of men to be ranked. The method is not suitable where the group is large because number of judgments required, become unmanageable.

Forced Distribution Method

In this system, a five-point scale of job performance is used. On one end of the scale are the best job performance and the other, poor job performance. Fixed percentage of employees is allocated to the *best*, *middle* bracket and *worst* ends of the scale. The supervisor is asked to allocate approximately ten percent of his men to the best end of the scale, twenty percent to the next category, forty percent to the middle category, twenty per cent to the bracket next to the low end and ten per cent to the low bracket.

The supervisor's opinion is taken as the final word. Despite subjectivity the method is relied upon for assessment of employee performance. This could be illustrated with the help of a table.

Job Performance Scale

10 per cent	20 per cent	40 per cent	20 percent	10 percent
Poorest	Poorer	Average	Better	Best

Critical Incident Method

This method involves keeping a record of exceptionally good or bad incidents in the employee's work life with respect to the period under review. Such good or bad incidents can be examined to rate the fortitude and practical skills of employees. Bad incidents do not mean low ranking. It is how the particular employee rises up to the challenge and works his way through difficulty that is considered.

Forced Choice Rating Method

The rater is asked to select one statement out of two or four which in his opinion is most characteristic of the employee and another which is least, or both. In effect, the forced choice system is an attempt to devise an objective method of arriving at the same answers that the top management would reach after a protracted and complicated process. To serve a practical example; the subordinate

- A. Commands respect by his actions —————→ most characteristic
- B. Is cool headed
- C. Is indifferent —————→ least characteristic (optional rating?)
- D. Is overbearing

Two of these are favourable and the other two, unfavourable. One of the two favourable terms checked as most characteristic gives plus credit whereas the other gives no or negative credit. However, articulation of these characteristics and the determination of the scoring key (most, least) are crucial in a just rating by this method.

Group Appraisal

The appraiser group consists of three to four persons including the immediate supervisor who give their opinions collectively. Assistance from others also could be taken to cover aspects of employee performance and personality which may not have been noted by the immediate supervisors. For just assessment, members approached for appraisal must be people who have some contact with the subject. These members can be managers at high levels or colleagues or subordinates. It is apprehended that colleagues, if associated can work as either rivals or personal friends, which would create 'biases' in judgment. There can also be cliques of informal groups based on mutual benefit ties! As far as subordinates are concerned, they might not perceive the issue correctly and judge the person from their own narrow standpoints. They might also avoid airing views against the supervisor for fear of reprisals. Group appraisals therefore are advised to be used with caution. As practical concern it is better to involve superiors rather than colleagues or subordinates in group appraisals.

Nomination

By this method, appraisers are asked to identify exceptionally good and exceptionally poor performers in the organisation. The latter group is singled out for correctives. Both groups are studied for academic knowledge about 'organisational climate' and specific 'drivers' of efficiency. Academic inquiry into poor performance is also necessary.

Work Sample Tests

In this method, workers are administered work sample tests which form the basis of their assessment which they are evaluated. It provides important practical inputs for training and employee development programmes.

Result-Oriented Performance Appraisal System

This technique evaluates the extent of attainment of targets in the context of overall objectives to ascertain the merit of personnel. *Value addition* on the part of an individual employee is considered which is attempted to be *quantified*.

Annual Confidential Reports (ACR)

In most government departments and public enterprises in India, performance appraisal is done through Annual Confidential Reports (ACRs). Format of these reports differs from organisation to organisation and also with levels as per specific requirement(s) articulated. Casual attitude is alleged on the part of superiors writing remarks for subordinates. There is strong opinion in favour of confidential reports incorporating modern techniques of rating.

Confidential report is written for a year and relates to performance, ability and character of the person, for that specific period. The essential features of confidential reports of officers under the administrative control of the government are as follows:

- (i) Annual confidential remarks are recorded to judge the performance and efficiency of officers in public services.
- (ii) The objective of maintenance of character reports is to put an officer on the desired path by pointing out defects.
- (iii) Adverse entries should be communicated in time to enable him to rectify the defect.
- (iv) From December 4, 1946 until April 20, 1966, the practice of communicating both remediable and irreparable defects was followed. Since 1966, irreparable defects concerning integrity and morality are not being communicated as per express governmental directive to that effect.
- (v) Confidential character roll recorded by reporting officers is to be countersigned by the superior authority.
- (vi) Countersigning authority may take a view different from that of the reporting officer in which case the view of the former shall prevail.
- (vii) Until the countersigning authority gives his remarks, the character roll is not considered complete and is not to be acted on.

- (viii) Time schedules have been prescribed for recording remarks at different levels and their submission to the government for maintenance of confidential character roll.
- (ix) Representations against adverse remarks are not ordinarily entertained as the very purpose of such communication is to apprise the officer of his failings in order that he rectifies them for his own benefit. Such communication should not be regarded as a matter of argument or controversy.
- (x) In rare cases, however, where the remark is concerning specific acts or is the result of an error on the part of the reporting officer, representation lies (*Ventat Rao vs. State of Orissa*; 1974 Lab. IC 1192; 1975 SLS 267(1974) 2 SLR 899 (Ori)).

Evaluation of Traditional Methods:

Perceived faults of traditional methods are as follows:

Performance is not evaluated in terms of its impact on organisational objectives, goals and targets. It focuses attention on the personality of the subject rather than organisational results or the purpose of his joining the organisation. Appraisal goals are found to lack in reliability, verifiability, validity, and are most often, subjective. Besides, raters also (allegedly) display biases. Both the appraiser and the subject consider it an unpleasant exercise as no performance appraisal system can be claimed to be perfectly free of biases or prejudices. Annual performance review “leaves people bitter, dejected, depressed and in despair for months” (Deming)

Most administrators do not possess knowledge of the art and science of performance appraisal which results in adoption of different criteria of assessment for one employee by different administrators.

Appraisals are not always utilised to educate employees with regard to expected behaviour. Counseling the employee to influence his behaviour in the desired way should be the prime objective of performance appraisal.

Traditional performance appraisal techniques do not stress effective communication between the appraiser and subject as a necessary and desirable condition or even as a prerequisite. Information flow, top to bottom, is crucial as personnel are desired to know the criteria by which their performance is being assessed.

V.R. Buzzotta (1989) raises the following other criticisms of performance appraisal:

- (a) Appraisal process often gets confrontational as employees and supervisors work as two opposing poles of organisational effort; reconciliation may not always be possible. The appraisal process gets emotional in case participants sense adverse entries or anticipate confrontation. There may be outbursts of temper or even sarcasm which leaves parties hurt and resentful.

- (b) Appraisal process is often judgmental. This causes conflict because the manager is required to act in a dual capacity, as 'judge' and 'counselor' which he may not be trained or experienced to be just to.
- (c) The appraisal process gets ambiguous as managers do not fully appreciate their responsibility and also lack the psychological insight and interactive skills needed to appraise successfully.

6.3.2. Modern Methods: Management by Objectives

Management by objectives (MBO) is a systematic and organised approach that allows management to focus on achievable goals to attain best possible results from available resources. It aims to increase organisational performance by aligning goals and subordinate objectives throughout the organisation. (business e- coach, 2005)

According to Odiorne (1965), result-oriented appraisals or MBO is "a system wherein the superior and the subordinate managers of an organisation jointly determine their common goals, define each individual's major areas of responsibility in terms of results expected of him and use these measures as guides for operating the unit and assessing the contribution of each of its members."

Steps in the Process

The main steps in the process are as follows:

(a) Determination of Results

The first step is to identify key areas in which positive results are desired. The general purpose of the organisation should be articulated in terms of meaningful objectives for each unit within the organisation. Once identified, the objectives should be delineated and should not normally be changed during the year. Objectives should be specific and achievable as short- term manageable targets. They should distinctly characterise the subject's job; in other words be directly related to his job description. These should be tasks for which the subject is held accountable. They should be realistic and achievable, at the same time; challenging enough to make the employee stretch his potential for the organisation's good.

Job design helps in goal setting for each level. It enables setting out targets quantitatively, for better performance measurement. The basic ideas behind written requirements for each position is, specification of duties, responsibilities, reporting relationships and qualifications (attributes or specifications) desired for achievement.

Each subordinate is required to establish short-term performance goals or targets. It is necessary that subordinates' targets are discussed with superiors for better co-ordination and avoiding of role conflict and ambiguity. According to O.A. Ohmann (1957) this procedure gives subordinates an opportunity to make their own evaluation of target accomplishments and assess further scope for improvement. While discussing results, the subordinate actually appraises himself and gains further insight

for improved performance regarding his methods, attitudes and behaviour. MBO is hence, first a diagnostic tool for self appraisal, then an action programme for change and improvement, next, a tool for implementation.

The second step is to clearly lay down the requirements and expectations at every level regarding expected volume of output, quality stipulations, time and money investment required etc. The idea behind the exercise is that performance appraisal system has its genesis in the broad purposes of the organisation.

Recording Observations

The appraiser records the performance of his staff members against norms articulated in well-designed appraisal forms. There is a formal provision for self-appraisal by the incumbent. Self-appraisal process enables self- assessment on the part of the employee. He analyses his present performance and identifies his strengths, weaknesses and potential for future growth, as well as craft plans for improvement.

Performance Progress Review Conference

Once performance appraisal is completed, the next step is performance progress review conference for exchange of information between the appraiser and appraisee. The subject matter is progress review as per specified parameters. Should parameters be changed or retained in their original form? Does format of appraisal chart need reviewing? What section should be added to orient it towards desired end such as career planning or performance improvement or enhancing productivity etc.?

Individual Development Programme

Based upon performance-appraisal reports, a plan can be developed jointly by the appraiser and appraise identifying specific performance targets for development period under review and formulating a description of specific approaches under consideration for improving the performance of the subordinate.

Post-development Programme Review Conference

Post-development review is designed to evaluate the results of the individual development programme and to establish new or modified targets for the ensuing review period.

MBO approach has limitations. The procedure may be impracticable in cases where the top personnel are simply not interested in involving subordinates in decision making. Besides, the approach stresses on tangible goals and not intangibles, like honesty, commitment of employees which actually determines performance.

Feedback to Employees

One of the important aspects of performance appraisals is the provision of clear performance based feedback to employees (Rearce and Portee, 1986). Raters tend to inflate performance ratings when they know their reviews will be fed back to the raters⁽Antononi, 1994). Inflated feedback gives distorted information. The question

arises; is performance appraisal feedback necessary? Many Korean organisations are known to offer no performance appraisal feedback to raters. Performance appraisal is viewed in Korean organisations as bureaucratic red tape which no body really cares about. However, they do take performance appraisals into account for promotions. The application of the concept is culture specific (Lee and Shin, 2000).

It is also to be kept in mind that benefits of appraisals are not primarily regarding procedure. Benefits result only when procedure is supported by consistent and fair judgment and managerial acumen. W.B. Oastetter has rightly said that although “there is a considerable amount of knowledge and understanding required to plan, organise, implement and operate a performance appraisal system, the application of the process need not be complicated”. There is generally an inverse relationship between the amount of paper work involved in the appraisal process and its effectiveness. Consequently, the emphasis of the appraisal process should not be on an elaborate system of forms, procedures and reports. The focus of this approach is the self-development and ‘self actualisation’ of personnel. The basic focus is on employee development. Performance evaluation therefore is something of an executive art and science in itself.

6.4 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL OF PUBLIC SERVICES IN INDIA

The performance of the civil servants is commented upon by the controlling authority, which normally is the head of the department. He rates the incumbents on several parameters, such as competence, punctuality, efficiency, capability, ability to work with the team, leadership qualities, etc. Often efficiency rating is a matter of subjective assessment. Level of efficiency is rated; *outstanding, very good, good or fair*. Promotions give special weight to a consistent ‘outstanding’ grade. Assessing authority rates integrity as “*totally beyond reproach*”, “*of unquestionable integrity*”, “*beyond doubt*”, or as, “*nothing adverse has come to notice*”.

Performance appraisal system followed in public services in India is based on the limiting idea of efficiency. Unless ‘integrity’ is rated negative, this parameter does not matter in the process of promotion. In the prevalent climate, it has to be recognised that integrity is as much, if not more, relevant to public service efficiency. If we consider probity and integrity in public service as national assets, an integrity rating like “*of unquestionable integrity*” has to be given due weight for promotion. By doing so, we would place equal emphasis on both efficiency and integrity. (Reddy, 1990). Mere absence of negative rating does not imply ethical behaviour. In the prevailing climate, integrity is as tangible a value added as ‘efficiency’ and should be given due count. It need not be asserted that the present crisis in public personnel administration is due to lack of integrity. Integrity is built into the idea of effectiveness. Integrity needs to be studied academically; all its dimensions need to be brought out and the same incorporated as a *positive virtue* in performance appraisal charts. Responsibility and responsiveness may be tangible suggestions. Hence, the first priority of public personnel administration is to improve ethical standards with a view to rooting out corruption.

Weaknesses

Despite all the efforts to make performance appraisal objective and useful, loopholes remain in the system as is practiced today. Some could be discussed as follows:

- (a) There is high degree of subjectivity in performance appraisal reports for employees at all levels. Performance appraisal is used more as an instrument of 'subservience'.
- (b) Employees, especially if they are due for promotion have to "chase" the concerned reporting, reviewing and accepting authorities to ensure that their appraisal report is written on time.
- (c) It is a common complaint that appraisal reports are never written on time. Time lag means that reporting and reviewing authorities do not remember all benchmarks of performance for the period under assessment.
- (d) For employees who are transferred frequently in a year, proper assessment of performance is difficult. It becomes more an official directive complied with, than an activity aimed at management development.
- (e) It is difficult for secretariat employees, especially assistant level upwards to under-secretary, to write anything meaningful in their annual confidential reports against targets and achievements. It is also not possible to prescribe any targets for officials who are entrusted with only deskwork. Even for others, specific targets are not fixed by the superiors.
- (f) Assessment of employee made in terms of 'satisfactory', 'good', 'outstanding', differs from officer to officer and also department to department. Where output of work can be measured easily objectivity is facilitated, but in government departments which deal mostly with policy matters, quantification is difficult.
- (g) Only adverse remarks are communicated to the employees. Even this is not done on time in many departments.
- (h) Number of ACRs being reported or reviewed should be limited to the span of control lest it become a meaningless, routine activity.
- (i) In most states, the formats are uniform for all the employees regardless of the nature of functions. There are wide variations in the grading of civil servants between states and the linking of empanelment of civil servants to ACRs has led to politicisation of the processs. Effort should be made to revise and update the ACR format and incorporate more department-specific and objective feedback

Recommendations for Better Objectivity of Appraisal

The Karnataka Administrative Reforms Commission in its interim report in 2001 examined the problem of performance appraisal and made suggestions for improvement. In order to improve performance appraisal, following changes have been recommended to be adopted;

- All information about the annual confidential reports of the employees must be computerised. The management should guard against missing reports or 'level jumping' in the process;
- There should be different formats for ACRs for secretariat, field, and public sector employees;
- Apart from adverse comments a copy of each year's completely written ACR must be given to the employee. This will help the employee know how his or her performance is being evaluated. He might make necessary improvements for the next year. The ACR need not be 'confidential' in a liberal environment;
- As is done for the armed forces and central police organisations, a grading system on a 10 point or a 7-point scale to assess the individual traits and attributes could be introduced as a necessary facet of the ACR exercise;
- All levels of officers who have to write ACRs must be given proper training in writing ACRs objectively;
- Counseling may be introduced for employees who get repeated adverse remarks; and
- Action should be taken against officers who delay writing ACRs whether they are reporting, reviewing or accepting authorities.
- Time frame should be fixed for approval of ACRs by ministers. ACRs are delayed at this stage for several months.
- The comments in the ACR should be utilised as inputs for training, job assignments and career development planning.

Confidential reports have far-reaching influence on the career of an employee. These should therefore be handled prudently. It need not be emphasised that the remarks such as "good", "very good", "satisfactory", "fair", etc., are not made with precision. Each one of these has different implications and leads to unintended consequences for the employee's career.

Suryanarayana and G. Prageetha Raju (1998) rightly state, that if training is provided meticulously at regular intervals for *both appraisees and appraisers* conceptual clarity will improve and appraisal process would become more acceptable to the organisation. Through training there is exchange of ideas and experiences. Stimulated role plays ensure better interaction in the hierarchy.

In this context, the recommendations of the Fifth Pay Commission are worth noting:

- A ten point grading scale should be used instead of the broad categories of good, very good, to consider finer and subtler distinctions among personnel. Benchmarks should be prescribed for performance.
- Transparency should be ensured through partial opening of the process by provision for communication of the final grading to the employees. In case of low grading, such communication would afford the employee an opportunity to represent against an assessment that may adversely affect his career advancement.
- Assessment and appraisal of employees' performance should be a continuous process. Officers responsible for reporting on their subordinates should maintain a weekly or monthly record of their impressions about the performance and contribution of subordinates, including, important achievements, shortcomings, adherence to schedules for completion of specified tasks, etc.
- Assessment of an employee should be in the context of the team and department as a whole since he does not operate in isolation but as member of a group. Appropriate weight for group work should be assigned in grading. Constraints should be clearly stated.
- The employee can opt to work under a different reporting officer in case of inconsistency or unfairness in review.
- Five years review should be taken into account for career advancement schemes.
- There should be quinquennial review of performance for Group A officers.
- Counseling of employees should form an integral part of performance appraisal.
- Delays should be minimised by adhering scrupulously to schedule prescribed and computerisation of data.

6.5 PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Improvements can also be made without much difficulty to improve the consultative nature of the ACR process and the feedback managers provide to staff. *A Performance Appraisal Model* will be of great use in reforming Annual Confidential reports.

Promotions should be merit based and the respective authorities have to benchmark the best practices and evaluate the performance of the civil servants both qualitatively and quantitatively along a variety of parameters. The performance appraisal of civil servants has to be according to these benchmarks and the necessary placement reward and punishments can be taken up by the authorities. (Misra, 1997)

The recent reform in Hong Kong Civil Services wherein it was mandated that the civil servants would be recruited on a permanent basis but their continuation in the job would be subject to verifying the performance indicators from time to time. This model can be replicated in India also. There may be periodic performance reviews or audits for civil servants, especially when they become 50 or complete a certain number of years in service. (Satish, 2005)

The Indian system fails to measure technical competence and their capability to carry out neutrally and impartially the policy directives of political decision-makers though this should be the spirit which guides their functioning. It is said that each profession should develop its own code of conduct and performance appraisal system. By this reckoning, the civil service system in India should also respond to the need for developing its own system of performance appraisal and code of conduct. No law can offer an all-time solution in these regards. Most of the Indian acts in their present form are adopted versions of their British editions. A perusal of such Acts clearly reveals that they were never intended to prescribe a code of conduct or a performance appraisal system. They only contained the powers and privileges, the service benefits, and the accountability mechanism which had to be followed by the civil servants (Morgan and Heady, 1997).

The Indian civil service allegedly lacks professionalism. As noted earlier, they act more as generalists and much less as specialists. The induction training has been designed in such a way that hardly any scope is left for giving a non-generalist orientation. Once they join the service, they are shuffled for short trainings from one to the other department, so much so that they hardly get an opportunity to develop an understanding of technical aspects of a problem or acquire a technical expertise. The inputs coming from civil servants can lead to a much higher value addition in certain areas if they could have an understanding of practical aspects related to them. For instance, professionalism of a high degree is required to handle complex tasks at the Ministry of Finance, Petroleum, Commerce, Power, Transport, Food and Agriculture, Irrigation, Communications, Atomic Energy, etc.

A study of the overall perception of the officers of the IAS by members of the Indian Police Service, politicians, technocrats, and academicians points out that they project themselves as experts on everything. Their concern for, and focus on their own career is very high. They are self-opinionated, power-hungry, shrewd and manipulative, procedure and rule-focused, arrogant, inaccessible, judgmental and critical, and having concern for minor details. They have been rated very low on positive traits such as commitment to organisation, trustworthiness, risk-taking, conscientiousness, innovativeness, and creativity. Most of the studies have rated them lowest as visionaries and transformational leaders. They are considered to be no-change agents. The self-perception of these officers (officers of the IAS) is exactly opposite. The thrust of the criticism of the Indian civil service system is on overstaffing, wastefulness, cautiousness, unfairness, and non-responsiveness, the last one being the most important of all, which could be seen from the fact that as per a recent decision of the government, discussions are being conducted on effectiveness and responsiveness of the Indian administration in the different parts of the country.

There is also an underlying Government concern about leadership skills in the Civil Service and elsewhere in the public sector. Largely in response to this, the Civil Service now has in place a six-pronged reform programme whose elements of

particular relevance to the Senior Civil Service include: (a) stronger leadership with clear sense of purpose; (b) sharper performance management; (c) a dramatic improvement in the diversity of staff; and (d) a service more open to people and ideas.

There has to be a regular appraisal of performance of public service providers at every level. As is done for the armed forces, a grading system on a ten-point scale to assess the individual traits and attributes could be introduced as a part of the annual confidential reports. Counseling may be introduced for those employees who repeatedly get adverse remarks. A time-frame should be fixed for writing the annual confidential reports as well as for their acceptance. It may be a good idea to provide a copy of each year's completely written annual confidential report to the employee concerned, to enable him to know how his/her performance had been judged and what improvements are required for better performance (Meenakshi Sundaram, 2005).

In the absence of standards, public service organisations get away with poor performance. The absence of an effective Performance Monitoring and Evaluation System makes it difficult to identify effective public service organisations from those which are unable to provide services. It is, therefore, necessary to set standards of public services and to ensure that the standards are adhered to by putting in place an effective performance monitoring and evaluation systems. (Administrative Staff College, 2005). However, with regard to specifying service quality standards, the following issues need to be considered:

- How can one take into account the diversity of circumstances across the country while developing service delivery standards;
- What should be the mechanism for enforcing standards of service ;
- Can financial allocations or payments be linked to service quality standards? How can one ensure equity in this regard, given that states start from different levels of competence and infrastructure ?; and
- Is there a meaningful way of establishing objectively verifiable service standards for achieving universal and quality primary education, reduction in infant mortality rate, and effective access to primary health care?

Since a large number of India's citizens live in rural areas, posing inherent difficulties in service delivery, special attention has to be paid to the improvement of service delivery in rural areas. Some of the problems associated with rural areas are the lack of credible institutions, poor resource base, and unwillingness on the part of public service workers to serve in rural areas, lack of accountability due to distance from the controlling unit, issues of local capture and information asymmetries. Following are some issues related to improvement of service delivery in rural areas:

- How can existing service delivery mechanisms in rural areas be reinvigorated to deliver services effectively;

- Can non-public sector delivery mechanisms backed by voucher payments offer an alternative to improving service delivery in rural areas;
- Can effective decentralisation lead to improvement in the delivery of services in rural areas;
- How can the tools of e-government be effectively used to improve service delivery in rural areas;
- Can performance evaluation systems based on citizen inputs help in improving the delivery of services;
- What level of local government should be the unit of service in rural areas, taking into consideration issues of economies of scale and accountability ?; and
- Will local economic growth help in improving the quality of public services in rural areas?

6.6 CONCLUSION

An effective performance appraisal system is a continuous activity beginning with goal setting, progressing through periodic reviews and culminating in traditional year end evaluation. It is designed to improve overall functioning of an organisation. However, performance appraisal is still perceived as a fault-finding exercise which encourages favouritism and timidity and servitude on the part of employees. The final grading of an employee depends much more on personal loyalty than performance. Final grading is made a personalised decision. Besides, appraisal is arguably not taken seriously enough. Confidential reports are completed rather lackadaisically barely a few minutes before final submission indicating that supervisors take this actively casually.

Though meant to serve the three fold purpose of monitoring, evaluation, and control, the appraisal system has been reduced just to a control mechanism to secure submission and compliance of the employee rather than an instrument for improving the capability of the organisation and individuals. The proclivity is suggested by the term 'annual confidential report' or 'confidential character role' that is used to name performance appraisal chart in government. The two obvious characteristics of performance appraisal in government are secrecy and fairness. Whereas secrecy is maintained by strict hierarchical structures of the government and its impersonal character, the fairness of the system has also been called into question. Subjective attitudes, personal biases and outdated value systems have been pointed out as the faults plaguing the system. Finally, it is necessary to discuss how responsibility for performance appraisal can be made more meaningful (Sharma, Harinder and Dey).

- The employee should be made aware of the organisation's expectations and norms used for evaluation
- The employee should have the right to raise his voice against unfair practices in rating. Such provision for hearing should be built into the

appraisal. Systemic evaluation and potential evaluation should be clearly distinguished for the benefit of the employee.

- Performance appraisal should ultimately become a development-oriented evaluation approach.

The focus of analysis in this Unit has been on appreciating all aspects of Performance appraisal. In order to get thoroughly, sensitised to it, the discussion has been on performance measurement, performance management, etc., besides highlighting the performance appraisal in public systems.

6.7 KEY CONCEPTS

Indicators:	Indicators are framed as per nature of a specific job. For example, indicators for a teacher and a civil servant would be different. Indicators enable progress (lack of) at a specific level.
Measures:	Measures provide specific information as to the extent of accomplishment of targets. Measures are both subjective and objective, as human performance cannot be judged by objective standards alone. The only condition is that measures should be amenable to a result- oriented assessment. Examples of measures include, time spent on specific activity, work hours, quantity of output etc.
Performance Gap:	Perceived difference between actual and desired performance is understood as performance gap. Human Resource Development activities are undertaken as per analysis or diagnosis of causes of performance gap. Performance gap is human and only indicates the needs for improvement and how the same should be affected for desired performance at that level.
Performance Plan:	Performance Plan integrates parts into the whole of organisational effort, including articulation of performance standards at each level, integration of performance and total measurement. The idea behind a performance plan is that each activity in an organisation is tied to the whole and should not be assessed in isolation. Missing links, causing sub optimal performance at a level should be discovered and taken care of to rectify whatever is creating shortfall at that level.
Results:	Desired final or specific outputs in terms of quality, quantity or money and time cost, and human resource indicators as stipulated for effective work performance. Due to cost constraint, measurement by results is needed to derive maximum benefit with minimum cost. Human Resource audit and performance management and

development are based on results measurement, or the extent to which desired performance has been approximated or elicited.

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6.9 ACTIVITIES

1. Discuss the concepts of performance measurement, management and performance development plan. Can they be applied to improve civil service recruitment?
2. What are the shortcomings in Annual Confidential Reports? How can they be remedied?
3. What is Management by Objectives? Discuss the steps involved in MBO.