
UNIT 7 JOB ANALYSIS AND JOB DESCRIPTION

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7.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- define the concepts of job analysis and job description,
- identify the process of job analysis, and
- identify the structure and uses of job description.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the aims of this course is to acquire or enhance your knowledge about the modern Human Resource Management concepts and techniques. This should, undoubtedly improve your skills as a manager, especially as a manager of people working at different levels in hospitality industry. You will also appreciate that an effective manager is one who is able to handle his or her people efficiently. In order to be a good manager of people, it will also be imperative for you to have an adequate understanding of the jobs assigned to them as also the relative job differentials in terms of their level of difficulty, responsibility, knowledge and skills. In this Unit, we shall be dealing with the concepts and techniques of job analysis and job description.

7.2 JOB ANALYSIS AND RELATED TERMS: DEFINITION AND USES

Job analysis refers to the process of examining a job to identify its component parts and circumstances in which it is to be performed.

There exists a wide range of job evaluation methods. The choice of an evaluation method is dependent on the number and kind of jobs to be evaluated, the cost of the operation, available resources, the degree of precision required and the **organisations'** environments – both internal and external. However, whatever be the chosen method, systematic gathering and analysis of information about jobs is a prerequisite. The central concern for a job analyst should be to treat jobs as units of organisation. Job analysis viewed thus will act as a tool which provides the informational base for a wide range of organisational and managerial functions. Job analysis, in this sense, should be purposeful and performed professionally as an ongoing organisational activity. The purpose is to gather, analyse and utilise information about jobs. This information is extremely valuable to make decisions relating to organisational **planning** and design, recruitment and selection of personnel, their training, appraisal and development and other managerial functions. Thus, **Job analysis is the foundation for both job description and job evaluation.**

The job analysis **process** involves gathering of such information as:

- a) What the employee does?
- b) How the employee does it?
- c) Why the employee does it?
- d) The materials, tools and procedures used in the conduct of the work,
- e) The physical activities involved in the performance of the work,
- f) The conditions under which the work is performed,
- g) Typical work incidents and work patterns, **etc.**

Each of these pieces of information is essential in determining the level of work and responsibility and the knowledge, skill and abilities needed to perform them to an acceptable level of proficiency. This is also relevant for customer care which is crucial in any service-based industry like hospitality.

The process of assembling and recording information on such essential characteristics of jobs is known as job analysis. In other words, jobs are subjected to analysis to find out precisely what the duties, responsibilities, working environment and other requirements of a job are and to present these in a clear, concise and systematic way. Job analysis should be undertaken by trained job analysts working in close collaboration with managers and jobholders.

As explained earlier, job analysis involves a systematic examination of jobs in order to uncover the nature of the **tasks** performed, the working conditions under which they are carried out, the responsibilities entailed and the skill required. Formerly, job analysis was the only way to analyse a job and help in human resource planning. Nowadays, **task analysis** also helps in the human resource development. (You will read about task analysis in a subsequent Unit).

Apart from job evaluation, the information gathered through job analysis may be used for a wide range of personnel and general management decisions, such as, the recruitment, selection, promotion and transfer of staff, performance review and appraisal, manpower planning, the design of training programmes and organisational analysis. It is indeed an essential part of any modern personnel management system. The kind of information gathered through job analysis varies considerably, depending on the specific uses to be made of it. Accordingly, job analysis programmes are usually tailor-made for the purposes in view. In practice, however, their main use is most often job evaluation.

7.3 JOB DESCRIPTION, JOB SPECIFICATIONS AND JOB ANALYSIS: LINKAGES

Job description is a broad statement of the purpose, duties and responsibilities of a job or position. A job description is based on a detailed job analysis and usually summarises the essential information gathered through job analysis. It describes the main tasks and responsibilities of the job clearly and concisely in order to facilitate the systematic comparison of jobs for evaluation purposes. The kind of information and amount of details contained in the job descriptions depend on the job evaluation plan to be used. However, in all cases they must be standardised and uniform phraseology should be used. If job characteristics are set out differently from one job to another, systematic comparisons are likely to be hampered and one of the main advantages of job evaluation will be lost right from the beginning.

Before we examine in detail the two cornerstones of job evaluation, viz., job analysis and job descriptions, we should mention a complementary means of describing jobs, namely by **job specifications**. These usually involve a listing of the personal qualifications regarded as necessary for satisfactory performance. Job specifications are mainly used in

selecting and recruiting staff and are accordingly not essential to job evaluations. But certain personal attributes, such as experience, education and aptitude, may occur in both, the job description as well as the job specification. Many job evaluation plans accordingly use job specifications to complement job description.

7.4 JOB REQUIREMENTS VERSUS PERSONAL QUALITIES OF JOB HOLDER

It needs to be kept constantly in mind that job analysis seeks to determine job requirements as opposed to the personal skills of the incumbent. Of course, job content and jobholder's aptitudes often tend to influence each other. Generally speaking, independent work encourages personal influence on job content whereas team work or work entailing the use of elaborate equipment reduces it. It is, however, very rare for job content to be so rigidly fixed that it leaves no room for any personal influence by the jobholder. Conversely, a job is rarely so extensively affected (this may not be true in certain jobs in hospitality and tourism) by the holder that it is impossible to arrive at any idea of its content without considering his or her personal attributes. The job of a marketing manager, for example, has certain basic requirements, which are definable quite irrespective of the qualities of the incumbent. It is these basic requirements that are the focus of job analysis.

A jobholder can be thought of as bringing to his or her work-knowledge, physical and mental abilities, and other personal attributes, such as tact, initiative and assiduity, which one is called upon to use as the work may demand. But irrespective of individual differences related to innate ability, motivation, level of education, age and character, the nature of the job makes certain demands on him or her. Since job analysis focuses on the job and its requirements, those personal qualities and characteristics of the incumbent not directly required by the job have to be disregarded. This procedure of "distilling" from the activities involved in the job those qualifications deemed necessary and sufficient for the job, and a simultaneous-systematic abstraction of the incumbent from the job, is essential to job analysis.

7.5 INFORMATION COLLECTION METHODS

A variety of methods are available for gathering job information. The method that was historically linked to the concept of job analysis was observation which was supplemented by the interview. In recent years, questionnaires, diaries, self-reports by employees and checklists have been experimented with different degrees of success.

There are three main methods to gather and verify information needed for each job, namely (i) questionnaire to be filled-in by the employee and his or her immediate supervisor, (ii) an interview with the employee and his or her supervisors, and (iii) direct observations at the work place. There are also other sources of information which help the analysts to get a complete and clear picture of the job in question. The job analyst could use one of these methods or a combination of more than one of these methods depending on the work situation.

The relative advantages and disadvantages of these three methods are discussed below:

i) The Questionnaire

The use of a questionnaire has a number of advantages. First of all, it is the most cost-effective method, since it can elicit information from a wide number of employees and their immediate superiors in a relatively short period of time. The main task of the analyst becomes one of planning the questionnaire well and checking the responses provided. Secondly, employees take an active part in completing the questionnaire, providing intimate detailed knowledge of their jobs which is not available elsewhere. Thirdly, the questionnaire has to be structured in advance, and this facilitates the processing of the

results. In some cases, once the responses to the questionnaire have been verified, they can conveniently be used with little further processing to prepare a job description.

The questionnaire method does, however, have disadvantages – some of them serious. To start with, the people required to complete it must have a certain level of education, and even then questions may be interpreted in different ways so that the answers may be beside the point. Furthermore, not everyone is able to describe fully and exactly the tasks that constitute their job. One may, for example, over-emphasise some features of it and completely ignore others even when they are important. There is less risk of this with a detailed questionnaire that includes a checklist of points, but questionnaire suited to all jobs is not easily drawn up and may be unduly long. In practice, while a well-structured questionnaire can get essential information quickly, it is virtually impossible to get complete comparable information solely by questionnaire, and this method is generally used in combination with interviews and direct observation.

While designing a questionnaire, nature of jobs to be evaluated and the job evaluation **plans/methods** are to be considered. At the manual or unskilled employees' level such as cleaner, housekeeping attendants, etc., the job analysis consists of a simple description of actions taken in order to complete the job. In this case, a plain narrative statement would serve the purpose of job analysis. But, as one moves up in the hierarchy of the organisation, the complexity of the job increases, and it ceases to be self-explanatory. The role of the night clerk, for example, his or her place in the organisation and the implications of the work and its effects on others, both alongside, above and below him or her are not self-evident. All this requires to be clearly put down. At a higher or managerial level, the issues become more complex and hence the need for job analysis is definitely greater. A similar situation exists in the case of service sector where the employees are in direct touch with the consumers.

ii) Interview .

In practice, an interview is almost always necessary in order to obtain precise, complete and comparable information. The interview conducted by the analyst is an effective way of checking on the information already available on job. The analyst asks the jobholders on the duties and main tasks on their job, generally working from a previously prepared list of questions as with a questionnaire. To know the full extent of a job through the interview, the analyst aims to obtain all the relevant facts about the job, such as:

- the title of the job holder,
- the title of the job holder's superior,
- the job titles and numbers of staff reporting to the job holder (This information can best be recorded by means of an organisation chart) and
- a brief description of the overall role or purpose of a job.

After the interview, the analyst draws up a report which is shown to the jobholder and his or her immediate superior for approval. The analyst, this way deals straightway with the question of why the job exists at all. It is a fundamental question and is not always clearly understood by the jobholder. The analyst usually drafts the report in the form of a job description, which effectively speeds up the preparatory work of job evaluation. It is not always easy to separate purpose **from** a description of activities, but it is important for an analyst to do so. For example, one might describe that the job of the manager is to supervise the range of activities taking place in lobby of a hotel. It would be wrong on the analysts' part to describe this as the purpose of the job. The purpose should show the necessity for the above is to act as an intermediate and coordinating link in the management chain, so that the general manager of hotel operations can adequately control the whole operation through a team of a manageable size.

Interviews are not only time consuming but also a difficult task of finding high quality analysts who *can* win the jobholder's confidence. As has been noted, "too many imagine interviewing to be relatively simple whereas nothing could be farther from the truth."

Obtaining information from a jobholder about his or her job is not an easy task. Many workers show a natural distrust of the analyst who comes to examine their work, whilst others will give a lot of information, much of it useless. It is accordingly essential to have a well trained and experienced team of analysts if the interview is to be the only method used.

iii) Observation

Repetitive work is most suitable for direct observation of what the jobholder actually does. Direct observation by the analyst can clear up points left unclear by the interview or questionnaire and give him or her an idea of the personal qualifications required, but the sight of an analyst in the work may well cause some stress and workers may dislike being observed. Observation is almost useless where the job calls for considerable personal judgement or intellectual ability, as in managerial or administrative jobs, it cannot possibly comprehend all the tasks in a work cycle that covers a week or month or that entails changes of tasks only at long intervals. Other than this a skilled and experienced person might make a difficult task look easy whereas, untrained and inexperienced person can make an easy task look difficult.

7.6 DESIGN OF JOB DESCRIPTION

A primary output or result of job analysis is a job description. Information obtained by job analysis is shifted and recorded concisely, clearly and fully in the job description. The job description must assemble all the important elements of a job, such as essential tasks, responsibilities, qualifications required and the functional relation of the job to other jobs.

There is no universally accepted standard format for job description for the reason that the form and structure of the job descriptions must depend on the kind of work being analysed and the job evaluation plan being used. For example, if the job evaluation plan comprises factors such as physical and intellectual effort, knowledge, skills, responsibilities and working conditions, it follows that job description should be structured to reflect these factors so as to facilitate factor by factor comparison and evaluation of jobs. With non-analytical methods, job descriptions may be more flexible and simpler but must **specify** the title of the job and its position in the organisation, summarise the tasks performed and list the skills and abilities required. A complete job description should, therefore, rightly contain three categories of information:

- job mission and location,
- the work performed, and
- the context in which the action takes place.

With non-analytical methods, job descriptions may be more flexible and simpler but must specify the title of the job and its position in the organisation, summarise the tasks performed and list the skills and abilities required. While writing a job **description** one should be brief, factual and precise as far as possible. It will be helpful to follow the following guidelines while writing a job description:

- 1) Always be accurate about what is expressed.
- 2) Omit expressions which are attributes – such as uninteresting, distasteful, etc.
- 3) Personal pronouns should be avoided – if it is necessary to refer to the employee, the work 'operator' or 'so and so executive' may be used.
- 4) Do not describe only one phase of the job and give the impression that all phases are **covered**.
- 5) Generalised or ambiguous expressions, such as 'prepare', 'assist', 'handle', etc., should be omitted unless supported by data that will **clarify** them.

- 6) All statements should be clearly and simply set down – promiscuous use of adjectives only reflects one's own opinion.
- 7) Describe the job as **is being** done, by the majority of workers holding the designation.
- 8) Write in simple language – explain unusual technical terms.
- 9) Description of a job which is part of teamwork, should establish the team **relationship**.
- 10) The length of description is immaterial, it is not expected even with printed forms that all job descriptions should be of equal length but write concisely.
- 11) When the job analyst finds that the data he or she has to work with is **insufficient**, he or she should stop until sufficient data is available.
- 12) Put the date of completion of each description and revise it as often as changes in jobs and occupation require.
- 13) Job description should have the concurrence of the concerned supervisor.
- 14) Description should contain the initials of the persons who compile them.

7.7 USES OF A JOB DESCRIPTION

Apart from being a basis for job evaluation, the job descriptions can be put to many uses. These are as under:

a) **Supervisor – Employee Communication**

The information contained in the Job Description outlines the work which the incumbent is expected to perform. Hence, it is an extremely useful document for both the supervisor and the subordinate for purposes of communication. Furthermore, it helps employees to understand just what work their associates are expected to perform, thus, facilitating integration of efforts at the work-site by the employees themselves.

b) **Recruitment, Selection, Promotion, Transfer**

Information pertaining to the knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform the work to an acceptable standard, can be used as a sound basis on which to base standards and procedures for recruitment, selection, promotion and transfer.

c) **Work Performance Appraisal.**

To be sound and objective, a performance appraisal system must be rooted in the work performed by the employees, such work is indicated by the duties in the job description. In such an approach, using each duty as the basis for discussion, the employee and the supervisor agree on work performance goals for the period to be covered by the subsequent evaluation report, they also agree on the criteria to be used to determine the extent to which the goals have been attained. The reports result from this methodology minimize **subjectivity** by focussing attention on the job, as distinct from the personality traits, habits or practices of the employee. As a **consequence**, the results are more factual, valid and defensible than is the case in other types of systems.

d) **Manpower Planning, Training and Development**

These three processes are closely interrelated. The job description showing, in specific terms, the knowledge, skill and ability requirements for effective performance of the duties, is a sound and rational basis for each of these processes. Analysis of various types of jobs at progressively more senior levels will indicate logical sources of supply for more senior posts, as part of manpower planning, it will also indicate the gap to be bridged in terms of knowledge, skill and ability, thus providing a sound basis for preparing job-related training and development **programmes**.

e) **Industrial Relations**

Frequently issues arise in the industrial relations field **which** have their origin in the work to **be** undertaken. In these instances the job description may be used to form a factual basis for discussion and problem resolution.

f) **Organisation and Procedure Analysis**

The duties and responsibilities outlined in the job description may be used to great advantage by management in analysing organisation and procedures, because they reveal how the work is organised, how the procedures operate and how authority and responsibility are apportioned.

Check Your Progress

1) Define Job Analysis.

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2) What are the uses of Job 'Analysis?

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3) How would you gather job information?

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4) Mention some guidelines for writing a job description.

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7.8 LET US SUM UP

Jobs are subjected to analysis to find out precisely what the duties, responsibilities, working environment and other requirements of a job **are** and to present these in a clear, concise and systematic way. The information gathered through job analysis can be used for a wide range of personnel and general management decisions. Job analysis is also a prerequisite to preparing job descriptions. In fact, job descriptions summarise the essential information gathered through job analysis. The various concepts and methods discussed in this Unit are useful in tourism industry as they are in any other.

7,9 CLUES TO ANSWERS

Check Your Progress

- 1) Job analysis refers to the process of examining a job to identify its component parts and circumstances in which it is to be performed. Read **Sec. 7.2**.
- 2) The main use of job analysis is job evaluation. Apart from job evaluation, the information gathered through job analysis may be used for a wide range of personnel and general management decisions. Read **Sec. 7.3** and answer.
- 3) There are three main methods to gather and verify information needed for each job, namely:
 - a) **questionnaire** to be filled in by the employee and his or her immediate supervisor,
 - b) an **interview** with the employee and his or her supervisors, and
 - c) **direct observation** at the work place.

Read **Sec. 7.7** and expand the above answer.

- 4) A few guidelines while writing a job description are:
 - i) always be accurate about what is expressed.
 - ii) quit expressions which are attributes, such as, uninteresting, distasteful, etc.
 - iii) do not describe only one phase of the job and give the impression that all phases are covered.

Read **Sec. 7.9** and list a few more guidelines.

Activity
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1). Make job analysis questionnaire for following jobs:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Lobby Managerb) Coach Driver2) Give job description of following:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Tourist Guide (Wildlife)b) Travel Agency Sales Managerc) Public Relations Officer (Hotel)