

Role and Importance of Human Resource Management in Modernization of Zoos in India

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In order to be world class, Indian zoos will have to refresh their human resource management system. Management problems create an opportunity for zoo personnel to work on and realize their potential. There is a very wide range of tasks and activities in the zoo viz. research, education, marketing, veterinary, husbandry, conservation, recreation, etc.

Zoos have all the required resources, which need to be identified and used optimally. As we are swept along the flood of exhibit and management innovations, we must remember that it is people, and not technology, which brings success.

If we try to understand the depth and importance of skilled labour, which can help us to avoid criticism and accidents in zoos, then it will help in accomplishing our zoo mission/ objective. Zoos need freedom from the stifling influences of State Government and the Municipal Corporation bureaucracy, and red tapism which will allow the modern zoo to recruit and hire skilled personnel, remove unproductive personnel and thus speed up decision making. Still, today most of the zoos recruit, or hire or outsource veterinary doctors on a contract basis with low remuneration. Also this is the case with decision makers (director, curators and other officers etc.,) who are transferred very often or every 3 to 4 years of their service in the zoo. Then a new person joins the zoo at higher post just because of the routine transfer with no past experience in zoo which further deteriorates the condition of the zoo administration and management and thus acts as a barrier for development of zoo and motivation of zoo employees.

What zoos need to understand today is the importance of recruitment policies rather than following the State Government or Municipal Corporation recruitment policies. You can't apply the same recruitment policies for the zoo staff. What we need to work on today is a new zoo recruitment policy, which is more sophisticated, challenging and complex.

Thus, in order to accomplish all its diverse goals, zoos must have innovative and well-trained, recruited personnel who understand the vision and goals of a modern zoological institution and have the requisite skills and motivation to implement them. The zoo recruiters have to make staff recruitment development and retention a priority at all levels which should also include continuous education and formal training opportunities.

In most of the zoos in India, the curators, veterinarians, education officers are performing all kinds of work in zoos which they are not supposed to do like legal affairs, administration, paperwork, supervisory at cash counter, feeding house, security, etc. Thus, we need to frame a proper job description and job specifications for each employee, so that they can concentrate on their job and not something that they are not supposed to do.

Job Descriptions — consisting of

- Job title
- Location (department)
- Job summary (objective of job)
- Working condition
- Principal duties & responsibilities
- Supervision
- Machines, tools, and equipment
- Hazards

Job Specifications — consisting of human qualification which is necessary to do the job.

- Education
- Experiences
- Training
- Judgement
- Initiative
- Physical skills
- Responsibilities
- Emotional characteristic
- Communication skills

Thus, involving staff from all areas and levels in the zoo organization will make better exhibitory. It will also strengthen commitment to the overall objectives of the zoo. Zoo employees should be self motivated or motivated by means of incentives, rewards, remuneration, recognition, promotion, etc.

Zoos need to follow a unique hierarchy as well as separate departments for different kinds of functioning in zoos. Thus, with implementation of various departments and assigning the targets for them, each department should have a business attitude and specific goal/mission to perform. The zoo organization should confirm that all the zoo staff must be involved in one or the other zoo task/mission. e.g., targets / mission accomplished and the appraisal for departments

Veterinary Department:

- Conservation & research oriented targets.
- Contributing articles and research work in various zoo magazines.
- Successful breeding of the endangered species.
- Total numbers of successful cases done.

Educational Department:

- Education oriented targets.
- Involve visitors in educational programmes.
- Fixed programmes should be held yearly.
- Compare the revenue and visitors with last year/quarter.

Human resource management:

- Check the attrition rates.
- Training programme for each department should be schedule.

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Marketing Department:

- Total revenue generated as compared to last quarter/year.
- They should target institutes, colleges, schools, tourist, and attract them to visit zoo.

This will help in systematic evaluation of the individual with respect to his/her performances on the job and his/her potential for development. This will further

help the organization to access the training and development needs of employees.

Thus, optimum output and speedy work will be the most important characteristic of the world class zoo in 21st century. The core mission of the zoo profession will not be attained if other important factors such as organizational behavior, employee recruitment, training, retention, development and marketing are neglected or left unresolved.

Report on the Kabul Zoo, Afghanistan

To meet the hard winter in Afghanistan, we at the Kabul Zoo started getting ready for it. We put together for some mammals and birds and also we put heaters inside the cages to help keep them warm.

Wildlife Conservation Society conducted a training programme with zoo staff and the veterinary faculty students and vet clinic at the zoo from Nov 18 -21. It was very useful for all staff and they got a certificate from WCS also. The workshop agenda included wildlife immobilization, handling and sampling.

Our education department recorded visitation of 160 children from four kindergarten schools; 120 students from other three schools. 200 students from Cooperation Center for Afghanistan (CCA) visiting the zoo.

The number of Mammal and bird species at the zoo are as follows :

Lion 2; Chines bear 1; Local bears 6;
Wolves 9; Jackals 5; Foxes 5;
Rabbits 32; Millus 8; Owls 12;
Vultures 16; Eagles 7; Porcupine 4;
Gazelle 4; Ibex 1; Goat 2; Sheep 1;
Pig 1; Maccaca 25; Ducks 6; Pattridge 2;
Crane 2; Paraket 5; Turkey 3; Peacock 5;
Pheasant 3; Doves 6; Pelican 1; Pigeon 17;
Geese 2; Lovebirds 20; Snowcock 1;
Pallas cat 4; Guineafowls 2.

Submitted by Mohammed Saidel Fazil, Education

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Announcement

Special issue of ZOOS' PRINT on P. P. Raval, 1951-2006 and Asiatic Lion

Mr. P. P. Raval, Ex. Deputy Conservator of Forest, Sasan (Gir), Gujarat passed away on 31st October 2006 due to kidney failure. We failed to report this earlier due to some confusion.

Now, we wish to honour P.P. Raval, a wonderful wildlifer who worked for conservation of Indian wildlife generally and Asiatic lion in particular, quietly and effectively his whole working career.

We will be bringing out an special issue featuring P.P. Raval and Asiatic Lion. In addition to a detailed obituary by Dr. Maradia and Asiatic Lions Protection Society, a reprint of the half-page Times of India article, some comments from a Souvenir brought out by Mr. Raval's family and whatever we can collect.

Mr. Raval was undoubtedly one of the most humble and dedicated of foresters. His works included both people and animals, conservation and education, zoo and wildlife management.

We invite you to contribute a memory, anecdote, photograph or article about Mr. Raval, the human being, the zoo man, the wildlife officer so we can honour him in a grand way.

The Editor Emeritus of ZP has been invited to help inaugurate an Asiatic Lion enclosure in Zurich in March and give a presentation. You can be sure that the Late P.P. Raval will figure large in her presentation and your contributions will make that credit to him even larger.

Thanking you and awaiting your contribution,
Sally Walker