

# EXECUTIVES' PERCEPTION ON EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES: A STUDY OF INDIAN SOFTWARE COMPANIES

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*This study investigates whether executive development programmes can enhance the performance and skills of executives in Indian software companies. The sample consists of 150 executives drawn from five software companies in National Capital Region, Delhi. The results reveal that, of all the executive development programmes, such programmes as quality of executive development programmes in India, India's own style of executive development programmes, evaluation of executive development programmes in software industry, production of global managers, measurement of business professionals, business professionalism- a money-oriented concept, liberal Indian economy have improved the quality of executive development programmes. These executive development programmes, which are now moving towards new innovations, have brought out the most important predictors of the overall performance of the executives in Indian software companies.*

## I- Introduction

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the world is going to be a global village and India is no exception to it. As a result, there has been a surge in the ranks of new and increasing number of market players with growing stakes in the Indian market. New business and ventures, green sunrise sectors, and virgin markets have opened up a whole new area besides changing the face of the industry itself. While a changing landscape calls for new skills and tools, many professions have in turn moved to centre-stage to take on the growing demands and challenges. Though around for a while, corporate India is only now rediscovering it through executive development programmes. From the neighbourhood retailers to million dollar corporations, everyone has experienced the benefits of developing the new blood.

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In the era of professional management, where managers as well as chief executives are being professionally developed, systematic interventions are the only way to develop and institutionalise the processes and a new culture. The organisations that are to be dynamic and growth-oriented can excel only by developing its executives competence, because the executive is the dynamic life-giving element in a business enterprise.

## II- Need for the Study

In today's competitive world, companies are looking for ways to enhance their performance. Leaner and tighter working units have become the norm, and the focus is on streamlining the most precious and dynamic asset, i.e. the employee. Development is one of the most effective means of inculcating dynamism and self-renewing capability in employees. Employee skills and abilities are essential for "moving" an organisation towards operating consistently with its strategy. Development programmes are planned programmes of organisational improvement undertaken to bring about a relatively permanent change in employees' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior. For development programmes to be deemed successful, they must be associated with improvements in knowledge, skills, attitudes or behavior that outweigh the fiscal cost to develop, implement, and evaluate such programmes. In order to improve the quality of managers, the organisation must expand money and effort, and introduce imaginative and systematic development schemes for them.

Executive development may be defined as an attempt to promote managerial performance by imparting knowledge, changing attitudes and behaviour, and enhancing skills. For the past few years, the focus of executive development programmes has been shifting from preparing managers and filling higher level positions to preparing them to meet the challenges of managing in a fast paced business environment of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore, the emphasis of an executive development programme is on developing a manager's ability to learn and make decisions under conditions of rapid changes. The ultimate aim of an executive development programme is, of course, to enhance the future performance of the executives and the organisational effectiveness. The major and more elusive task of executive development is to mould and fashion the behaviour component into a virile and unmixd weapon of an enterprise's achievement.

Executive development programmes provide an executive with an

unprecedented growth, and have come to acquire an added relevance and a central role in business operations and enterprise management. They offer an opportunity and provide a platform for young executives to develop their potentials and managerial skills so that they could evolve innovative ideas. Besides, executive development programmes also help to devise effective strategies for cracking perennial evaluation issues of development programmes such as retention and compensation patterns, improvement in making the managerial decisions and skills, value creation in the employee-employer relationship, and reduction of the generation and gender gap in the organisation.

An executive development programme gives the executives some extra working energy, confidence, and motivation, and also keep their morale high. The professionalism of management and the ability of managers to develop the positive attitudes and behaviours among employees, and the company's corporate values have to be observed as a vital element in the company's continuing success. In the field of human resource management, training and development play a crucial role in maintaining the high quality of the company's employees.

It is an established fact that, during the last couple of years, India has emerged as one of the most dynamic and potential markets of software services in the world. Skilled managerial and technical manpower provide India with a distinct cutting edge in global competition. Today, India's competency in software and related services is recognised globally. India's IT software industry is a capable provider across a wide range of skills and disciplines. In fact, Indian software and enabled services industry provides a large opportunity to expand trade, and create a niche at a global level. The software companies from India are the new stars on the global horizon, helping their global partners to attain a competitive edge by providing various products and enabled services. Today, a core question in India's economy is that whether it can leverage its human capital, technology, consumer capabilities and business savvy to emerge both as an effective provider of technology products and as a strong consumer base.

### **III- Review of Literature**

Since 1950, there have been attempts to generate a veritable management development boom within a wider management boom. In the mid-forties, only two companies viz. Sears, Roebuck in America, and Marks and Spencer in England had given serious thoughts to the development

of managers. At that time, there were only three university programmes in America for the continuing advanced education of managers: The Sloan Programme at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the programmes at New York University Graduate Business School for the continuing education of managers and young professionals in banking and finance, and The Advanced Management Programme at the Harvard Business School.

In the mid-fifties, sincere efforts were made to catalogue the companies with specific executive development programmes, and provide a conducive environment for the growth. As a result, many universities in the United States had gone in to all kinds of advanced management programmes. Today, it is no longer possible to count the number of companies that, one way or another, work on the development of management and managers. A large company that does not make a specific provision for such work and does not have a management development staff of its own is the exception. Another exception is the business school at university level without any form of a management development programme. In addition, an untold number of outside organisations such as trade associations, consulting firms, etc. have gone into the management development business.

This interest is by no means confined to the United States. It has spread to Europe and to Japan. Within the last few years, it has broken through the Iron Curtain. Some of the Soviet satellites; for example, Czechoslovakia, have started advanced management work; and in 1970, the Soviet Union itself set up two major advanced management schools for industrial executives. The manager's job in the seventies was more difficult and challenging in that it had never been before. Reconciling statesman like vision and sensitivity with the gritty reality of making enough profit to survive tomorrow is not easy. By way of backdrop, there are turbulent economic and social changes, technological advances, new power relationships between politicians, unions and employers, and uncertainties in the supply and price of raw materials.

#### IV- Objectives of the Study

Our study has two main objectives which are stated as follows:

One, to evaluate the perception of the executives towards executive development programmes in Indian software companies under different parameters: positive effects of liberal Indian economy on the quality of

executive development programmes, mandatory evaluation of executive development programmes in software industry, production of global managers, measurement of business professionals, executive development programmes for facilitating innovations, overall executive's performance in Indian software companies, and India's own style of executive development programmes.

Another, to offer suitable suggestions to improve executive development programmes in the software companies in NCR, Delhi.

## **V- Data and Analysis**

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected with the help of questionnaires from five units of software companies located in NCR, Delhi. The main reasons for confining the study to five software companies located in NCR, Delhi, were easy access of the researchers to the sample respondents, and the limitation of time and finances at the disposal of researchers. But, in the case of secondary data, the supporting and relevant materials such as text books, research papers, NASSCOM website and publications like Dataquest, PC, etc. were collected in order to present the facts in a logical format.

### *V-1: Profile of units and executives*

The present study is based on the data collected from five software companies located in Noida, Gurgaon and New Delhi. A sample of 150 executives was drawn on the basis of random sampling. Of the 150 executives, 52 executives were from HCL Technologies Limited, Noida, and Gurgaon; 34 executives were from Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Noida, and New Delhi; 28 executives from NIIT Technologies Limited, New Delhi; 19 executives from Satyam Computers Services Limited, Gurgaon; and 17 executives from Wipro Infotech, New Delhi. Of the 150 executives, 15 were General Managers, 30 Regional Managers, 15 Sales Managers, 15 Senior Project Manager, 30 Project Leaders, 15 Software Engineers, 15 Senior Sales Executives, and rest 15 Business Development Managers. Classification of executives according to designation can be studied from the following table:

**Table- 1**  
**Classification of Executiyes according to Designation**

Sr. No.	Designation	No. of Executives	Percentage of Executives
1	General Managers	15	10%
2	Regional Managers	30	20%
3	Sales Managers	15	10%
4	Senior Project Managers	15	10%
5	Project Leaders	30	20%
6	Software Engineers	15	10%
7	Senior Sales Executives	15	10%
8	Business Development Managers	15	10%
	Total	150	100%

Source: Questionnaire-1 in the Appendix.

Table-1 reveals that 40% of the 150 executives were the Regional Managers and Project Leaders, 10% General Managers, 10% Sales Managers, 10% Senior Project Managers, 10% Software Engineers, 10% Senior Sales Executives, and 10% Business Development Managers in the software companies in National Capital Region, Delhi.

*V-2: Classification of executives according to age group*

The executives of software companies in National Capital Region, Delhi have been classified according to their age groups. The data given in the following table reveal the classification of executives according to age groups.

**Table- 2**  
**Classification of Executives according to Age Group**

Age Groups (in years)	No. of Executives Surveyed	Percentage of Executives
25—30	30	20%
30—35	45	30%
35—40	45	30%
40—45	15	10%

45—50	15	10%
Total	150	100%

Source: Questionnaire-1 in the Appendix.

Table- 2 reveals that age groups 30-35 and 35-40 contain maximum number of executives surveyed, i.e. 45-45 respectively. Moreover, 120 out of the total of 150 executives surveyed lie within the age group 25-40. Thus, it can be said that a majority of executives (80%) are of the middle age group.

#### *V-3: Classification of executives according to experience*

The experience years of executives in software companies in National Capital Region, Delhi are given in the following table:

**Table- 3**  
**Classification of Executives according to Experience**

Experience (in years)	No. of Executives Surveyed	Percentage of Executives
02—07	15	10%
07—12	15	10%
12—17	90	60%
17—22	15	10%
22—27	15	10%
Total	150	100%

Source: Questionnaire-1 in the Appendix.

Table- 3 reveals that a majority of the executives (60%) have 12 to 17 years of experience in software industry. Thus, it can be said that the software companies in National Capital Region, Delhi have well-experienced executives.

#### *V-4: Classification of executives according to educational qualification*

The qualification of executives in software companies have been discussed in the following table:

**Table- 4**  
**Classification of Executives according to**  
**Educational Qualification**

Educational qualification	No. of Executives	% of Executives
Engineering or other Technical degree	60	40%
Masters in Computer Application	30	20%
Both Management and Technical degree	30	20%
Post graduation	15	10%
Graduation	15	10%
Total	150	100%

Source: Questionnaire-1 in the Appendix.

Table- 4 reveals the literacy levels of executives in general. 40% of the executives have both engineering and other technical qualifications. 20% of the executives have computer application education, 20% of executives have both management and technical education. Thus, the software companies located in NCR, Delhi have a class of highly qualified executives.

#### **VI- Quality of Executive Development Programmes in India**

Let us consider the table given below:

**Table- 5**

Options	Respondent	Percentage
Yes	75	50
No	75	50
Total	150	100

Source: Questionnaire-2 in the Appendix.

Table- 5 reveals that out of 150 executives surveyed in selected five software companies in National Capital Region, Delhi-India, 50% (75) of



the executives are satisfied with the quality of executive developing programs in India while 50% (75) were not satisfied with the quality of executive development programs.

*VI-1: Need for India's own style of development programmes*

Let us consider the table given below:

**Table- 6**

<u>Options</u>	Respondent	Percentage
Yes	135	90
No	15	10
Total	150	100

Source: Questionnaire-2 in the Appendix.

Table- 6 shows that 135(90%) of the respondents agree that Indian software companies should develop their own well designed development programmes for their executives. Thus, it can be concluded that Indian software industry should design there own executive development programmes in India in order to meet the requirements of domestic as well as global markets.

*VI-2: Mandatory evaluation of executive development programmes in software industry*

Let us consider the following table:

**Table- 7**

<u>Options</u>	Respondent	Percentage
Yes	150	100
No	0	0
Total	150	100

Source: Questionnaire-2 in the Appendix.

Table- 7 indicates that 100% of the executives surveyed have appreciated the appraisal of executive development programmes, and they all have agreed that such executive development programmes are mandatory to the upgrading and advancement of their knowledge based assets.

### *VI-3: Production of global managers*

Let us consider the table presented below:

**Table- 8**

<u>Options</u>	Respondent	Percentage
Yes	150	100
No	0	0
Total	150	100

Source: Questionnaire-2 in the Appendix.

It is evident from Table- 8 that all the 150(100%) executives surveyed are of the opinion that India can produce global managers by enhancing and polishing their skills through the conduct of various executive development programmes at regular intervals. Thus, it is concluded that India has a potential to produce global managers with the help of executive development programs.

### *VI-4: Measurement of business professionalism*

Let us consider the table given below:

**Table- 9**

<u>Options</u>	Respondent	Percentage
Yes	120	80
No	30	20
Total	150	100

Source: Questionnaire-2 in the Appendix.

Table- 9 reveals that 120 (80%) of the executives are of the view that their business professionalism can be measured by their efficiency and effectiveness of performing the work while 30 (20%) are of the opinion that it is not only difficult but almost impossible to measure the business professionalism.

*VI-5: Business professionalism as a money oriented concept*

Let us consider the table presented below:

**Table- 10**

<u>Options</u>	Respondent	Percentage
Yes	75	50
No	75	50
Total	150	100

Source: Questionnaire- 2 in the Appendix.

Table- 10 shows that 75(50%) of executives are of the opinion that money plays a vital role in today's business environment scenario; whereas, 75(50%) are of the view that they go with the values and quality as a first incentive for their self satisfaction, and money will be the secondary incentive for them.

*VI-6: Liberal Indian economy's improved quality of executive development programmes*

Let us consider the table given below:

**Table- 11**

Options	Respondent	Percentage
Yes	105	70
No	45	30
Total	150	100

Source: Questionnaire- 2 in the Appendix.

Table- 11 depicts that, out of the total population of executives covered under this study, 70% (105) of the responding executives convincingly answered that the quality of development programmes has improved due to liberalisation of the Indian economy; while, 30% (45) of them did not agree to it. Thus, it can be concluded that due to liberalisation of Indian economy, the quality of executive development programmes has improved.

*VI- 7: Development programmes are steps towards new innovations*

Let us consider the table given below:

**Table- 12**

Options	Respondent	Percentage
Yes	135	90
No	15	10
Total	150	100

Source: Questionnaire- 2 in the Appendix.

Table- 12 shows that 135(90%) of executives are of the opinion that the development programmes are positive steps towards innovations. Thus, it can be concluded that development programmes certainly knock at the door of new innovation and advancement in managerial and professional skills and knowledge.

## **VII- Conclusion**

One of the biggest success stories of the market oriented reforms in India is IT sector. India is now amongst the fastest growing IT markets in the world. Supportive Government policies along with private sector participation have fuelled the sector's unprecedented growth and expansion. The globalisation of economic activities since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century has witnessed the emergence of the Indian IT/software industry diaspora as a key player on the world stage. Contemporary developments in upgrading and enhancing the skills and knowledge of their knowledge based assets through providing the executive development programmes at different levels and time intervals have enabled these IT/software

companies to operate virtually anywhere in the world. The liberalisation of HR policies with regard to training and development on their executives, and diminishing constraints on the flow of transactional capital by top management to enhance the skills of their executives has meant that many of the companies are now able to invest in executive development programmes that can generate highest returns.

Executive development programmes have proved that their content creation work consistently meets the high standards, enabling the companies to expand the capabilities and global boundaries further, and achieve cost efficiencies and effectiveness. That is why, 50% of the executives expressed their satisfaction with the quality of executive development programmes in India; whereas, 50% were dissatisfied with the quality of the programmes organised in different software companies in NCR, Delhi. This study also reveals that, since 90% of the executives considered that India should develop and frame its own style of executive development programmes, 100% of the executives thought that there should be a mandatory evaluation of executive development programmes in the software industry of India with the object of producing global managers. Of the total executives, 80% of them are of the view that business professionalism can be measured; whereas, 50% of them think that business professionalism is a money oriented concept. Moreover, 70% of the executives are of the view that the liberalisation of Indian economy has improved the quality of executive development programmes; whereas, 90% of them say that the executive development programmes are major steps towards innovations in this sunrise sector of India. In other words, an executive development programme is like a flower in bloom to be experienced.

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### Appendix: a two-part questionnaire

Questionnaire-1 pertaining to Table-1, Table-2, Table-3, and Table-4 in the text

S. No.	Particulars
1.	Name
2.	Date of Birth (Age)
3.	Educational Qualification
4.	Business Organization
5.	Position Title / Grade
6.	Area of Working
7.	Period of Experience in this field
8.	Work experience in Present Organization
9.	Address (optional)
10.	Contact No (optional)
11.	Email ID (optional)

Questionnaire-2 relating to Table-5, Table-6, Table-7, Table-8, Table-9, Table- 10, Table-11, and Table-12 in the text

S. No.	Give Answers to Following Questions in Y or N	Y/N
A.	Are you satisfied with the quality of developing programs in India?	( )
B.	Should India develop its own style of development programs?	( )
C.	Should there be a mandatory evaluation of executive development program in software industry?	( )
D.	Can India produce global managers?	( )
E.	Can we measure business professionals?	( )
F.	Is business professionalism a money oriented concept?	( )
G.	Has liberalization of Indian economy improved quality of development programs?	( )
H.	Whether development programs are the steps towards new innovations?	( )