The Equality Theme in Contemporary Human Resource Development Discourse: A Critical and Contextual Case Study of an Education Development Agency in Pakistan

Muhammad Athar Siddiqui

Department of Human Resource Management

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Strathclyde

June 2010

This thesis is the result of the author's original research. It has been composed by the author and has not been previously submitted for examination which has lead to the award of a degree.'

Signed: Date:

Dedicated to my father, Dr. Muhammad Mujahid Siddiqui, whose work ethic and integrity will always be a source of inspiration

Acknowledgements

I am thankful to my supervisor, Dr. Stephen Gibb for his invaluable guidance, support and help over the course of study. His ability to advice without taking away my own creativity is an aspect that I would take further as a source of personal learning. I am also thankful to my second supervisor, Dr. Calvin Burns for his admirable calmness in providing feedback of my work.

I am grateful to all the staff of Department of HRM at University of Strathclyde for their ever present cooperation and wee-chats that I would fondly remember. I must remember all other PhD students for being such a nice group and for sharing their own horror stories of writing-up to understand I was not the only beast in the stress. I should especially thank Patricia McTaggart, former secretary of postgraduate programmes and the current secretary, Jean Nelson for their timely help in administrative sides of managing the project. Sincere thanks must go to Dr. Dora Scholarios, director of postgraduate programmes for her support towards scholarships, visa extensions and her constant 'encouraging' reminders for finishing the thesis. I should also be thankful to Universities UK for the ORSAS scholarship and all the people who supported my application for the funding.

I wish to express many thanks to the members of the organisation, who provided me opportunity to conduct my fieldwork and were supportive towards fulfilment of my academic goals. I must not forget colleagues who were kind enough to allow me access to libraries in Pakistan and posted me local literature, whenever I needed. I should also thank Ayesha Malik Khan for proof-editing this document. I must especially mention my friends Sumair and Zeeshan who checked the document on immediate notices.

I must also express my gratitude to members of UFHRD, who provided critical feedback at conferences and helped me see the value of my work beyond PhD. I should also thank Dr. Jenny Rodriguez of this department for her help in data analysis technique and continual nudging for reading one more paper. I must also acknowledge the contribution of Sohailuddin K. Alavi, my undisclosed mentor, and former teacher

in Ethics and Management Practices, who has always appreciated my work, regardless to the fact that I critique whatever he comes up with. This is the time to say that my outlook towards organisational studies continue to be shaped by his teachings.

I am utmost thankful to mom and dad, who have prayed for me and supported me morally, emotionally and financially throughout my life; words cannot do the justice to their effort. Equally supportive have been my parents-in-law throughout the course of study. I am grateful to my brother, Dr. Ilyas for his early morning text messages to wake me up despite knowing I work up late at nights. And also, to brother Abrar, whose own PhD at Michigan State University has kept him as cheerful as mine, which meant we had plenty of interesting stuff to share.

I cannot thank my wife Fatima enough for her patience and care, who had to cancel many of her plans but was always there for me. I also appreciate her help for cross-checking the references; a job she did competently. The one to be acknowledged most is my son, Huzaifah, whose baby utterances over the phone, which were harder but more fun to transcribe than an interview, were motivational in finishing the thesis.

Abstract

Contemporary human resource development (HRD) approaches such as organisational learning, learning organisation, communities of practices, and mentoring all present an idealised worldview based on participation, mutuality, employee centeredness and shared notions of learning. While this discourse is stronger than ever, the studies presenting evidence about these remain scarce. The advocates of critical studies in HRD have critiqued this discourse for its idealism, strong performative focus covered under assumptions of equality and its disorientation from organisational contexts. However, the critical scholarship has not quite moved beyond critique to the empirical research.

With an aim to critically examine the equality theme in contemporary HRD discourse in a case study context, and to advance the holistic and contextually informed understanding of HRD practice, critical interpretivist case study research was undertaken in an education development organisation in the Sindh province of Pakistan. Three main objectives are considered in this research. First, is to analyse dissemination of HRD discourse in the workplace. This helps to see the nature and direction of discourse present in organisations. Second, is to analyse consumption of this discourse. That is, what are members of the organisation doing with discourse based on rationales of equality? This informs whether what is espoused is also in-use or not. Third, is to understand the contextual factors encouraging or discouraging the realisation of equalities in an HRD relationship. That is, what are the characteristics of a wider organisational context that are impinging upon the practice of an HRD discourse?

Data collection was carried out over a three month period and included 50 semi-structured interviews, direct observations in a work setting, HRD events and some documentary evidence. Critical discourse analysis was used as an analytic technique to put findings into contextual perspective. Data analysis reveals strong presence of a contemporary HRD discourse disseminated through a range of interventions and its

importance connected to change, growth, social justice and organisational members' well-being. However, the consumption of this discourse is not internalised and there is very little in-use which is espoused. Employees do not see much practical value in this discourse and merely, they are using the discourse to create a favourable impression and please HRD professionals. Buried within this heavy discourse of participation are the realities of context. Findings show the existence of the socio-political nature of context restricting the realisation of equality based learning relationships. The exploitation of employees at the hands of privileged groups and demarcations on the basis of social status and language barriers explain the reasons for a failed practice of HRD concepts. It also shows learners' disengagement in the learning process affected by unfulfilled promises of participatory and social equality and its impact in terms of their perceptions towards HRD and its initiators in the organisation.

The study highlights the importance of equalities in HRD by paying critical attention to the context rather than showcasing learning as a natural harmonious occurrence. By bringing to surface relatively muted issues of context in HRD research, giving voice to the learner and generating an evidence-based account of HRD practice, the study makes an important contribution to the emerging field of critical HRD.

Contents

Illustrations

Figures

Tables

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background – Scoping the field

Human resource development (HRD) at its heart is concerned with facilitation of learning and purports to bring betterment, for individuals, groups, organisations or societies (McGoldrick *et al*. 2002a). Whatever we do in our lives as students, academicians, or practitioners has a strong bond with HRD. Our career aspirations and interests are facilitated by some form of education, training and workplace learning. Hence, formally or informally, we are touched by HRD throughout our lives.

HRD as a field of organisational studies has taken big leaps over the last two decades. From its identity as a study of managing a single unit department of training and development, HRD has come a long way forward to establish its position as a subject of strategic importance. The mainstream literature in HRD focuses on the organisational aspects and caters to the developmental needs of the workforce to improve performance in the areas of innovation, quality, and cost reduction amongst others (Swanson and Holton 2001). The contemporary HRD literature addresses these aims using a variety of concepts such as, organisational learning, learning organisation, lifelong learning, mentoring and other related developments. The workplace learning ideas have moved from formal training and development programmes to learning in teams and from each other. Overall, the shift has tilted towards placing greater responsibility on the individual to learn, for teams to collaborate, for shared perspectives in learning and for organisations to think of an individual's development as a way forward for future (Kim 1993). The strategic and futuristic direction of HRD views learning as a free-flowing process of mutuality, equality and participation in developmental relationships. This orientation of

HRD comprising 'learning in organisation' perspectives is understood as the most influential and central thread of the HRD literature.

The growing focus on participatory HRD in the learning-orientated discourse is identified as an equality theme for this study. This is a relevant theme for analysis as the contemporary HRD discourse attempts to engage learners through some form of participation. The coverage of how equality is embedded in various HRD concepts is discussed in detail in Chapter 2. Equality, as a topic of research, has been debated and critiqued in the long tradition of human resource management (HRM). Traditionally, equality issues in HRM have focused on equality of opportunities in employment (Pilbeam and Corbridge 2002). The typical focus of these studies has been on the analysis of the impact of equality legislations in controlling discriminatory practices against disadvantaged groups, such as, women, racial minorities and disabled workers (Özbilgin 2000). The discourse of equality adopted in this study is different from the legislative aspects of equality in HRM studies. Rather, it is based on the espoused promises of equality in the contemporary HRD discourse, which claims to offer equality-orientation in HRD interventions and practices.

In this research, I take a critical stance to this acclaimed body of contemporary HRD discourse, which presents the process of learning and development as a naturally occurring good (Holmes 2004). In spite of the large number of territorial debates about definitions and purposes of HRD, for example, American writers' emphasis on performance outcomes and European writers' favouring of learning outcomes (Garavan *et al.*, 2000) or whether HRD needs to be defined or not (Lee 2004), a consistent feature of modern day HRD literature is its normative and prescriptive conceptualisation of the process of learning and development. This prescriptiveness in HRD theory is advocated through unquestionable ideals of equality and shared approaches to learning with no significant considerations given to the *context* of production in which HRD is practiced and learning takes place.

With this as a core argument, the key point raised in this research is the need to take a critical stance to the *equality* theme in contemporary human resource development discourse. This refers to the argument of HRD as a general good for people, society and organisations. Broadly, this shall refer to shared and participatory approaches to learning and development based on openness, mutuality, respect, harmony and so forth. In that sense, HRD for this project can be understood as an umbrella term inclusive of ideas such as organisational learning, learning organisation/company, communities of practice, training and development, and critical reflection. This implies that this study is not about testing one particular concept in HRD but I study contemporary HRD discourse in general in an organisational setting. This discourse can also be identified as the discourse of learning orientated organisations.

1.2 Conceptual and empirical rationale – Towards a contextual understanding of HRD

Academic writings have presented the contemporary HRD discourse formed around notions of shared learning as a 'conflict-free' literature (Walton 1999). Despite the growth of publications on idealistic forms of HRD and learning orientation, research evidence suggesting the successful practice of such discourse is sparse. Taking this problem into account, Easterby-Smith *et al*. (2000) have observed the renewed attention towards addressing the problem-free and best-practice nature of organisational learning. They comment that somewhere in the way of popularising organisational learning concepts, the reality of the socio-cultural / organisational context was lost. For instance, until recently, in its established tradition of academia, organisational learning and learning organisation literature paid silence to issues of power, politics, dominant actors, emotions and wider organisational concerns (Vince 2001). In addition, the unitary and global outlook of contemporary HRD provides little room of appreciation for contextual differences prevailing across organisations and different parts of the world. But the problem is not limited to prescriptiveness of the contemporary HRD texts. More typically,

its persuasiveness concentrates on the individual, the learner or the worker, that is providing them with participatory and equality based opportunities of learning and development. Yet, the theory has a strong mainstream focus and the underlying gains are organisational. The language used is one of equality, sharing, mutuality and participation but the purpose is to advance organisations in a rapidly changing environment (Fenwick 2001). The literature establishes that employees should take the centre stage and be in control of their learning, but the empirical cupboard confirming this remains empty. Mainstream HRD research largely remains immune to the voice of the learner and at a distance from understanding influences of socio-cultural / organisational context on HRD practice. Thus, the blanketed assumptions of equality in learning remain intact.

These concerns about the ethical and moral choices of informing realities and equality ideals are now being actively raised by critical HRD (CHRD) writers. The fundamental struggle of CHRD deals with challenging taken for granted assumptions of the dominant paradigm of performance, unmasking the capitalistic endeavours of organisation and unravelling the socio-cultural and political context in which learning occurs (Rigg *et al.* 2007; Callahan 2007). A significant drive of CHRD is to emancipate the oppressed, to shift the balance of power and to give voice to the disadvantaged in learning (Fenwick 2004; Sambrook 2009). In doing so, CHRD aims to produce social equality at work and in HRD.

Although 'theoretical' awareness of neglected issues of context in HRD has increased, parallel research evidence advancing the contextual understanding of HRD is slow. Speaking about the contradictions in critical HRD, Trehan *et al.* (2007) assert that the critical HRD literature is in danger of presenting theoretical underpinnings without laying a foundation in 'relevance in research'. Their argument is that the dynamics of dominant structures are not dislodged by theoretical shifts but by finding ways to research the relevant issues. At a more philosophical level, Sambrook (2007a) raises the point that this is a critical 'time' for HRD and proposes that while we should not take for granted any assumptions, we must also not assume our assumptions without criticality.

To an extent, publications in the HRD arena have responded to these questions and contextual understanding and dynamics of power, politics, emotions and trust have started to appear in empirical studies. However, the research on learning in organisations, as Prange (1999) observed, is still done in a non-cumulative way. The little gathered research evidence of the interplay between socio-cultural and political influences in HRD are scattered and are not the direct result of studies conducted for this purpose. Moreover, where there have been cases of contextual understanding in HRD, studies have usually focused on management function and processes in place, with little voice coming from 'employee, the learner' – the supposed main beneficiary of HRD interventions and the legitimate purpose of critical studies. Further, newer studies that have analysed the practice of critically reflective discourse with attention paid to 'voices' of individual learners, have come from the domain of classroom settings (see for example, Trehan and Rigg 2003; Sambrook 2007b). However, critical and holistic case studies focusing on contextual understanding of contemporary HRD discourse in an *organisational* setting remain in paucity.

Considering the debates highlighted above, I have attempted to study the equality theme in HRD discourse in a non-western context of Pakistan. To show sensitivity towards the claims of global best-practices of contemporary HRD, the next section gives an overview of HRD research in developing countries. The status of HRM and HRD research in Pakistan is covered after that.

1.3 HRD research in developing countries

McLean (2000) expressed that HRD is marked by a considerable effort to find one right answer. Despite numerous research efforts within HRD journals, there is still not one unified explanation of learning, and yet there continues to be a custom to reference the universal theory of HRD in the submitted articles for these journals (McLean 2006). Drawing from personal and professional experiences in various countries, McLean (2000,

2006) noted that HRD cannot be defined even for a single country, let alone the world. For example, he argues that he has witnessed failure of change management interventions within Taiwan, which had been successful elsewhere in the same country. Furthermore, he mentions that having taught to students of 69 different nationalities, he has experienced several worldviews, each offering a distinct opportunity to conceive learning from the perspective of a student's country of origin.

Zhu's (1998) study of HRD in China during transition to a new economic system highlighted that while radical changes and reforms in organisations were persuasive, the conditions only started to change when the context of markets changed in the economy. Until then, Chinese managers kept investing in training, and experimenting with best-practice resources that came with the reforms agenda, but were not able to see any material changes in the way they operated. This was mainly due to the Chinese context of highly centralised planning, which did not support the reforms in business and management practices.

Similarly, in understanding the transfer of knowledge base for MBA education in China, Newell (1999) questioned the importation of the degree programmes from first-world countries. She argued that the linear attempt of transfer of education is based on fake assumptions because most of the USA MBA knowledge is based on objective truth and cognitive understanding of knowledge. However, Chinese traditions have a very strong role for social-construction of knowledge, and see knowledge as relational. The Chinese model is based on a community concept, and social connection is an essential element in conducting business. She concludes that Chinese managers see best-practices as under-emphasising the context-specificity of knowledge.

In the same vein, the relational concept of context and knowledge has also been reported in Chang's (2009) study of assessing multi-national training programmes. The research tested a contemporary concept of openness in learning, and observed the American trainers' struggle in relation to authority with Taiwanese participants. This struggle was

based on the trainers' coming to terms with their emphasis on two-way communication and a silent response from the participants. The respect culture towards the instructor in this multinational organisation meant that none of the participants would ask any questions from trainers, which created a culture of silence in training situations, and failed to materialise the concept of openness that trainers were trying to bring into the training sessions.

Other studies, however, show that there is no unified proposition to ascertain that local cultural factors influence HRD in every country or organisation. For instance, Dirani (2009) conducted a quantitative study to identify the relationship among the learning organisation culture, job satisfaction and employee commitment in the Lebanese banking sector. The results of this study showed a positive correlation between several constructs of variables, but no direct or interaction effect of Lebanese social patterns, such as, Islamic values and family-based socialisation was reported.

On presenting a commentary for the future of HRD, Stewart (2005) observed that one area that should be ruled out for a future research agenda is comparative research across cultures. His argument is based on McLean's (2000) convincing argument that HRD cannot be understood in a universal fashion, and that HRD is largely dependent on the country's stage of development. In fact, this is consistent with the publication trends in HRD journals. The papers published in the special issue of Human Resource Development International (2009) on HRD in developing countries presented studies on India, Saudi-Arabia and China. The focus of these papers centred on HRD challenges, and included issues such as planning for managing large populations, countering low female participation in the labour market, and reducing reliance on oil industries for growth.

1.4 HRM and HRD in Pakistan

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is a developing country in South Asia with an official estimated population of 165.6 million (Federal Bureau of Statistics 2009). According to 1998 census, male population is 51 % and female population is 49 % and the urban-rural divide is 32.5 % and 67.5% (ibid.). The official national language of the country is Urdu and the business language is English. Four provinces make up the country, namely; Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan and North West Frontier with each having its own official provincial language and strong regional identity. For example, depending on their province and language locality, people are more likely to identify themselves as Sindhis (Sindhi speaking) or Punjabis (Punjabi speaking) rather than identifying themselves as Pakistanis (Rahman 1994). The official religion of the country is Islam and constitutes majority of Muslim population. The literacy rate of Pakistan is amongst lowest in the world at 43 %.

The understanding of business and management practices in Pakistan organisations is limited in international publications. Research is usually done by students in business schools and published in local journals or expert articles by practitioners are published in leading newspapers. In Hofstede's (1991) studies, Pakistan is positioned as collectivist, high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance and half way of the masculinity index. Khilji's (2001) research on understanding HRM in Pakistan shows that corporate culture in a Pakistani organisation is a mix of British inheritance, local values and American influences. She notes that HRM in Pakistan is done in traditional ways, structures are hierarchical, authorities are accepted without questioning, policies flow top-down and feedback is rarely sought.

Since the 1990s, the Government of Pakistan has adopted a comprehensive programme of deregulation and has encouraged private investments. Steps have been taken to launch change management programmes in inefficient public sector organisations. The aims of such programmes have been to introduce professionalism and sound management

practices in the areas of recruitment, selection, and performance appraisals (Qureshi 1994). The paradigm adopted at the national level has been functional and performance-focused, outlining a new culture characterised by innovation, quality and discipline (Pakistan HR Society 2001).

The private sector and multinational organisations have embraced integrated and focused HRM systems, paying attention to culture, organisational development changes and various approaches such as Management by Objectives, 360 degree appraisals, and pay for performance (Hussain 2003). However, Jamal (1998, 2005) reports that the Pakistani organisations continue to suffer from lack of vision, and operational inconsistencies because of centralised structures. Qureshi's (1994) study on employee effectiveness in South Asia cautions that while HRM practices continue to progress, parallel practices of personal contacts and favouritism still prevail in the recruitment and selection processes. The study notes that the added managerial layers are created without any rationale, mainly to facilitate promotions based on socialisation processes.

Khilji (2001) argues that the Pakistani society holds three distinct ethos, which are social set-up, religion and the West. According to her, the childhood experiences of social set-up, where elderly respect is essential, influences the organisational set-up of unquestioned authority. Religion, in her assessment is in the sub-conscious. On the basis of her research on organisational cultures in 25 Pakistani organisations, she contends that Islam appears least significant at work. The Western values come from British colonialism, which was based on formal structures, authoritative controls and acceptance of top-management decisions. However, her own work and other studies such as Hussain (2003) and Menezes (2006) suggest the preference for an American style of work. The dress codes have become less formal, feedback processes between managers and employees have become stronger and in-house training facilities have exposed employees to modern management practices. Menezes (2006) argues that HRM in Pakistan has moved on from bureaucratic structures and there exists a good team spirit in employees to contribute to the organisation. But he adds that despite this growth, the perception of HR in Pakistan is that

of a cost-centre rather than a contributor. Recent studies by Shamsi and Jalees (2004) on cultural transformation in the financial sector and by Khan and Fariduddin (2006) on facilitators of change in state oil company observe higher levels of modernisation and presence of participatory management and refreshing attitude in corporate cultures. This implies that there is some evidence of the growing acceptance of involving workers in decision-making and the emergence of organisational culture based on lesser hierarchical forms of communication.

HRD in Pakistan is even lesser known than HRM. HRD in Pakistan, at least from a government perspective focuses on country development. Given its stage of a developing country, the higher education target areas in terms of facilitating education, vocational skills, scholarships concentrate on science, and engineering technologies (Budhwani 2008). However, HRD as a subject of study and area of work have grown at a speedy rate in the last 15 years and modern curricula, mainly based on American and Japanese practices are taught in MBA programmes. Despite problems of instability in the region, and international perception of a country marred by security issues, businesses operate normally as they do in any other country and competitiveness and market needs guide professional development (Memon 2004).

HRD needs in the market are governed by the challenges of globalisation, international trade and productivity. Various professional bodies at both national and local levels, such as Skills Development Council, Vocational Training Institute, and Directorate of Manpower and Training have been formed to impart skills in the workforce (Kazmi 2007). According to Amjad (2005), these initiatives have been taken because skills development has been the most neglected area in the country. These bodies are expected to provide a productivity link between employers and training providers (Kazmi 2007). The focus of these institutes have been on providing technical skills such as quality and safety controls, trouble shooting, project planning and report writing (ADB 2005).

HRD interventions in the corporate sector come from private training houses, consultants and in-house facilities. Many professional organisations now employ a dedicated training and development manager or an organisational development head (Menezes 2006). Management are also sent to attend executive courses in top business schools. These residential training programmes can be about functional areas, strategic areas or customised for a particular sector or organisation (REDC 2009). The multi-nationals, local private sector and well-known developmental sector organisations follow the best-practices model and invest heavy funds in the development of people (Pakistan HR Society 2008). The training in these organisations covers a broad scope of skills, and management development programmes. These organisations are well-connected internationally and can also afford to engage international consultants for HRD interventions. Recruitment in these organisations comes from top business and engineering schools and the workers are familiar with modern concepts. Global HRD concepts such as learning organisations and employee-led development are considered 'trendy' at these workplaces (ibid.). However, there is not much research to suggest the effectiveness and distinct outcomes of these concepts in Pakistani organisations.

For this study, some Asian/Pakistan HRD relevant points to consider are that the case study organisation chosen for this research is located in the developmental sector, which as Budhwani (2008) commented is a better placed sector in terms of HRD vision, for example, in provision of training, advocating adult learning practices, and for creating public-private partnerships for empowerment and change. Similarly, Ismail *et al*. (2006) in reflecting on the Asian HRD conference suggested that researching HRD in Asian economies may suggest scope for addressing current cultural or political influences in practice. Moreover, Lynham and Cunningham (2006) on the basis of their comparative analysis of national HRD in transitional economies (Brazil, South Africa, Morocco, Philippines) observed that developing countries with a colonial past fight a joint struggle to equip the labour force with challenges of competitiveness and at the same time to break the norms of imperial past. Considering Pakistan was a British colony before

independence in 1947, such observations may be useful in understanding HRD practices in the present case study organisation.

1.5 Research aims

Keeping in mind the theoretical and empirical gaps highlighted above, the elaborative statement of this research aim can be written as,

> 'To critically examine the equality theme in contemporary HRD discourse in a case study context, and to advance the holistic and contextually informed understanding of HRD practice.'

Operationally, this is achieved with the following three research objectives.

a) To analyse the dissemination of espoused discourse in a case study organisation; that is, the nature, presence, methods and direction of contemporary HRD discourse
b) To analyse the consumption of the espoused discourse; that is, the in-use of this discourse, to compare what is preached and what is practiced
c) To evaluate the contextual realities impinging on practice of this discourse; that is, how organisational contextual factors are encouraging or discouraging this practice.

The expected outcomes are that the study will bring *'context'* back into HRD, develop an *'evidence based'* account of the practice, and give *'voice'* to the learner.

1.6 The case study setting

This research is based on a case study of an education development agency, EduDev, located in Karachi, Pakistan. This 200 employee, non-unionised organisation is engaged in various community development programmes supporting school and institutional development in the Sindh province. Given its linkages with the developmental sector, it subscribes to the contemporary discourse of learning formed on the principles of participation, and shared and social equalities. For this type of research, the selection of an organisation which at least theoretically articulates this discourse was an important criterion. The research aim to explicitly study the equality theme in HRD discourse informed this choice of setting because I was aware of EduDev's management belief in this discourse from my previous engagement with this organisation as an MPhil researcher and short-term employment. The evidence of this belief included interventions to become a Learning Organisation (Siddiqui 2004), change and re-structuring programmes to become participative in management styles, focusing on learning as a vital part of developmental campaigns and engaging consultants to redefine how organisation historically thought of development. This included efforts to move developmental directions from economic output alone to building self-awareness and challenging global norms of knowledge. Training programmes during this phase reinforced these ideas, and focused on behavioural aspects of working in a learning-orientated environment.

In addition, the research setting being outside Europe and North-America not only helps to advance contextual understanding in an organisational setting but also moves away from an universalistic and global outlook of contemporary HRD discourse.

1.7 Research methodology

Critical studies in HRD are concerned not only with the ideological critique but also with finding alternative perspectives to research. Philosophically, this research adopts a critical

interpretivist inquiry (Alvesson and Deetz 2000) to guide the aims of the research. This is concerned with illuminating a subjective view of the world, to deconstruct discourses of the researched, draw critical awareness to one's own interpretations and highlight the process of research informing those interpretations. This is done using reflexivity (Hardy *et al.* 2001), of 'self', of the researchers' pre-dispositions and connections with the researched and research place, which may have role on interpretation of the data. These include the issues of my previous connection with the organisation. In particular, this involves my Sindhi identity and presence of a majority of Sindhi workers in the organisation, especially at the work level who are considered learners. The other possible issue is the participants' perception of my role in the organisation. My motives were purely academic, and the research contract had no clause for me to report findings back to them. This means the organisation had no power in the way I disseminated the findings. These issues are further elaborated in the research methodology chapter and the final section of this document.

This study is based on a single case study design (Yin 2003) in a typical sense that it studies one central aspect, 'equality in contemporary HRD practice' using multiple data collection sources. Using purely qualitative methods, the research employed interviews, direct/overt observations and some document analysis. The focus in data collection was on explication of socio-cultural / organisational context and specific narratives and examples highlighting equalities / inequalities in HRD produced by the context. The use of multiple sources or triangulation has helped strengthening trustworthiness (reliability) in data and in understanding multiple perspective of the subject in consideration.

The nature of data collected is largely textual and involves discursive texts (e.g. narratives/metaphors/cultural expressions). With the purpose of contextual understanding of the field, critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used as an analytic strategy. This mode of discourse analysis entails picking up clues of 'context' from the qualitative data and making it subject to 'critical' understanding in relation to the objectives of research (Phillips and Hardy 2002; Fairclough 1995).

1.8 Levels of contribution

This study makes important contributions at levels of theory, practice and methodology in HRD. At the level of theory, it fulfils the aims of research and thus advances our understanding of shaping the context of HRD that helps or hinders the practice of equality-orientated learning and development. By elaborating on the seldom spoken matters of context in HRD, this research also shifts emphasis from conflict-free prescriptive ideals to a contextually aware and sensitive practice of HRD discourse. Further, by focusing on the unheard voices affected by promises of equality in developmental relationships, the research makes a significant increment to studies in critical HRD.

In congruence with the arguments of HRD as an ethical field and need for practice-driven theorisation in HRD (Stewart 2003), theoretical contribution in this research is achieved with certain practice related elaboration. That is, there is also an action orientation in the way theoretical knowledge has been used to advance contextual understanding of the field. However, any more prescriptive sets of recommendations have been avoided.

In addition to this practice-relevance embedded in theoretical advancement, the research also contributes to practice by highlighting challenges that practitioners may have to consider in conducting HRD given the socio-cultural context of organisations, especially in a foreign culture.

The study contributes to the research methodology in HRD by responding to Elliott and Turnbull's (2005) calls of bringing variety in researching HRD. Historically, the HRD research has been confined to a positivist analysis of quantifying training effectiveness while qualitative research has not been able to shift the ideology of looking at HRD from management's perspective (Valentin 2006). Critical studies, on the other hand, have generally avoided an empirical analysis (Trehan and Rigg 2007). This study, by combining critical theory and an interpretive paradigm, bridges this empirical gap in the

critical scholarship of HRD. The contributions are also reflected in terms of the benefits of researching in respondents' native language and challenges in researching a concept like equality.

1.9 Organisation of thesis

This work consists of five chapters in all. This chapter (Chapter 1) has introduced the research topic, the country context, research objectives and what is to come in this document.

Chapter 2 reviews literature on contemporary HRD discourse and the notions of equality. It starts with putting contemporary HRD in focus. The multi-disciplinary perspectives in contemporary HRD are mapped, and the equality theme in learning orientated discourse is identified as a focus of this research. The awareness of equality as a relevant area of inquiry is also demonstrated. It then explains the exponential rise of the equality theme in learning orientated discourse over the years. This is followed by a critique of naïve assumptions of shared and equality-based perspectives, which lacks empirical evidence, sidelines the learner and blindfolds its context. Recent critical examples addressing the identified issues are covered. Critical HRD as an alternative lens of understanding, inclusive of its own problems, is considered next. The chapter ends with a summary of the argument outlining the need for a more complete and contextual understanding of equality-based contemporary HRD discourse from a critical perspective.

Chapter 3 outlines the process of research investigation. Philosophical, methodological and analytical considerations are explained at length in this chapter. The details of the case study organisation, research questions, methods and procedures employed and issues of generalisability, validity and reliability in qualitative research are explained. The last

part of the chapter reflects on some of the ethical considerations faced during the data collection phase.

Chapter 4 is the presentation of the case study analysis. Findings are presented using the three research objectives as broad codes of presentation. Contextual findings are presented thematically with critical considerations given to the context in discussion; that is the use of critical discourse analysis as an analytic of text. Generally presented as a story of research, the analysis is comprehensive and some discussion and link to related theory is also included here.

Chapter 5 elaborates on the implications of the case study findings using theoretical resources and highlights contributions made to the contextual understanding of HRD in a case study organisation. The interplay of contextual influences and the equality theme is presented holistically and comparison with other similar studies is presented as a theoretical output. Along with practice and methods contribution, reflections on the critical practice of HRD are also given here. The conclusion takes into account the extent to which these findings are generalisable and identifies some areas of further research. The chapter ends with a section on limitations and reflexivity which elaborates on the possible effects of my position on the process of research and my identity on the interpretation of the data.

Chapter 2

Contemporary Human Resource Development: Equality Perspectives and the Missing Links

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the scope of the study and illuminated on the setting of this research. The focus of this research is the discourse of contemporary Human Resource Development (HRD). The word contemporary in this project signifies the learning ideas or ideals based on shared and participatory equalities, a view that equality-orientated development is available to employees in the organisations. That is, modern HRD practices, broadly the concepts of organisational learning / learning organisation, enable employees to become active participants of development and let them take charge of their own progress. In this chapter, I explore and critique the notions of this contemporary HRD discourse and set out the need for research from a critical perspective.

This chapter starts with a synthesis of mainstream conception in contemporary HRD, which is related to the best-practice management literature and the organisational benefits of utilising HRD. The central idea in the mainstream understanding is that organisations engage in HRD activities to increase competitiveness, innovation and productivity, which can result in direct financial benefits for the organisations. The mainstream conception purports to build an organisation for success and views HRD as a resource to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage in the global arena. The chapter extends the focus on contemporary HRD and presents multi-disciplinary perspectives of this field. Amongst several perspectives, the learning-orientated discourse in contemporary HRD is identified as an area of focus. This perspective imbues participatory equality as a key tenet in the current concepts of contemporary HRD.

The chapter then elaborates on the identification of an equality discourse as a relevant area for analysis. First, some understanding of equality research in general management / HRM is provided, which usually includes issues of equal opportunities in employment and is facilitated by legislative frameworks. The equality theme in HRD, however, is not a policy matter but is espoused through various ideas in contemporary HRD literature. After establishing this relevance, these contemporary ideas, such as learning organisations, communities of practice, and mentoring, and how they permeate the notions of equality as a common theme, are discussed.

The chapter then moves on to a critical examination of the problems related to this kind of discourse. The three main problems with this espoused theme of equality are debated. The first is its lack of evidence, that is, little empirical work suggesting that these equality-orientated HRD practices exist in real organisations. The second is sidelining the learner, that is, the supposed assumptions of benefiting workers are based on the performative assumptions of mainstream literature, which are disguised under the language of participation. The third problem is the blindfolding of context; that is, the view that contemporary HRD approaches are indeed best-practices and stand for the larger good of society, irrespective of operational context. The chapter then revisits these problems, and highlights some of the theoretical and empirical examples of how these issues have been addressed. This section shows that although some progress has occurred in understanding the issues of context, such as operational issues in learning organisations, and power and politics in mentoring, evidence is scattered and relatively sparse.

The last part of the chapter presents the critical HRD approach as an alternative to examine the taken-for-granted assumptions of contemporary mainstream literature. This alternative approach calls for challenging the moral and ethical foundations of mainstream HRD ideas, and argues for giving voice to employees in HRD research. The critical HRD approach aims to move away from the mainstream focus of performance improvement and argues a case for emancipation of learners and an analysis of social

inequalities. Critical HRD has primarily been developed in a class-room setting, and the critical stream has been criticised for its lack of empirical research in organisational studies. The chapter conclusion, therefore, states the need to study the equality theme in contemporary HRD discourse by adopting a critical stance at an empirical level.

2.2 Contemporary HRD in focus

Human Resource Development is an interesting, complex and somewhat ambiguous field of academic and practice (McGoldrick *et al.* 2002b; Lee 2003). Although the first use of the term HRD can be traced back to 1969 originated by Leonard Nadler (Wilson 2005), it is only over the last two decades that HRD has been taken seriously as a valuable organisational resource and as a legitimate field of academic research (Garavan *et al.* 2002). Today, HRD is seen as a vital component of the organisation's strategic initiatives. According to an estimate, US organisations spend $109.25 billion on employee learning and development annually (American Society for Training and Development 2007). Similarly, in the academic domain, Kuchinke (2002) informs that HRD programmes have the highest enrolments in USA college and university business courses.

The mainstream conception of the purposes of HRD can be traced back to the human relations roots of the field, which defines a particular approach to the management of people at work (Walton 1999; Schied 2001; Gibb 2002). This approach concerns the study of behaviours in work groups, and the examination of relationships between motivation, employee satisfaction and productivity. HRM in this approach includes the whole of people management, the combination of employee resourcing, employee relations and HRD concerns in business and management (Gibb 2002). The American Society of Training and Development has historically focused on human relations training to train personnel managers in the areas of interpersonal relations, and managing workers' motivations and behaviours at work (Gillespie 1991). Buckley and Caple (2004) suggest that training and development activity can benefit individuals in a number of ways. For

example, the trainees may feel greater intrinsic job satisfaction from performing a task well and acquiring new skills. The trainees may also derive extrinsic job satisfaction from enhancing career prospects and promotions. In turn, the organisation, by getting the desired motivation and behaviour from employees can improve performance and productivity.

The mainstream conception of HRD is based on providing planned and systematic training to achieve effective performance in an activity, task or job. The HRD practice involves ensuring an adequate supply of properly trained personnel, keeping present job performance levels at the required standards, and developing skills, abilities and attitudes for future job requirements (Bennett 1991). The functional and the job performance focus in mainstream HRD is derived from the global best-practices literature in HRM, which aspires to prepare the workforce for twenty-first century organisations (Ruona and Gibson 2004). This body of work posits that people are an organisation's primary source of competitive advantage and 'success is determined by decisions employees make and behaviours in which they engage' (Mello 2002, p. 4). Johnson (2000) adds that the 'best practices are described as HR methods and systems that have universal, additive, and positive effects on organisational performance' (p. 69). Thus, the role of HRD from mainstream and best-practices perspectives involves developing and implementing long-term strategies that leverage the potential of people as assets, and inspire them to produce quality outputs for organisations. These strategies require a long-term commitment from the employer to invest in training and development, with the expectation that a skilled employee will be committed to the profession and lead to increased performance.

Thompson and Mabey (1994) mention that HRD strategy involves recruiting and inducting high quality people and encouraging employees to accept change as a norm and as an opportunity. The mainstream HRD practices literature identifies roles according to organisational requirements, which can switch between dualisms (El-Sawad 2002). For example, as per the needs of an organisation, the focus of HRD can be either on the human aspect of HRD, suggesting investment in personnel development or the resource

aspect of HRD, suggesting cost and expendability. The focus can also switch between facilitating and directing, enabling and controlling and so on. These mainstream positions, originating from American values of performance-deliverability (Swanson and Holton 2001), are based on institutional patterns, characterised by managerial commitment to HRD (El-Sawad 2002). The commitment can be measured by the financial investment in HRD planning, and performance can be evaluated by its corresponding effect on the increase in customer service or reduction in cost. Performance can also be evaluated by studying the direct effect of HRD investments on innovations, such as introducing new problem solving techniques and on sustaining a competitive advantage, such as continuous improvement in processes due to the skilled workforce (Garavan *et al.* 1999). This view portrays an objective, rational and quantifiable understanding of HRD.

In summary, the mainstream conception of HRD is based on the best-practices model of performance, and caters to the organisational aspects of effectiveness and competitiveness. The next section extends the theoretical foundations of contemporary HRD and identifies the 'learning in organisations' perspective as a relevant area for this study.

2.3 Multi-disciplinary perspectives in contemporary HRD

Despite significant growth in monetary investments in HRD, the academic scholarship of HRD lacks conceptual clarity (Garavan *et al.*, 2000; Ruona 2000). This lack of conceptual clarity comes from the contested nature of HRD and its multi-disciplinary character. The field is contested because the understanding of HRD can be located in various disciplines. For instance, various strands of HRD include skills and training, employability and the psychological contract, economic, functional, and competency perspectives, and systems thinking (Garavan *et al.* 1999; Swanson and Holton 2001). While these challenges are problematic on the one hand as this creates conceptual difficulties, at the same time they are opportunistic because it shows the diversity and research possibilities in the field.

To put matters into perspective, there are two main debates. First is the issue of definition. There is no consensus about what is meant by HRD and even the need for definition (Ruona 2000; McLean 2000; Lee 2004)? Mostly, HRD textbook or functional type definitions would contain the following aspects:

> HRD refers to facilitating training and development, workplace learning, performance and change through organised interventions; managing developmental capacity and capability of individuals, groups and organisations and is a strategic process concerned with meeting both business and individual needs (Chalofsky 1992; Armstrong 1999; Gilley and Maycunich 2000).

For Swanson and Holton (2001, p. 4),

> 'HRD is a process of developing and unleashing human expertise through organisational development and personnel training and development for the purpose of improving performance.

Yet, there are those who believe that the essence of HRD is fully captured when left undefined. For instance, Lee (2004) views HRD as a holistic field inclusive of country development with far reaching impact on our lives. According to her, HRD evolves with time, space and context but cannot be defined. Sambrook (2001) considers it to be a 'negotiated evolution' that can only be determined as it 'discursively constructs' in practice, whereas McLean (2000) finds any attempt to define HRD as non-beneficial and regressive because of cultural, societal, geographical or economic differences.

A second area of debate is that concerning performance versus learning regarding the purpose of HRD (Yang 2004). Generally, though not necessarily, American authors advance a performance focus and European authors advance a learning focus (Garavan *et al.* 1999). Performance-driven conceptions of HRD hold that the purpose of any HRD

intervention is to improve organisational performance (Swanson and Holton 2001) whereas, a learning view holds, 'HRD should develop individuals who ultimately contribute to organisational prosperity' (Bierema 1996 cited in Yang 2004, p. 129). The growing acceptance, however, is that HRD is a broad and multi-perspective field and *'learning'* is the vital component of HRD research and practice (McGoldrick *et al*. 2002a). Although there is no fixed definitional agreement on what is HRD, a consensus is that when talking about HRD, the reference is to the concern 'with supporting and facilitating learning of individuals, groups and organisation' (ibid. 2002, p396). In this project too, the term HRD refers to the 'learning in organisations' perspective of the field. This is the body of literature where the present study intends to contribute. The various perspectives are summarised here and the learning-orientated area is identified as the focus of this study.

To map the multiple-perspectives in HRD and to identify a particular area for research from a wide array of perspectives is a daunting task. Two literature reviews by Garavan (1999; 2000) are used as the base papers to map the different bodies of work in HRD and to identify a relevant area for this research. Citing the work of various authors, Garavan *et al.* (2000) have summarised key debates within workplace learning and HRD. According to them, two parallel streams occupy contemporary HRD research. One group is concerned with explicating assumptions, values and philosophies underlying HRD. The assumption in this stream is that academic concepts are transferred at an ideational level in practice rather than at a specific theoretical level, so a discussion on values and philosophies would help practitioners to choose from a range of options in their work situation (Gellerman *et al.* 1990).

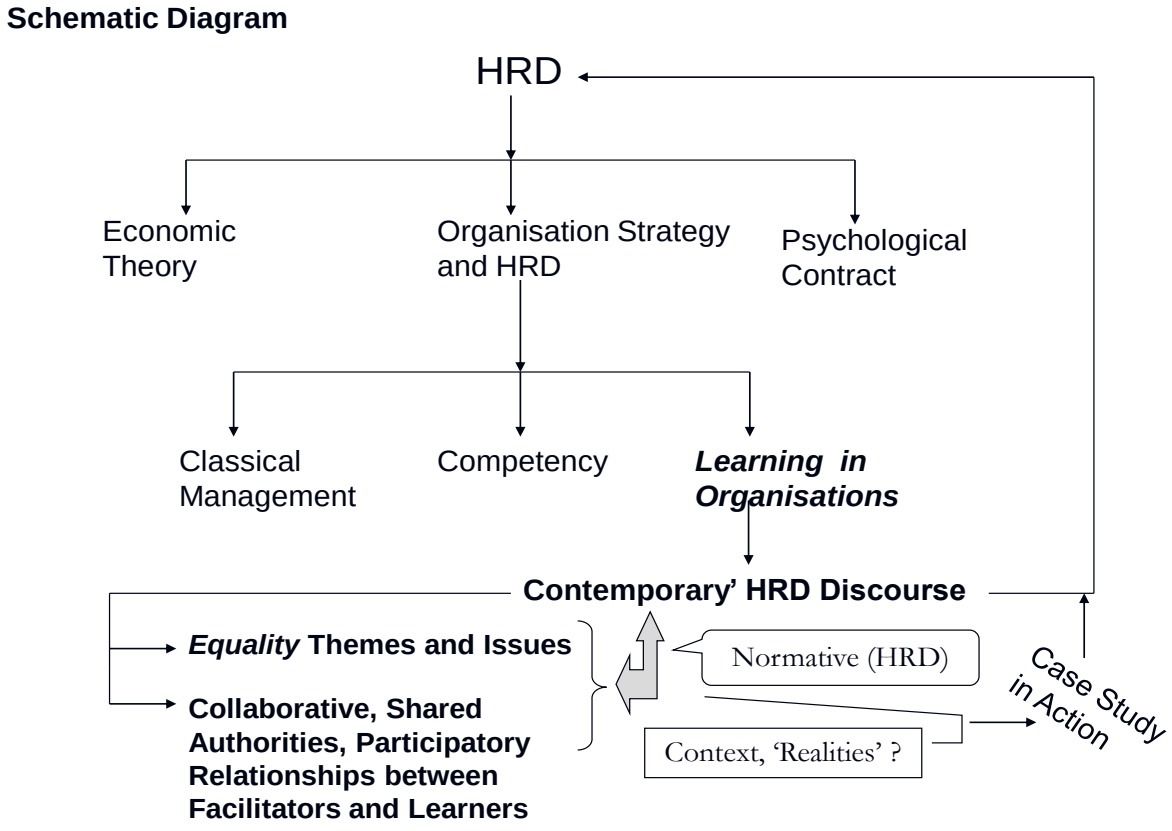
The other group is concerned with researching explanations that help to broaden our understanding of the role and contribution of HRD in organisations (Gray 1997). In this stream, efforts have been put on three specific theoretical perspectives. First is the economic-theory based perspective that focuses on human capital and resource based theories of the firm and evaluates HRD provision in terms of its form, amount and

comprehensiveness in the organisation (Lawler 1992). Second is a psychological contract that deals with a new deal of growing employee capacities to increase their job worth (Gilbert 1996) and conceptualising 'employment relation using notion of expectations, perceptions and obligations' (Garavan *et al.* 2000, p. 66). The specific HRD contribution in this perspective examines the extent to which training and development forms the substance for implicit contracts. The third perspective drawn from organisation theory and general management concentrates on developing employees through HRD interventions. This perspective is strategic and is concerned with establishing linkages between HRD and organisational goals, and enhancing human resource utilisation through provision of training, development and education activities for accomplishing business strategies (Garavan *et al.* 1999; Harrison 1997).

Although all these perspectives are important, it is the organisation strategy perspective that is increasingly viewed as the specialised and frontline role of HRD. In understanding this specialised area, commentators have identified three strands of HRD (Garavan *et al.* 1999). The first is HRD practice within the traditional paradigm of functional or classical management. In this form of practice, the senior management determines HRD needs of the staff and a HRD specialist provides the solutions to the organisation when requested (Boydell and Leary 1996). The second is the competency-based model that includes career management and employees' skills inventories with more focus at the tactical level rather than the strategic level. HRD is offered through experts, institutions or wider government initiatives such as vocational educational training (VET) in Europe or National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) in the United Kingdom (Marchington and Wilkinson 2005). The third perspective in the organisational models of HRD focuses on the creation of learning in organisations (ibid.) and deals with developing employees through continual learning opportunities and employing shared and visionary approaches at work (Pedler *et al.* 1994). This perspective focuses on developing a culture of learning and creation of organisational learning processes (Garavan 2000). The 'learning in organisations' perspective is the most current and popular understanding of contemporary HRD.

Within this popular perspective of HRD, a lot of attention has been paid to cultivating a culture of learning, on greater individual responsibility for learning and shared approaches to learning where people at the workplace engage in a participatory manner and carry out HRD activities in a mutual relationship with an active aim to learn. These notions of participation, mutual relationships and engagement in learning activities form the major ingredients of contemporary HRD discourse (Mumford, 1997; Watkins and Marsick 1995; Cheetham and Chivers 2001). For this study, I have labelled this fundamental aspect of contemporary HRD discourse as an 'equality theme'. As mentioned in the previous chapter, I argue that the understanding of the equality theme in contemporary HRD is without empirical foundations and is based on the wider neglect of context of production of HRD practices. The schematic diagramme shown in Figure 2.1 summarises the multiple perspectives discussed above, and identifies the 'equality-theme' within the contemporary HRD discourse as a focus of this research.

Figure 2.1 – Multiple perspectives in HRD: A conceptual model



The next section discusses the concept of equality in general, and explains how this equality-theme in HRD is different from other understandings of the concept. The subsequent sections look at the emergence of an equality based learning discourse from its historical roots to its current strong position in mainstream HRD literature, before critically examining the merits of this discourse.

2.4 Equality as a relevant discourse

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that the equality theme has been a legitimate area of research in HRM scholarship, and how the understanding of this in HRD is

relevant and different from the equality theme in other studies. The concept of equality in HRM studies has remained an established area of inquiry. It has been widely researched and debated, mainly in the areas of equality of opportunities, and the legislative frameworks of equalities in recruitment, pay, promotions, rewards and so on (Pilbeam and Corbridge 2002). Equal opportunity legislation is also formed to protect the workforce from discrimination on the basis of disability, religion, gender, race, and age. In spite of the laws providing equality, critics argue that the equal opportunity approach focuses on remedial action and counting the numbers employed in certain groups (Kandola and Fullerton 1994). On the other hand, the concept of managing diversity is defined in wider terms, and encompasses treating people as individuals, recognising that each employee will need different kinds of help to succeed. Vince and Booth (1996) have criticised the managing diversity approach, pointing out its lack of sensitivity to power relations in organisations, which can result in less importance being given to under-represented groups. To some extent, this critique is similar to the one raised about the equality-theme in HRD, which also ignores the organisational context of learners' engagement in learning relationships. The critique on the problems with an equality discourse is presented in section 2.6 of this chapter.

The most widely researched area of equality in general management and HRM has been gender equalities, especially the area of equal employment opportunities for women. Jewson and Mason (1986) identified two approaches to promote equal opportunities in employment, namely, the liberal and the radical change approaches. The liberal approach suggests that men and women are the same and that equality will be achieved when employment policies become identical for both sexes. Özbilgin (2000) argues that this gender neutral approach has long disadvantaged Turkish women in employment opportunities. Critics, such as Healy (1999), argue that formulating the same rules for men and women institutionalises inequalities based on sex, race and class. The liberal approach has also been identified with the business-case argument (Pilbeam and Corbridge 2002). The business-case argument is that equality and diversity benefit an organisation financially. But this argument has failed in practice because promoting

equality for disadvantaged groups is not always financially beneficial and the business-case supporters are ‘naive about the discriminatory motives of some employers’ (Özbilgin 2000, p. 43).

The radical approach to promote equal opportunity is advocated by individuals who espouse strong ethical values, and acknowledge the historical disadvantage that groups such as, religious minorities, disabled, and women face in employment (Jewson and Mason 1986). The advocates of this approach argue in favour of positive discrimination, such as quotas for black people in employment, and affirmative action laws. The criticism of this approach is that while it increases a relative position of a disadvantaged group, it does not change the structures that perpetuate inequalities (Cockburn 1989), and hence, is a delayed response to a real equality (Daly 1978).

These arguments show that the concept of equality has been debated in HRM research. The main concentration of the research in equality has been in the areas of work employment. However, the equality theme in contemporary HRD discourse is not based on legislation and written rules of equal opportunity. Rather, this orientation of equality is based on promises of participation, which emanates from the espoused discourses of creating learning in organisations. An over-arching focus in this discourse is that HRD experts and learners participate in learning activities on an equal basis, that is, they share learning aspirations and engage in learning relationships with an active aim to learn. Virakul (1998) has identified that equality is one of the most fundamental concepts of HRD because it helps people believe in the power to improve their surroundings. However, she contests that the unseen aspects of equality, such as prestige, political influences and personal relations have hardly been critically considered in the HRD discourse. The next section dissects the common thread of equality in the contemporary HRD discourse across various concepts.

2.5 The rise and rise of the theme of equality in HRD: A common denominator of learning-orientated discourse

At present, the theory of HRD and state of learning at work is burgeoned with a participatory outlook, collective responsibility and employee centeredness (Hamblett and Holden 2000). This emphasis is based on the overarching role of HRD as a strategic driver of learning and change (Garrick 1998). The scope and vocabulary of HRD has graduated from top-down instructional training to workplaces as sites of learning (Harrison 1997) or it could be said that domains of education, training and development have witnessed the 'learning turn' (Holmes 2004). Thus, every idea of HRD is based on some form of learning connection. The role of trainers is now that of 'facilitators of knowledge', trainees are 'learners' (ibid.) and training rooms are 'learning spaces.'

In this contemporary HRD discourse, a common feature of argument is the question of relationship between two groups: the providers and receivers of HRD. In an effort to cultivate of learning and engage learners in HRD activities, it is suggested that these two groups are 'equals' and that their existence is interdependent. It is understood that both groups should treat each other as 'equals' in order to build a 'feel-free to learn' environment. What has made this 'equality' debate visible is the change in perspective of learning in newer literature. Phillips and Soltis (1998, p. 53) explain that Plato, Locke, the Behaviourists, the Gestalt theorists and others have depicted the 'learner as a lone investigator' and 'what is missing from all these accounts is the explicit recognition that learners always belong to a social group.' The reasoning is that when two people, groups or workers within an organisational setting interact, they are not just disseminators or acquirers of knowledge but they also share certain values, ideologies, beliefs and thinking patterns.

This equality is understood not only in the typical sense of equal employment opportunities, but also in the manner in which HRD specialists and employees act their

roles and interact. These concepts are not entirely new but this discourse has never been that strong before. In fact, many of the current conceptions of HRD and the emphasis on equality based on mutuality and relationship come from the humanistic tradition of education in the 1960s and progressive movement of adult learning in the 1970s (Yang 2004). These concepts were popularised under the term Learning Organisation by Peter Senge in 1990. For example, the ideas of the humanistic approach, most notably put forward by Carl Rogers in his best seller 'Freedom to Learn for the '80s' reflected a similar theme and sounded quite challenging for that time,

> 'Some readers may feel… the belief that teacher can relate as a person to their students – is hopelessly unrealistic and idealistic… They may see that in essence it is encouraging both teachers and students to be creative in their relationship to each other … and feel that such a goal is quite impossible …. I have heard scholars in leading universities arguing that it is absurd to encourage all students to be creative … That may be enough for them … I want to go on record as saying it is not enough for me …' (Rogers 1983, p132)

During the same era of 1960s, Knowles introduced the term 'andragogy' as a theory of adult learning. This theory, viewed as an alternative to passive instructional designs (Swanson and Holton 2001), is based on utilising adult experiences as rich source for learning and acknowledging the dynamic interaction between individual and environment (Yang 2004). The main principle of Knowles' model of andragogy is involving and helping adult learners in managing their learning programmes (Knowles 1995). The American tradition of HRD is largely informed by Knowles' principles of adult learning.

Similarly in European tradition, Kolb *et al.'s* (1974) cycle of experiential learning has played a major role in translating participatory-orientated learning approaches from the education domain to mainstream HRD literature (Reid and Barrington 1999; Marchington and Wilkinson 2005). A key ingredient of Kolb's model of adult learning (the experiential cycle) is that learners develop meaning through a four-phased process of experiencing

concrete phenomena, reflecting on the experience, discussing meaning with others and developing principles on which they can interpret those meanings for actions (Rusaw 2000). The extension of Kolb's model into the organisational learning cycle promotes that information is generated through direct experiences of employees which are 'shared' and 'interpreted collectively' (Dixon 1994), and leads to responsible action being taken by those involved (Easterby-Smith 1997).

Parallel to this growth of learning perspectives was the movement of change management in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In the wake of need the for innovation, speed to reach customers and competitiveness, it was considered that for organisations to survive, sustain and succeed in future, the organisation's learning strategy has to be effective and for learning to be effective, greater responsibility has to be put on the individual (Kanter 1989). Similar views were echoed by Senge (1990) in expressing that, for organisations to prepare for the future, both the providers and acquirers of learning need to have vision to learn and to interact in a manner that alters their mental models and produces learning that is greater than the sum of their potential. Thus, the foremost challenges for HRD in the contemporary environment were to accomplish a sense of shared responsibility towards learning (Kim 1993), and to achieve the status of learning driven company as the only source of sustainable competitive advantage (Pedler *et al.* 1989).

The overwhelming response of contemporary HRD to these changes can be seen in the exponential rise of organisational learning-related literature during the post 1990 period that includes a broadening of organisational learning literature itself (for example, Dodgson 1993; Easterby-Smith *et al.* 1999; Easterby-Smith and Lyles 2005), its various ideal states such as learning organisations / companies (for example, Senge 1990; Burgoyne *et al.* 1994; Marsick and Watkins 1999) and professional approaches to development such as communities of practices (for example, Wenger 1998; Lesser *et al.* 2000) and mentoring (Clutterbuck 1998; Flaherty 2005). In one way or the other, all these well-known concepts underlie the common theme of participation and equality in

developmental relationship. For instance, the defining feature of the learning organisation, widely accredited to Senge's (1990) book The Fifth Discipline states,

> 'Learning Organisations are organisations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together' (p. 3).

On similar lines, the seminal work of Lave and Wenger (1991) on communities of practice (CoP) suggests that workplace members are part of communities because they accomplish tasks through entrusted and legitimate participation. In 'doing knowledge' and sharing insights through activity in a community, participants share understanding concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for their community (Joy-Matthews *et al.* 2004).

Not much different are the claims of mentoring literature on the issue of equalities in the facilitator and learner relationship. The award winning work of Clutterbuck (1998) reflects that learners and those helping to learn (coach, guardian, networker, counsellor or mentor) are equal in a sense that one has the need to learn and the other has something to offer to make that learning possible. These terms of equality are demonstrated by mutuality of relationships and perspective, where responsibility is shared and understood. This puts them in a unique situation where benefits surpass professional and personal lives.

The power of learning mantra as a building block for the future, founded on the ideals of participatory equalities, has not only remained limited to academicians and organisational territories. Given that HRD is a broad concept and development can be conceived at global, continental, country or work level, the contemporary HRD ideas have been promoted by organisations, governments and global agencies alike. For instance, in outlining the agenda for learning policies, the Organisation of Economic Co-operation

and Development (OECD 2003) observed that putting the learner at the centre of a learning process gives an individual the opportunity to choose and exercise new found autonomy. In such a process, shared learning is coupled with shared authority.

To sum up the argument, generally any HRD text today is full of prescriptions explaining how organisations, HRD personnel, facilitators and learners should conduct themselves, and how organisational learning is fostered through equality by virtue of treating each other with respect, mutuality, trust, harmony and without infighting.

2.6 Problems with an equality discourse: Little evidence, sidelining learner and blindfolding the context

Literature on equality in HRD practice sounds interesting and implicitly expresses good intent on behalf of the academicians and practitioners of organisational learning. There, of course, cannot be two opinions about equality and participation being a good thing. As Ruona's (2000) study on core beliefs in HRD based on expert opinions points out, the very fabric of HRD values is based on people caring for and supporting each other. Given these assumptions, any discourse that aspires to produce 'collectivism' must be believable. However, close scrutiny of the discourse shows that most of this text is normative, idealistic and detached from practice. As Holmes (2004) notes, a concurrent problem with HRD is its lack of relevance with practice and reliance on analogical explanation of ideas, which prefers language over substance.

This HRD discourse presented above was created on the basis that people have diverse experiences, different preferences of learning and bringing them together in a mutually equal way would enhance learning effectiveness at work (Kim 1993). The argument is not whether treating facilitators and learners as equals is effective for learning but the question is: Does bringing two groups together in practice make this equality happen? Does subscribing to this discourse mean we have achieved the participatory equalities in

developmental relationships and that the learner has achieved the status of central figure in HRD? From the literature, it is not clear if that is the reality in organisations or some wishful thinking of mainstream academic. There is an apparent lack of *empirical* evidence to go with this equality theme in HRD.

Fenwick (2001, 2004) argues that, whether based on 'learning' or 'performance' as its purpose, the principal nature of the contemporary HRD discourse is 'performative'. This discourse continues to grow because it has a marketing appeal; an ability to sell to the decision makers in firms. Predominantly, this is a top management discourse because its underlying intent is based on economic gains for the organisations, for enhancing performance and to out-do the competitor by using newly acquired learning to one's advantage (Valentin 2003). Thus, the role of participation and sharing in HRD activities is not really about the learner's well-being and growth, but it is about the contribution to the bottom line results of the organisation or subjugation to the interests of those who promote HRD goals in organisation. This is not to suggest that organisation gains should not be considered but as Findlay *et al.* (2000) have argued if organisational learning practices are based on mutuality then it must also advance the employee's gains of development, for example, in freedom and choices of their personal development.

The problem, however, is that any attempts to understand learners' perspectives on equality in HRD are restricted by lack of employee voice in dominant HRD research (Elliott and Turnbull 2005). Typically, the mainstream or business-centred HRD research has attracted management views on process improvement, product / service innovation and financial benefits of employee development (see for example, Swanson 1998; Lynn *et al.* 1999; Anderson 2008). But, this in itself does not mean these successes are achieved at the equilibrium of equalities in developmental relationships. Since learning-orientated ideas are seen by consultants and interventionists as a panacea for all future problems, the equality promises espoused by HRD have taken a backseat. In fact, in empirical terms, it remains a largely unquestioned and little discussed theoretical proposition. Participatory outlook then is nothing more than a selling point or an assumption around which HRD

strategies can be formed and promoted in workplaces. As Fenwick (2001, 74) neatly sums up,

> '… The learning organisation concept offers cuddly vision of 'collegiality'… But amid the enthusiasm… the place of a worker in a learning organisation has become relegated to one of eternal, slippery, deficiency… That the workplace appoints itself as individual's educator, personal development counsellor and even spiritual mentor is rarely questioned.'

Another major problem with this normative nature of theory is that it ignores the wider context in which HRD interventions are offered and learning takes place (Trehan and Rigg 2003). To put it another way, contemporary HRD discourse presents an idealistic and 'picture-perfect' state of organisations. The territory of modern HRD, littered with equality notions, is treated as a conflict-free, neutral and apolitical area of practice (Walton 1999). Except for a few pedestrian comments, there seems to be a consistent and careful effort to avoid the impact of power, politics, emotions, trust, and socio-cultural issues on HRD relationships in mainstream discussions. Given the plethora of studies on the contested and politically situated nature of workplaces (Clegg 1979; Pfeffer 1981; Hardy and Clegg 1996; Curtis 2003), this is a rather naïve position to adopt. It could be because dwelling on influences of context on HRD relationships would ordinarily mean giving voice to learner and hence, challenging the liberation paradigm of HRD or posting a bold response to 'corruption of learnarism' (Homles 2004, 2007). Again, the argument is not one of opposing equalities in learning but to ask: What happens to power, politics, culture and other contextual factors in which HRD specialists and learners operate? Do these factors go into oblivion just because an organisation believes in this contemporary learning discourse or individuals in their desire to learn indeed neglect the contextual factors?

An extension to the matter of context is the universalistic and prescriptive character of mainstream HRD. It not only assumes context is problem-free but also tends to suggest

that the practice of HRD is universal and uniform across the globe. There is one superior form of knowledge that is, follow the prescriptive steps of learning, think and learn together or prepare for failure. Despite calls for including cultural boundedness and its effects on HRD, not just the problems but also benefits that there may be in local understanding (McGuire *et al.* 2002), the global-prescriptive aphorism of HRD remains intact. Amongst studies which have attempted to research, theorise or make use of 'context', the typical focus has been on the immediate context of learning provisions or functional aspects such as time resources, availability of funds, duration and frequency of training, rewards for learning, availability of information, learning strategies, individual motivation and so on (see for example, Marsick and Watkins 2001; Kontoghiorghes 2003; Eddy *et al.* 2006). Much like the big-brother HRM, the theorising of contextual analysis in HRD is marred by the same efficiency syndrome and instrumental rationality (Townley 1994). Not surprisingly then, the overall impact and influences of socio-political-cultural / organisational context on equality themed contemporary HRD practice remains under-theorised in the wider body of HRD literature.

While there is an acknowledgement that these concerns are now under the microscope, the scrutiny does not always come from empirical studies but is more of 'identifying' that there are issues such as power, politics and trust that merit a place in HRD literature (Easterby-Smith *et al.* 2000). The remaining sections of this chapter discuss the ways in which these issues are now being addressed by theorists of HRD.

2.7 Critically revisiting contemporary HRD discourse: Some theoretical and empirical exemplars

Despite resorting to theoretical critique and lack of empiricism, it is reasonable to say that there is now renewed attention on HRD and more and more critical views of the conflict-free nature of HRD are being adopted. Some specific ways in which this critical 'refocusing' has appeared in recent studies are covered in this section.

2.7.1 Learning organisation and contexts

The learning organisation / company concept is characterised by assumptions and properties which rest on participatory equality in the work place. The critics of this are well-established. These include the assumption that all organisations face change of equal magnitude and its universal treatment with regard to the issues of status, rights and opportunities (Van der Krogt 1998). The other well-known problem includes lack of clarity and implementation of abstract constructs like mental models and personal mastery. Pointing to the confusion, Walton (1999) has critiqued the contradictory conception of 'shared' vision, 'team' learning and 'personal' mastery, which may create misplaced expectations of roles and outcomes in learning resulting from dual focus of mastering the personal but working in teams.

A significant study with the very aim of exploring contextual influences is Tjepkema *et al.'s* (2002) European project. Using case studies, their research demonstrated successes and struggles of HRD and learning organisations. Mainly, explicating on management issues in large European organisations, the study considered the impact of top level commitment, HRD role clarity, significance of learning culture, and availability of time and resources in developing coherent learning orientated organisations. Reflecting on the study, Sambrook and Stewart (2002) noted that despite strong outcomes of the collaborative research, the notions of HRD and LO vocabulary remains problematic. This question is not only operational but also one of the different expressions used across case study workplaces and variance that exist between academic and practitioner language. This raises the argument of one universal LO discourse sufficing across cultures. In that vein, elsewhere Sambrook and Stewart (2000) have put high value on educational roles of HRD professionals in moving from 'act of faith' or 'mimetic isomorphism' to shaping learning cultures that value all forms of learning.

2.7.2 Communities of practice, espoused theories and theories-in-use, and the equality discourse

Communities of practice demand that organisations offer legitimacy for employees to participate in and gain access to resources. The underlying theme is that mutual and volunteer interest in learning in joint domain is what keeps these communities of practice together. Wenger (1998), the pioneer of the concept, admits that these communities can reproduce counterproductive patterns, injustices and prejudices and can be the centre of failure and reproduction of its conditions. This is because the legitimacy and access to participation it demands hangs between tensions of 'learning for work' or 'work for learning'.

Embedded in communities of practice is the notion of espoused theory: the general norms about what everyone agrees on (Schön 1983). In organisations where participatory equality in learning is a focal point, espoused theories may be guided by discourse of reflecting on one's self values, demanding deeper understanding of learning from each other through participation and critical reflection. However, there are theories-in-use which stand in contrast with espoused theories (Woerkom, 2004). These theories are professionals' understanding of work strategies in relation to specific context. These could be cultural understandings of work-setting that professionals keep in private in order to withstand social pressures and conform to existing frames of references. In such cases, espoused theories of communities of practice and learning become mere rhetoric. Moreover, Schön (1983) notes even when the espoused theories do not work, people resist criticising them for the fear of appearing incompetent and losing professional goodwill in the circle. Stretching the argument a bit further, management may continue to pursue these learning ideals because if people are not criticising then everything must be right or because they may see withdrawing their own ideas as personal failure.

Therefore, transferability of communities of practice and seemingly free-flowing learning practices from academic texts to work organisations is not a simplistic process; it is

affected by the parallel organisational culture that is running within and outside HRD activities.

2.7.3 Diversity in participatory learning

The problems with learning organisations or other forms of contemporary workplace learning concepts are not only to do with their neglect of larger organisational context. Even when seen purely as sources of learning and HRD activities, there are issues that need to be addressed. Poell and Tijmensen (1998) argue that although the LO tends to provide more room for individuals to learn, it fails to recognise the 'diversity' across participants. Its zealous focus on personal mastery, creating new mental models and flexibility means it supports a particular kind of learner. Ortenbläd's (2005) experimental work based on his experiences at a Learning Company Conference at Warwick University (1998) provides interesting insight in this regard. Based on Jung's personality types' group exercise with participants, he suggested that only particular kinds of people are attracted to ideas such as LO. According to this work, Type 3 or Intuitive-Feelers personality type people seem to be interested in LO concepts. For them, interactions are about free talking without fear which goes in line with values of modern mainstream learning discourse. However, it cannot be expected that everyone in an organisation will have this personality type. So, to involve all the people in the organisation (an important component of participatory equality), developmental interaction methods that encourage diverse personality types need to be adopted.

Talking about diversity, maintaining equality relationships in HRD settings is a challenge. As per the Institute of Personnel and Development (IPD) (1996, p. 1), diversity expands beyond the horizon covered by the law. Developmental interactions are affected by personal, relationship and communication factors. Irrespective of whether organisation is a LO, CoP or any other type, the culture and environment of the organisation dictate its training and development needs (Palmer 2005). If the culture does not put high value on respecting ethnicity, gender or age diversity for example, it is unlikely that HRD

professionals or participant teams will be consciously sensitive to these issues in developmental interaction. In cross-cultural settings, where enforcement of law is not adequate or interpretations of law are varied, even personal factors such as demographics may be overlooked in relationships, forming biased perceptions of who are successful or unsuccessful learners.

2.7.4 Power, politics and emotions in HRD

Drawing on the definition of political activity within organisations by Pfeffer (1991, p. 9), 'those activities taken within organisation to acquire, develop and use power and other resources to obtain one's preferred outcomes', Clarke (2003) reports that the learning process is affected by the political milieu of the organisation's life because learning is situated in the social context of the institution. Similarly, Rusaw (2000) comments that 'in creating lifeworld for participants, training programmes emphasise equality and openness… This calls for stripping learning programmes to their foundation and rebuilding them entirely on new assumptions of participatory equality' (p.252-253). However, she warns that when attempting to build such training programmes, organisations may act with 'defensive routines' (Argyris *et al.* 1991), because 'closing gaps between beliefs and practices threatens assumed authority' (Rusaw p. 257). In training situations, they may do this by controlling the format of discussion, imposing needs and denying equal access to resources. And, at training need analysis level, reporting of learning needs can be influenced by those who have the resources to make decisions (Clarke 2003).

Trehan and Rigg (2003) argue for giving consideration to complexity, emotion and power in HRD education. Reflecting on their personal experiences of teaching HRD, they state that the 'alternative HRD pedagogies, while less hierarchical and placing more emphasis on personal and professional experience, reinforce the value of consensus, which either tend to deny power dynamics superficially or attempts to assimilate them' (p. 204). According to their project of collaborative learning practice in a university setting, they

explain that the assumption that power and authority are not so problematic in shared approaches to learning is a myth. Their phenomenographic approach to research reveals the anxiety and discomfort students felt because of the 'illusion of equality while keeping the authoritarian nature of tutor-student intact' (p. 231). They attribute this anxiety to perceived 'intellectual authority' that facilitators of learning have in such situations.

Certainly, the interplay of power and politics in understanding the participatory and social equalities in HRD is a key area of concern in practice. Informing these factors in HRD is crucial because hiding them may stop us from understanding not only why learning happens but also why it does not? Trehan (2004) takes a more critical view to the study of power. Commenting on what is not being talked about in HRD, she argues that mainstream HRD aspiring for social equality makes the use of power invisible by undermining the truth of power and politics in organisations. According to her assessment, whether to work with dominant power in knowledge formation or to encourage new discourses in learning are inescapably political acts. Using Townley's (1994) analysis of understanding the Foucauldian focus on the 'how' of power, she suggests that by encouraging awareness of how power operates, facilitators and learners can be presented with an ethically aware model of HRD. The implications of this work are possibly illustrated in eye-opening research by Colley (2003) on engagement mentoring that brings these issues to the surface.

Colley's invigorating work digs into the interplay of power, politics and emotion in the context of female-to-female engagement mentoring designed for enhancing the social inclusion of unemployed in Britain; an idea that New Labour endorsed as part of their political agenda. The underlying thesis is that mentoring relations between mentor and mentee over time will reach the empowerment stage giving young people tools and confidence to take control of their own path way (p. 19). However, using a Marxist and feminist lens, she discovers the dominant and subjugated relationships hidden under the cover of support and encouragement.

Applying Bourdieu's (1986) concept of 'habitus' (personal values / predispositions) and 'field' (context) power in explaining her analysis of mentoring narratives, Colley informed that mentors increasingly put their values ahead of mentees' dispositions. And while 'field' allows individual agency for mentees, it implies neither complete freedom nor equality in the engagement mentoring scheme. The demands that mentors put on mentees for the marketed incentive of social inclusion forces them into displaying emotional labour, 'management of feeling … requiring one to induce or suppress feelings in order to produce proper state of mind in other' (Hochschild 1983, p. 7). Unravelling myths of equality in mentoring, Colley notes, 'the greatest contradiction in mentoring is that this brutal commodification of the self is cloaked in the guise of human relationships based on warmth and compassion' (p. 152). The analysis shows how the interaction of power, politics and emotion leads to stretching the discomfort of the socially excluded in a scheme that was designed, in the first place for their social inclusion. The implication for HRD professionals then is to promote equality with a critical angle without losing sight of power and politics issues so that we are able to realise the goals of ethically informed HRD practice.

2.8 Critical HRD as an alternative: Promises and challenges

Much of the critique that I have raised above can be placed under the emergent field of critical human resource development (CHRD). But to recognise and emphasise the existence of CHRD as an alternative understanding of HRD, it needs to be explained separately. The emergence of CHRD can be attributed to established traditions of critical thinking in critical management studies (CMS) (for example, Alvesson and Willmott 1996; Fournier and Grey 2000; Grey and Willmott 2005). The CMS approach posits that workers are exploited by the rhetoric of HRM through thinking that they are better off with it than without it (Legge 1995). The critical theorists believe that the best-practice approaches' ideological inclination to bottom-line inculcates amorality in management students by freeing them of any sense of moral responsibility (Ghoshal 2005) and

transforms enterprises into structures of domination and control (Froud *et al.* 2006). According to the CMS position, the mainstreaming of management literature ignores the human factor, and employees have less control and face enhanced domination (Coff 1999). Fucini and Fucini (1990) suggest that the best-practice ideas of organisational effectiveness assume that workers must work like machines and be exploited to a great extent. This results in the corrosion of moral responsibility because justification of the concern for people or environment is sought in terms of owners' interests (Adler *et al.* 2007). The CMS position questions the 'alignment between knowledge, truth and efficiency' (Fournier and Grey 2000, p. 17) and attempts to seek alternative explanations on the premise that work life may not be as it appears in mainstream literature.

Like most of CMS works, the fundamental struggle of CHRD is to present an ideological critique of the dominant paradigm and to debate moral, political, ethical and emancipatory grounds in HRD (Rigg *et al* 2007). In adopting this stance, CHRD values HRD not just as multi-disciplinary (i.e. informed by cognitive, systems thinking, adult learning) but also as a multi-perspective (moral, political, ethical) field of study (Garavan *et al*. 2007). Although CHRD pursues to avoid a particular position, such as learning or performance and humanistic or mechanistic, its inclination is towards learning and humanist camps, as terms like 'anti-performative' for CHRD (Bierema and Cseh 2008) and 'performance junkies' for mainstream HRD (Sambrook 2007a) might suggest.

In some respects, CHRD uses the same linguistic devices as that of the mainstream, such as 'challenging taken for granted' and 'participation and equalities'. But the underlying sets of meanings and assumptions in employing these terms are different. While, learning organisation / company refers to 'challenging taken for granted' assumptions and points to challenging an organisation's position on a continual basis to become more competitive (Senge 1990), CHRD's use of the phrase points to 'asking questions that are not meant to be asked' (Trehan 2007, p. 73). These questions in HRD can include challenging an organisation's ideology of learning and unravelling political, racial, ethnic or gendered dimension in HRD decision making (Fenwick 2004; Rees and Metcalfe 2007). Similarly,

CHRD does not reject the discourse of equality; but, unlike the mainstream's instrumental focus of participatory equalities, CHRD accommodates analysis of inequalities of power and caters to 'developing a workplace and social milieu characterised by justice and social equality' (Rigg *et al* 2007, p15).

In catering for analysis of social inequalities and studying the intersection of power and social factors, one of the significant attributes of CHRD studies is 'emancipation' of workers (Sambrook 2009). By creating awareness of power relations, illuminating the role of politics and group relations, CHRD aims to 'shift power from oppressor to the oppressed to give them voice and freedom, whether in HRD research or practice' (ibid. p. 67). As Fenwick (2003, p. 619) notes, 'the central problem with organisational learning from a critical perspective is that it is definitely not emancipatory'. She recommends that by attempting to study the contested nature of learning, focusing on the learner's interests and organisational practices that 'unjustly exclude or privilege individuals or groups', critical HRD can provide the opportunity to produce workplaces based on equity and social justice.

Based on these propositions and synthesis of various publications, the key tenets of CHRD can be encapsulated as follows,

- Critical construction of HRD combines the essence of critical theory with the aim of creating new understandings that lead to changed practice within social contexts, especially organisational (Callahan 2007, p. 79).
- Theory, discipline and practices that question taken for granted assumptions (Rigg *et al.* 2007, p. 9), challenge existing paradigms (Sambrook 2009), and question prevailing economic ideologies and power relations constituting organisational structures of inequality (Fenwick 2004).
- Working towards an emancipatory ideal and realisation of a more just society based on fairness and democracy (Reynolds 1998, p. 5), without reproducing the habitual focus on performance improvement (Callahan, p. 79).

All things considered, CHRD is not unproblematic. One of the problems is that it sounds oppositional or just as an attack or criticism of everything 'mainstream'. This is not entirely true even though that seems to be the prominent line of reasoning in scholarly publications. But CHRD is not against a particular concept. Instead, it aims to incorporate pluralistic ideas and co-existence of multiple understandings. Sambrook (2007a) has explained that oppositional in CHRD does not mean 'criticising' but challenging conventional thinking that fails to address social analysis. Critical HRD writers do acknowledge and make use of HRD concepts. For example, Owen-Pugh (2007) argues for understanding subjectivity and conflictive relations in communities of practice that may shape individual evaluation, leading to marginalisation or departure from the community but without discrediting facilitative and innovative potential of the concept. Similarly, using experiences of research in a utility company in Wales, Vince (2001) has called for incorporating organisational dynamics of power, politics and emotions in organisational learning to understand pressures experienced by a workforce during a change process at the organisational level. Thus, researching from a critical HRD perspective is not based on rejection of an idea but on taking the ethical stance; that is, 'the rightness and wrongness of truth and justice' (Russ-eft 2004, p. 44).

A bigger issue with CHRD is its elitism and lack of action-orientated research (Githens 2007). Despite its ambitions of emancipation, giving voice to the oppressed, analysis of equalities/inequalities and appreciation of local contexts, CHRD has yet to demonstrate empirical analysis of these issues. CHRD, like its parent body CMS, carries mysticism and spirituality about it (Alvesson and Deetz 2000) and is in danger of indiscriminate usage and uncritical acceptance of the critical (Callahan 2007; Sambrook 2007a). It could be argued that the emergence of critical studies in HRD is only recent; a young discipline in its first 10 years of establishment. But it could also be said that whereas the debates have grown, the parallel research momentum has not picked up. The majority of published work in CHRD so far is argumentative and does not contain substantial primary data. A few studies that have examined the individual learning experiences and

relationships at work, such as Turner *et al.'s* (2006) research in a UK public sector provider of managed services, have revealed outcomes of 'non-learning', group divisions and anxiety. But while such pieces hint at the political nature of learning and negative use of feedback, they do not explain the collective influence of socio-cultural context on HRD practice and learners.

The discussion above has focused on CHRD as a perspective or as an alternative way of analysing HRD. The other level of understanding CHRD is the critical practice or pedagogy of HRD. This means formulating content, curriculum and practice of HRD that are critically reflective in nature and are inclusive of sensitivity to power, and ethical, political and emotional aspects in facilitator-learner relationships (Reynolds 1997). Using critical reflection means, the 'process' of teaching or doing HRD is emancipator; that is, learners have the chance to question assumptions and develop alternative ways of acting. And, including sensitive issues in curriculum means the 'content' opens up the potential of understanding obstacles to emancipation (ibid.). Critical pedagogy of HRD has been applied and tested empirically with some success but its scope has been limited to classroom settings. For example, Sambrook's (2007b) experiences of teaching MSc modules in health and social care leadership employing a critically reflective approach showed professionals' positive feedback and increased awareness towards social context of work and the National Health Service. Similarly, Rigg and Trehan's (2004) experiment of using critical-self reflection with Masters students showed that, though the process of teaching created some dissonance as it challenged power relations, the auto-biographical reflections of professional students highlighted institutional and political forces impacting on their work lives.

However, the empirical studies analysing critical practice / pedagogy of HRD in an organisational sphere are again scarce. Trehan *et al* (2006, p2) observed, 'while critical pedagogies are accumulating, they seldom exhibit corresponding changes in HRD practice.' Rigg and Trehan's (2008) recent study has only increased such fears. Their research account related to management development programmes for senior managers in

a British public service organisation and revealed mixed results and scepticism towards the value of critical reflection, as noted in participants' comments like, 'There's not enough direction' or 'I can't possibly spare 3 hours to sit around just talking' (p379). This little organisational evidence of applying CHRD means we are 'unsure' of how the practice of CHRD might look in work organisations (Sambrook 2009).

Hence, it could be said that CHRD offers a lot of promise and avenues of research, which the restrictive focus of mainstream HRD does not. But, at present, it neither provides sufficient empirical evidence of the criticism it raises for mainstream HRD (the absence of influences of social / organisational context on participatory equalities) nor sufficient empirical evidence of its own practice at workplaces (presence of social justice and emancipation).

2.9 Argument summary and the need for research

Certainly, with the maturation of HRD over the years, the issues of practice, prescriptiveness and ignorance of the context have surfaced in academic literature. As a scholarly movement, these have been raised by the proponents of critical HRD. However, to fully understand the utilisation of equality-orientated HRD discourse and its implications whether successful or failed, there is still a shortage of in-depth empirical studies and more so in different geographical contexts. One can find studies arguing for incorporating contextual problems in HRD debates but they do not derive from case studies. In most cases, these studies are conceptual analyses and literature reviews about the missing links but these do not address the issues using first-hand data. Therefore, it is argued that we need detailed contextual case studies of equality-based HRD practice in organisations and theorising around the implications resulting from an evidence-base.

According to Stewart (2003, 2005), HRD is an ethical field because it develops in practice and informs 'what should one do?'; if that is true then the job of HRD research

should not be to delineate from its contextual environment. Otherwise, the alternative is to rely on random atheoretical foundations in understanding HRD (Swanson and Holton 2001). In order to meet the end of building contextual understanding of the equality theme in HRD, I adopt a critical HRD theoretical lens. In this research, a critical perspective that is the careful examination of a contemporary HRD discourse with respect to the social context of the organisation is considered. Additionally, critical attention to alternative development ideologies that are critical of the 'critical' practice is also considered.

The main aim of this research is to critically examine the equality theme in contemporary HRD discourse in a non-Western case study context, and to advance the holistic and contextually informed understanding of HRD practice. The expectations are that the outcomes will generate an empirical base in HRD and provide voice to the learners, thus fulfilling the purposes of critical HRD. The next chapter proposes the research methodology that lends itself to the aims of this research.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

This chapter outlines methodological ideas, processes, strategy and issues attached with this research project. The aim of this study is to critically examine the equality theme in contemporary HRD discourse in a non-western case study context EduDev, and advance a holistic and contextually informed understanding of HRD practice. The specific research objectives are based on studying the espoused discourse, in-use discourse and the contextual factors influencing the practice of participatory HRD. The expected outcomes of the research process are to give voice to the learners and develop an empirical base in critical HRD studies. The study employs a critical interpretivist paradigm, because it facilitates the study of discourse empirically and accommodates subjectivity but is also amenable to critical interpretation.

The study uses multiple data collection methods, such as interviews, participant observations and document analysis to study the phenomena of equalities in HRD practice. The multiple methods not only triangulate the data but also help to understand the formal and informal context of HRD practice. The analysis method used is critical discourse analysis, a variant of discourse analysis, which helps to frame the discourse within an organisational context. The issues of validity, reliability and generalisation in qualitative research are also debated. The different views about these are explained and the parallel criteria of credibility, transferability and dependability have been considered. The credibility in critical studies is achieved using reflexivity, a concept widely used in critical ethnographic traditions. Reflexivity requires the researcher to draw awareness to the self and relation of self to the field. This discussion includes the role of my previous contact with the organisation and reflexivity in relation to my identity and the findings.

The final section on ethics discusses the advantages and disadvantages of familiarity with the setting and my personal conduct in the research process.

3.1 Research philosophy: Underlying assumptions of knowledge and world views

Much of management thought and conception of knowledge comes from research conducted within a positivist paradigm of scientific research. In such a view, organisation is seen as an objective, politically neutral site and research is concerned with methods to control variation and test hypotheses in the manner of laboratory sciences (Donaldson 2001). Similarly, HRD researches have traditionally privileged the performative paradigm, to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of HRD investments in the form of productivity measures. When the focus is on culture and change management, it is for neutralising resistance and increasing competitiveness (Valentin 2006). This replication of natural science methods into a people-centred field of HRD silences the important issues of individual treatment, power, emotions and context. The question is not of the philosophical positions alone. In spite of the increase in qualitative research in organisation studies, the underlying ontological and epistemological perspectives have remained positivist and studies often follow structured patterns of problem identification and solution without deconstructing discourses of marginalised voices (ibid.).

In qualitative research, the popular research position, especially in the European tradition of HRD is the interpretive paradigm. The interpretative paradigm assumes an underlying pattern and order of the social world which is based on our thought of what exists and 'practical' knowledge that can guide judgement and action (Alvesson and Deetz 1996). However, Habermas (1971) alerts that there are limitations to the ways an interpretive approach shapes knowledge of the world. Amongst them is its over-emphasis on subjective elements of knowing things because it does not lend itself to any strategised form of analysis. In doing so, it remains amenable to any methodical form of analysing

the researched entity and serves to constrain human thought and potential without paying much attention to 'ways in which our understandings are shaped by the structure and culture of institutions in which we live and work' (Foley 2000 in Valentin 2006, p20).

Critical theory on the other hand is located in political, historical and social context of activity. Critical writers question one social order and argue for multiple meanings of the perspective. As a philosophical world view, critical management studies are not concerned with getting one straight forward story but rather in unmasking domination and presenting ideological critique (Alvesson and Deetz 1996; Hardy and Clegg 1997). In a theoretical sense, critical studies call for understanding organisational sites from multiple phenomena and exposing the alienating nature of capitalism. However, while critical writers go in to depth on how modern systems of organisation ignore ordinary voices and downplay cultural practices, they do not express the great deal of interest in empirical work. Rather, critical debates are manifested presenting higher order critique of pivotal issues such as conflict and diversity.

The philosophy of this study constitutes elements of both *critical theory* and an *interpretivism paradigm* and can be called critical interpretivism (Alvesson and Deetz 2000). Since I am interested in the study of context, I adopt elements of critical theory that consider issues of conflict, participation and unheard voices that form the practices of organisation. In addition, the issue of 'researcher and researched' is still subjective, because the realities we encounter are subject to exposition we have of data and data site (Musson and Duberley 2007) which brings in questions of interpretation. But as a critical interpretivist, as opposed to a pure interpretivist study, the analysis is taken with a critical angle. This means, meaningfulness of data is valued, perspectives are considered and facets of organisational life are studied beyond mere interpretation to that of analytically understanding the ways in which HRD relationships are progressed or distorted by cultural, political or organisational dynamics. In the purview of critical HRD, such an approach is in line with Elliott and Turnbull's (2005, p. 2) argument that 'critical emphasises the necessity for continuous examination of HRD's received wisdom.'

Ontologically speaking, the nature of reality can be considered as that of 'becoming' (Lee 2004). HRD is a non-static 'becoming' activity of learning, change and development and our thoughts on what we think of HRD is bounded by time of the activity in which organisations are studied. Sambrook (2000; 2001) considers HRD as discursively negotiated evolution that is enacted and evolved in time. So, we can present the HRD world view as an activity that is interacted, communicated and influenced by discursive practice. The overarching 'context of organisations' that binds HRD activity yields a certain level of practice that we as researchers only understand by discursively engaging with participants.

The research also uses reflexivity as a process of research. Any research informed by a Critical HRD theoretical lens must demonstrate reflexivity in character. Reflexivity, in alignment with critical management studies, is about awareness of one's self and relation of self to what is researched (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2003). It involves reflecting on how the process of research shapes outcomes (Holland 1999). Since, themes and categories generated are part of the analytic process of researcher, researched and text (Silverman 2001; Musson and Duberley 2007), it merits consideration to give account of the researcher's influences which may help in providing a better understanding of the phenomena being studied. Reflexivity in writing means revealing to the reader knowledge and feelings of one's self towards the research subject and participants (Sambrook 2002). In this thesis, I have attempted to clarify my stance and predispositions, wherever relevant and useful.

3.2 Research aim and objectives

The main aim of this research is to critically examine the equality theme in contemporary HRD discourse in a non-western case study context, and advance a holistic and contextually informed understanding of HRD practice.

Specifically, the research aimed to analyse the following research questions:

1. To explore the nature, methods and processes of the dissemination of HRD discourse in a case study organisation. This refers to the communication of the espoused discourse, the channels through which it is promoted and meanings associated with this discourse. This is important in understanding how well such concepts are communicated to those who are to be developed.

2. To explore the consumption of this discourse; that is, what is happening with these concepts? This relates to analysing the receiving, utility or application of these discourses or in-use practice of the espoused discourse. This allows us to see whether or not what is preached is also practiced, and, what perceptions people have about this discourse.

3. To explore contextual factors that encourage or discourage the practice of contemporary shared/equality based approaches to HRD. It is understanding of these contextual influences and its interaction with HRD that form the evidence-base theorisation for HRD, puts context back into prescriptive HRD discourse and brings HRD knowledge closer to practice.

3.3 Case study research design

The literature review showed a dearth of holistic and contextual case studies in HRD. It showed that a growing critique of lack of the contextual understanding in HRD discourse comes from the synthesis of secondary reviews and general strands of organisational studies rather than as a direct result of significant HRD specific case studies. Therefore, I have used a single case study research design (Yin 2003) to conduct an in-depth study of the organisational context influencing HRD by keeping learners at the heart of research. In other words, the study focuses on the employees or the learners with the expectation that their participation in the process of research would generate empirical evidence for HRD practices and provide a voice to the learners in HRD research. Since my interest was in the detailed understanding of the context, I decided to do a single case study with substantial detail about the context rather than multiple case studies which provide a breadth of comparative information but often lack depth of data (ibid.).

Case studies are conceptualised differently by different writers. Yin (2003), Stake (2005) and Eisenhardt (2002) are some of the well-known writers on case study method. Typically, case studies involve multiple methods for studying a particular research topic. Yin's model is considered procedural, typified by an American style of processual research while Stake's approach is considered more involving and towards a social constructivist side of the spectrum. Eisenhardt's approach to case studies is strategically analytic and commonly used in business strategy and innovation-type research. I have used a blend of Yin and Stake approaches to case studies. Although the study is involving and exploratory, data is ethnographic in nature and analysis emerges from the field, I have also used systematic procedures to guide the process of research. In addition, case study has an explanatory element in its understanding of contextual nature of HRD. Yin's approach focuses on the process and planning of case study design, that is, it calls attention to some guiding mechanism that leads the various phases of research. Stake's approach offers greater flexibility for incorporating the follow-up questions and probing more about the themes as they emerge during the fieldwork. This is particularly helpful in

the study of the discourse as it requires deeper engagement in the interview process. I have used Yin's approach in planning my research and in data collection design, i.e., to decide which specific method(s) can be useful in getting information about the particular aspects of equality in learning? This planning aspect is illustrated in Figure 3.2 further into this chapter. Yin's model has helped me to keep track of the methods and manage data, while Stake's model has provided me the leverage to move across data, and to get more insights about HRD discourse. Furthermore, because Stake's approach focuses on critical theory and an interpretive end, it is concerned with the uniqueness of the situation, which this case study also attempts to understand. However, Yin's concerns for generalisations from a single case study are also taken into account. These are explained further in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

3.3.1 Descriptive case study context – EduDev as a researched organisation

This case study is located in the education development sector in the Sindh province of Pakistan. This section focuses on the descriptive case study context which is distinguished from the analytic context. Any repetition in analysis chapter is intended to put the data into perspective.

3.3.1.1 The organisation

The case study organisation (EduDev) is based in Karachi, the capital of Sindh province of Pakistan. The organisation was formed in 1992 with the primary objective of evolving programmes for raising the standard of education in Sindh. Its scope has expanded to institutional development, providing infra-structural support to schools, consultancies for education change and funding and training to support education growth. Although it is accountable to the Government's education department for utilisation of grants and budgets, it is professional and autonomous in developing its strategies. The organisation is competitive in its sector, with its outreach to five major districts and interventions throughout the province. This is a significant success given that in the education

development sector there are only three other organisations that may potentially be serving at the same level. Over the years, other than Government's allocated funds, EduDev has attracted projects from UN subsidiaries such as UNICEF and other international bodies.

EduDev is a non-unionised organisation of roughly 200 employees and close to 50 % male and 50 % female. It is headed by female Managing Director in her late 70s with an immense track record in pioneering education projects, girls education and literacy campaigning. She has held key positions in the civil service, government and provincial assemblies. Although fully active in running EduDev, her involvement is that of a figurehead and signatory role.

The most important strategic and leadership role in the organisation lies with the Director of Operations, who guides the direction of the organisation, gives ideas, and leads strategy formulation. His own background includes a Masters degree in Business Studies from the London School of Economics and another postgraduate degree in information systems from Aberdeen, UK. After serving a few years for the BBC in London, he felt that HRD theories and education systems were in need of change. In his own words, this challenge 'got him back to Pakistan' and he joined EduDev in 1996/97 to do something he believed in.

EduDev was a relatively small organisation until year 2000, when they only had two projects and its scope was limited to monitoring and evaluation of the literacy rate in the province. The Director who at that time was Manager of the Monitoring and Evaluation unit presented a proposal to the MD to expand the scope of EduDev. This proposal was based on the participatory vision of development, modernising the outlook of the workplace and outward centred strategy to attract funds and stakeholders. With the due approval of the MD, he took the seat of Director of Operations in the office to implement his plans. Since then, he has developed a reputation as a 'man of vision' in the developmental sector. From the years 2002 to 2004, he embarked on the journey of

restructuring and change in moving EduDev from a need-based service provider to the one of actively engaging organisation with a strong statement of purpose in learning and development. His efforts were focused on introducing contemporary HRD concepts such as turning EduDev in to a learning organisation, professional development of employees, introducing external consultants to educate employees with up-to-date management concepts and at the same time introducing critical thinking ideas around development. He envisaged EduDev as a 'theoretically strong, academically charged and practically driven' organisation.

At the time of research, EduDev had six development programmes/projects focusing on a range of areas such as community supported schooling, fellowship supported schooling, women's' literacy, home schooling, support to private schooling, and enhancing children confidence and creativity. Other work groups included supporting units, such as, marketing, administration and human resources, programme support and development, and finance. In terms of organisational structure, both programme and supporting units function as 'teams' run by managers /coordinators and are overseen by the Director of Operations.

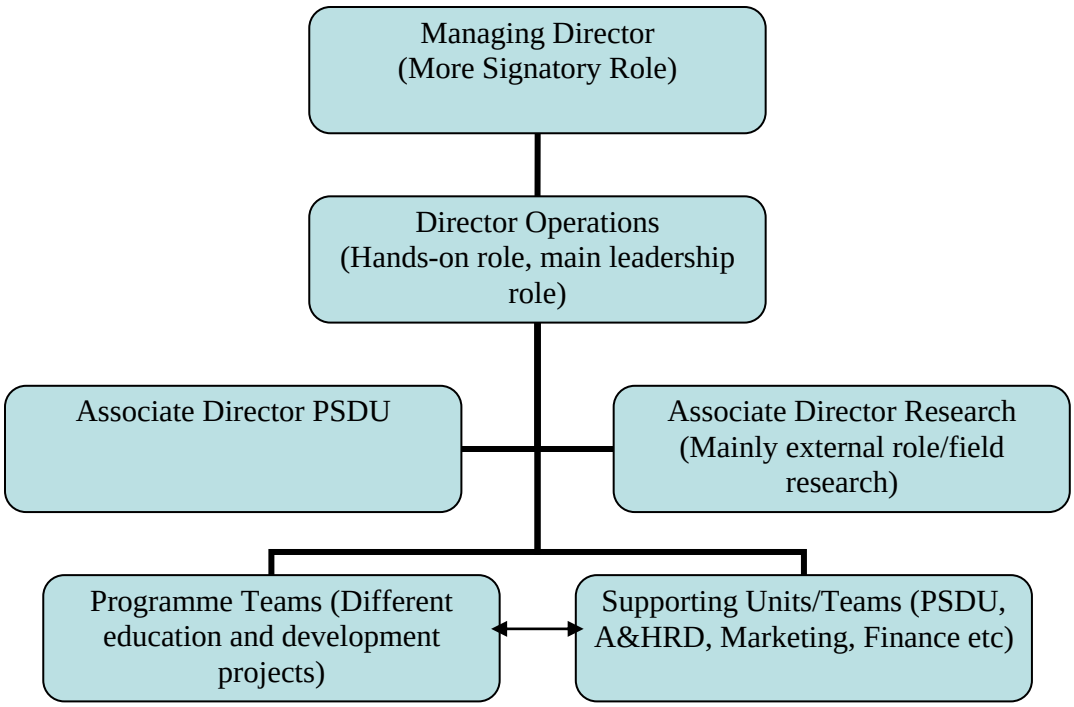
In most cases, the Heads of supporting units are colleagues of the Director of Operations, who prior to restructuring, worked under him in the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. Supporting units are seen as important ones in decision making and planning of activities at the organisational level. The workforce in these units is composed mainly of young staff aged 23 to 30, both male and female with education from top private institutes, usually non-Sindhi and belonging to the higher social class. The workforce in programme units, where cultural sensitivities are involved and outward communication is required with communities, is composed mainly of middle aged staff (35 plus), both male and female, usually Sindhi with rural exposure and education from public universities.

The Human Resource Development unit of EduDev is a small unit that is integrated with administration, and called A&HRD. The roles of A&HRD at EduDev are about HRM

contracts, salaries, appraisals and recruitment. The main employee developmental activities are conducted by the Programme Support and Development Unit (PSDU), which is headed by a female Associate Director. PSDU conducts programme reviews, training need analysis, capacity development and is involved in most of the things related to learning and development needed in organisation.

The organisational chart on paper is represented in Figure 3.1. The Managing Director heads the organisation at top. She approves funding and budgets and is well-informed with day to day affairs of the organisation. The main leadership role is provided by the Director of Operations. The head of PSDU, even though it is a support unit has an Associate Director position because of her sets of responsibilities and involvement with most of the formal activities of organisation. Associate Director Research (male) shares close communication with staff for undertaking programme specific research. Programme teams and support units are at the same level of the hierarchy, work in liaison with each other, and report directly to associate directors and the Director.

Figure 3.1 – Organisational chart for EduDev



A point of clarification to be kept in mind is that purpose of this research is not to study the impact and effectiveness of education development programmes undertaken by EduDev but to study the equality theme in HRD as practiced 'inside' the organisation, which of course may be about the work-related learning.

3.3.2 Selection of the case

The choice of organisation is *theoretically sampled* (Silverman 2005), meaning it is deliberate and relevant. First, an organisation was needed which at least had made an attempt in initiating equality-based HRD discourse. From my previous engagement with EduDev (a total of four months in 2004 as researcher and a short-term employment), I understood that the organisation actively engaged in open learning forms of discourses both at their programme intervention and at employee development level. Developmental sector organisations by virtue of the nature of work they do are rooted in concepts of openness, flexibility and sharing of information (Baig and Babar 2005). The main purpose for such entities is to serve the public which is possible by being sensitive to needs of people they serve and by investing in harnessing the potential of their human resource. Therefore, they are assumed to be practitioners of a learning discourse.

My former association has played a part in selection where the experiences of such concepts in team meetings, trainings and policy making were part of daily life. Such criteria of possessing 'formally articulated aims of a learning orientated organisation' have been adopted in related studies such as Sambrook and Stewart (2000). Second, since contemporary HRD discourse treats context as utopian and uniform, it made more sense to do research in a geographical context where little academic research is cited. The advantage is that this not only allows the study of contextual influences (which would still be possible if research is framed in Europe or North America) but in theory at least, it also provides the opportunity to empirically challenge the universalism of the HRD literature. What I intend to state here is that even though the study would contribute to the under-

represented literature of developing countries in organisation studies (Budhwar and Debrah 2001), a worthy pursuit in itself, this alone is not the criteria of selection. The logic of selection is inevitably linked to the HRD related gaps.

Third, as any research site is invariably a choice of access and availability (Saunders *et al.* 2003; Easterby-Smith *et al.* 2002), my previous contact with EduDev allowed an opportunity to engage in an in-depth case study with the trust of management and participants.

3.3.3 Access

This research was conducted over three months from April 2006 to July 2006. The contact had already been established with the Director of Operations and Managing Director on my visit to Pakistan in August 2005 and access had been granted. In the first meeting on April 1, 2006, topic agenda was discussed in general and a great deal of interest was shown by the Director. A formal letter from the supervisor expressing the interest in studying learning relationships at EduDev was given to the Director, and I was assured of the full cooperation from his side. My identity as a PhD researcher in the organisation was disclosed and known to the members of the organisation.

At the start of research period, I spent some time in the office with various employees in order to gain the trust and explain the research agenda. Overall there was good cooperation from members of organisation. Barring one employee, no one asked for any proof or copy of my supervisor's letter.

The access granted to me was fairly open. On average, I spent five to six hours a day in the office. I was allowed to spend my day in any room, programme unit or supporting unit that I wished to and had the flexibility of time and hours I wanted to get involved in. This

was helpful in keeping the distance when needed and not to disturb participants in case they had an important work task to complete.

3.4 Data collection methods

Data collection methods employed in this research are purely qualitative. Being a case study, the research employed multiple methods thus using *triangulation* (Denzin and Lincoln 2000) as a technique to enhance validity of data in addressing research questions and understanding key phenomena, that is the, 'interplay of context and relationships in HRD'. Three sources of data collection were used, namely: semi-structured open ended interviews, overt observations (both in the work setting and HRD events such as trainings) and to an extent documentary analysis of any available material including the organisation website. Considering the sidelining of learners in HRD research, the main unit of analysis in terms of respondents was learners (the supposed beneficiary of HRD) and in terms of analytic concept, equality relationships and contextual influences.

3.4.1 Interviews

Open-ended interviews are usually the major source of data collection in qualitative studies (Denzin and Lincoln 2000; Silverman 2001, 2005). The main advantages of interviews are their potential to reveal rich data and ability to picture the wider context and sense-making during the process of research (Saunders *et al.* 2003). It allows a researcher to understand the meanings people attach to a particular concept, theory or phenomenon. The technique also helps the participants to clarify whether a question is clear to them or not, and thus ensures that the research is moving in the intended direction (Silverman 2005). However, a good interview usually means a time consuming approach and lengthy textual data to deal with (Saunders *et al.* 2003). Nevertheless, interviews as data collection methods are central to qualitative case study research.

In this case study too, interviews were the main source of data collection. These interviews were semi-structured, face-to-face, open-ended and narrative type interviews (King 1994; Silverman 2001). The interview guide was used for the original questions. This was based on the three research questions and the main ideas from the literature; that is, asking the participants about their views of participatory HRD and its application at EduDev. As the Critical HRD literature indicated in the previous chapter, equality ideas are taken-for-granted and the organisational context is not studied in detail. The participants were asked to talk about their perceptions of the participatory HRD discourse and the role of the organisation, HRD managers and systems in facilitating this discourse. This helped to understand if the participants have accepted the taken-for-granted meanings or whether they evaluate the discourse according to their respective experiences in practice. The 'planned' interview questions focused on participants to provide specific examples of when equality in developmental interactions had been practiced or violated, how they saw the organisation as a system for their own development, and the factors affecting them socially or work-wise. Participants were asked to present a chronology of their own development in the organisation. For developmental interactions, questions focused on the equality in HRD processes, that is, needs, design, delivery and evaluation, and employees' participatory role in taking learning initiatives. The complete list of questions including those generated during the interviewing process is listed in Appendix I.

Interviews were started after spending a few days in developing trust and rapport building in the organisation. On average, an interview lasted one hour to 90 minutes and employees spoke at length about the organisational context and changing relationships that they have experienced over the years. There was no major resistance in giving interviews and members were generally happy to be interviewed, except when workload did not allow them. Except for one female worker, there was no-one who refused to give an interview. In total, 50 interviews were conducted of which 30 were male and 20 were female respondents. Overall, both males and females were equally responsive in

providing data. This was judged on the basis of issues and themes raised by both male and female participants and the average length of the interview time. The data showed that both groups raised similar issues and shared in-depth information. Generally, employees who had spent three years or more gave longer interviews while those in their first year of work had less relevant data to share. One interview was discarded because the respondent later turned up to say that his responses were biased opinions and should not be considered! After about 35 interviews, most of the important themes had emerged but since it was a single case study and time was available, more interviews were done to confirm data. In some instances, participants themselves wished to be interviewed. In qualitative research, the confirmation of the emergence of the major themes is judged by the saturation point of data (Denzin and Lincoln 2000); that is, the point at which additional interviewing is not leading to the emergence of newer themes. Throughout the process of research, there were few changes in interviews and some of the issues that had emerged in interviews or observations were added iteratively.

Respondents were sampled in a way that all the programme and support unit members were represented. However, the main focus in interviewing was on employees and managers from programme units as they are considered receivers of HRD or learners in EduDev. There were some key informants that I knew from past association which helped the process of research to progress in terms of getting deeper insights and identifying participants. These key informants included the Director of Operations, Head of PSDU (HRD), two managers and one assistant manager from the Programme Units. The sampling was purposive and convenience based. It was purposive as I was interested in the workers and HRD personnel, and convenience-based because I selected participants based on their availability. The interviewees' breakdown is given in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 – Interviewees' breakdown in terms of gender, work units and managers / workers

Total	**50**
Male	30
Female	20
Total	**50**
From Programme Units	32 (21 Males and 11 Females)
From Support Units	18 (9 Males and 9 Females)
Total	**50**
From Programme Units	32
Managers / Assistant Managers	9 (6 Males and 3 Females)
Workers	23 (15 Males and 8 Females)
From Support Units	18
Director / Managers	3 (1 Males and 2 Females)
Associate and others	15 (8 Males and 7 Females)

Confidentiality of data was assured to each participant at the start of interview. A statement assuring the participants about the confidentiality and the academic purpose of this research was read out to the participants. There was no informed written consent needed for the approval of questions. There were repeated questions seeking assurance of confidentiality by some participants. Unfortunately, there was resistance in audio-taping the interviews. Out of the 50 interviews, 33 of them allowed recording, 12 of them were recorded using pen and paper and five did not even allow note-taking (for more details, see Appendix II). In such cases, I had to rely on memory and did the note taking immediately after interviews. Fortunately, those who allowed audio-taping seemed the most representative ones in terms of themes generated. One of the five unrecorded interviews was also a substantial one in terms of insights into context. Also, quite a few of the respondents chose to give interviews outside the office setting. All the audio recorded interviews were stored in a password protected computer in Windows Media Player *wmv audio files.

These interviews were in mixed languages consisting of English, Urdu and Sindhi and in many cases were mixes of all. All the interviews were translated and transcribed into English by myself and there was no back-up translator in the process. This is valuable as Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2002) recommend that personally translating and transcribing helps to understand the data thoroughly and ensures a reasonable consistency in the interpretation of data. Although, I do not make claims to be an expert on linguistics, I have used my experience and awareness of translating interviews and have tried to be as consistent as possible. Still, the presence of mixed languages could raise the question of concept equivalence in other languages. However, it needs to be understood that these participants were not illiterate in terms of their formal education. The case is not that they do not understand English. It is just that they are not very fluent in the English language. Moreover, there is not a Sindhi or an Urdu word for every concept. That is one of the reasons for interviewees' using mix of the languages. So, even if they were responding in Sindhi, they would still use the term HRD, critical thinking, or change. The interpretive issue is that my understanding of the concepts is based on academic literature reviews while their understanding is based on practice or experience. This is where interviewing helps because a researcher can ask for elaborations and make sense of the data. However, I have acknowledged that there may be some variation in interpretation because of my academic understanding in the limitations and reflexivity section of the last chapter. One should also add that the language issue is more pertinent when critical linguistic analysis is used as a method of discourse analysis, which specifically focuses on the role of spoken words and language rules in analysing the problems, as is the case in legal studies and government policy-making studies (Phillips and Hardy 2002). This study employs the critical discourse analysis variant of discourse analysis, which focuses on the interplay between critical ideas in the texts and the organisational context. This is discussed in detail in section 3.5 of this chapter.

3.4.2 Participant observations

Participation observation, a technique within the ethnographic tradition is widely used across qualitative approaches and as a technique within case study research (Lofland and Lofland 1995; David and Sutton, 2004). Ethnographies are employed for collecting empirical data on societies, cultures, traditions and community settings. In organisational sociology, ethnographies are used for understanding 'social situations in relation to their naturally occurring contexts' (Weick, 1985, p. 568). An essential requirement of ethnography is to remain in the field (for months or even years) to become completely aware with first-hand knowledge of the setting (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The data in ethnographies can be collected using interviews and participant observation. A 'complete' or a classical form of ethnography in organisation studies requires the researcher to immerse themselves in the field as a 'worker' (ibid.) and to collect data using in-depth participant observations.

Gill and Johnson (2002) categorise the 'participant observation' roles as complete participant, complete observer, observer as participant and participant as observer. In this research, I was an 'Observer as Participant', that is, involved in organisational life as observer but not involved in work activity (ibid.). As observation was overt and everyone knew my PhD role, it avoided the ethical problem of being seen as an outsider with a spying agenda (Vinten 1994). This also reduced the chances of abruptly terminating connection with the case organisation that are possible in doing covert participation observation (ibid. 1994). The advantage that I had because of my previous contact with the organisation was the movement and access available to me. This arrangement meant that even though I was not doing a complete ethnography, I was still able to become aware with first-hand knowledge of the setting. In addition, 'keeping eyes and ears open and being attuned to what might be happening outside of the planned scope' (Hill 2002, p133) became a powerful source of information, which Feldman (1995) has called 'semiotic analysis'.

The technique was specifically helpful in 'living the life' of organisation, watching the interaction and understanding the 'most-talked about issues' in employees' life at EduDev and what they meant in terms of both participatory and social equality and learning. The conversations, discussions in team meetings, routine engagement of employees, tone of the discourse, encouraging or discouraging comments about learning, and positive and negative views about critical concepts were observed. I was allowed to attend and observe team and company meetings that gave a chance to analyse the perspective of management. These meetings were also fora for discussing developmental needs and introducing new HRD/learning discourses, that is discourse dissemination methods. The method also presented the opportunity to observe feedback of meetings, and some of the criticism that members shared informally with each other.

I also attended one workshop/conference on early childhood development that also included personal development sessions, and two training sessions on social marketing and capacity building. Participation in these activities provided opportunity to directly observe notions of equalities in developmental communications and speak to participants about their experiences. This helped to closely study consumption of the discourse and contextual factors active during HRD activity. Observations also verified the issues participants had or were to raise in interviews, thus triangulating the data and establishing content validity in qualitative methods.

Data was collected using a personal notepad, in which observatory field notes were taken and if there were any explanations or unanswered questions that could have been tackled through interview or any further observation, they were marked. These observations were both casual and semi-structured. I started off with the casual observations as I was trying to make sense of the context. When some sense of data had been formed and themes were becoming clear, observations were taken in a semi-structured way with labelling of the context, pattern or theme, if the situation permitted. At times, I kept the diary closed and tried to appear distant if it was felt that note taking would be seen as negative. Most of the times, I also had access to a password protected desktop computer. This was the normal

routine adopted in the particular room and between schedules of interviews. Sometimes, observations were researched in a Word document and saved on USB or emailed to self. Where it was not possible to record observation by any means, I had to rely on memory to make notes after office hours.

3.4.3 Documentary analysis

Documentary analysis is limited in its scope of interpretation (Silverman 2001) but the purpose here was to go through the HRD related documents available (planning papers, manuals, and participants' material) for studying the formal nature of HRD in practice. One of the advantages of looking at documents is that since participant observations reveal contents (only) of existing situation, going through previous material helps researchers trace the events of the past (ibid.). The idea was also to analyse the ontological nature of documents to see for example, whether the tone of documents suggests intent of participatory equalities.

Documents were considered matter of availability by being present in the setting. Some of the documents were organisational and policy memos, written exchanges between teams and PSDU/HRD, training needs proposals, manuals and feedback forms. These helped to see the formal nature of HRD communications and to what extent the request of employees were being answered or to what extent the feedback of PSDU was being taken positively by employees. Documents were not available to take home because of confidentiality and copyright so I had to make quick notes at the site. A few of the letters were photocopied with the consent of relevant personnel. There was also in-house learning orientated published material such as newsletters and magazines available to analyse espoused discourse. This reflected the ideology and focus of learning initiatives in the organisation.

The map of the embedded single case study design (Yin 2003) showing the roles of each of these methods is given in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 – Data collection design guiding the case study research
Adapted from Yin's (2003) single embedded case study design

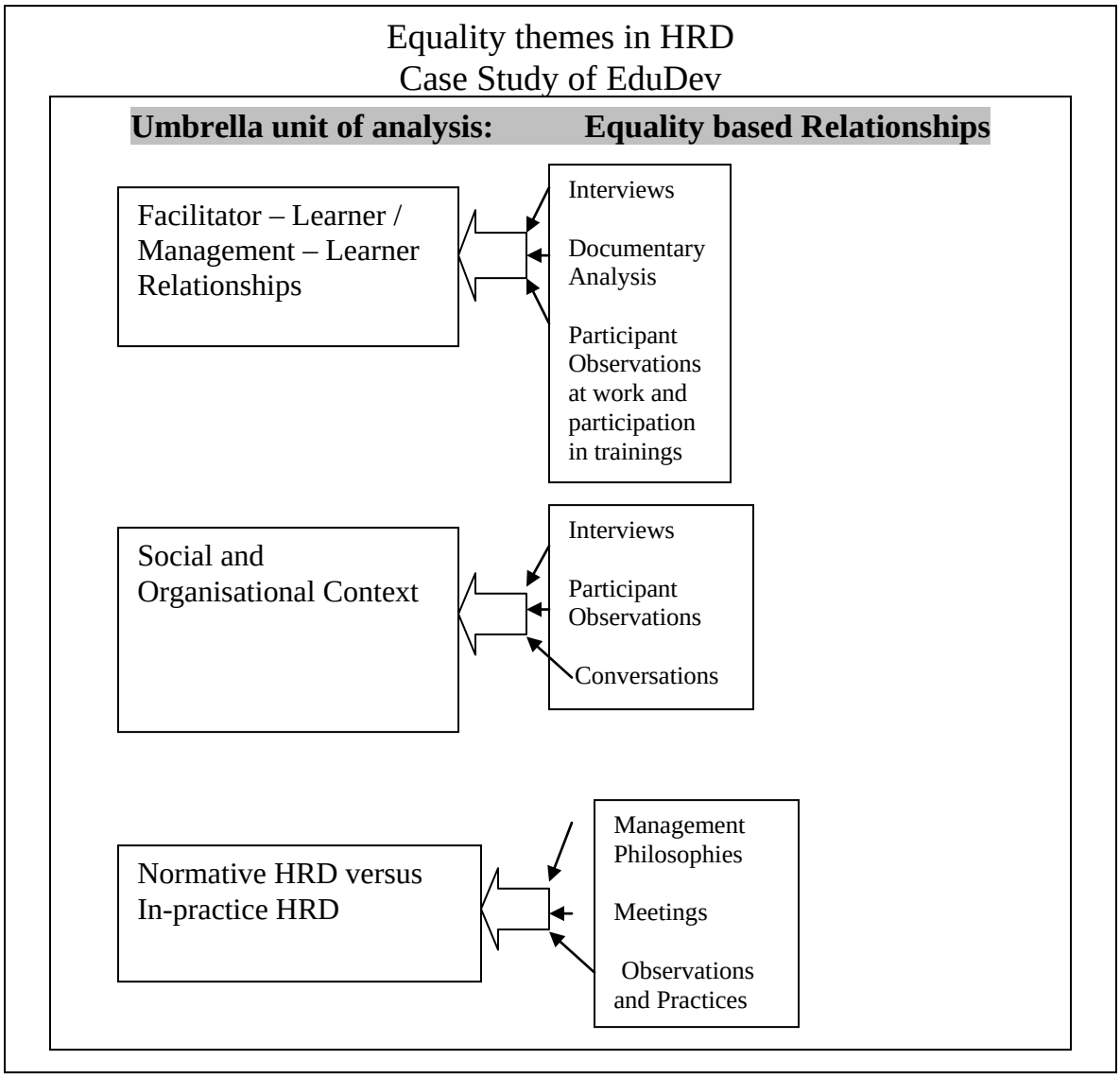


Figure 3.2 shows that multiple methods were used in this research including interviews, observations and document analysis. Meetings, routine work, management ideologies and

practices were also observed. The focus was on understanding the equality relationships in HRD in the case study organisation. The facilitator-learner or the management-learner relationship was studied using interviews. Observations of training and developmental activities contributed in understanding the interaction between the providers and receivers of HRD. Documents were helpful in looking at the formal nature of the espoused discourse.

Social and organisational context was mainly studied using interviews. As discussed earlier in the interviews section, the participants were asked to share examples of how organisational context helped or hindered the practice of equality in learning relationships. The conversations and participant observations in the work setting enriched and triangulated the data regarding contextual influences in HRD.

The analysis of normative versus in-practice HRD discourse helped to understand the espoused and in-use discourse and the variation between the two. The stated management philosophies and the communications by the Director in meetings helped to understand the nature of the espoused discourse, while the observations, practices and the interaction of employees in the meetings helped to understand the in-use discourse.

3.5 Critical discourse analysis as an analytic strategy

A common thread of any variety of discourse analysis is taking ‘discourses seriously in recontextualising both macro and micro narratives that inform organisational dynamics and contexts’ (Alvesson 2002, p68). I have adopted critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a method of data analysis. By definition, critical discourse analysis which is an amalgamation of ‘critical’ and ‘context’ (Phillips and Hardy 2002) allows critically locating discourse within the contextual meaning of organisation. In that respect, CDA as an analytic technique fits with the purpose of this research.

CDA is common in organisational studies where studies are centred on political and power relationships (Fairclough 1995). In tandem with Trehan's (2004) idea, that to present any version of HRD or to promote any specific knowledge of HRD is inescapably a political and power act, CDA underlies the identification of power dynamics in texts, which does not necessarily have to be dysfunctional. It allows studying ideologies of HRD (the dissemination of discourse) and the attitudes / perceptions (utility, neglect, and optimism) towards it of those affected by power dynamics (the consumption of it). Studies conforming to this perspective are also helpful in studying distinct cultures, such as Hardy *et al.'s* (2000) study of refugee systems in Palestine, analysing political strategies of NGOs in shaping the right to speak and silence of different groups.

Fairclough (1992) and Fairclough and Hardy (1997) have identified a framework for carrying out CDA at a practical level. They contend that CDA can be seen as a three-dimensional context comprising text, discursive practice and sociocultural practice. *Texts* refer to vocabulary that is the tone of discourse; it shows any use of metaphors, declarative or interrogation in tone of textual data (for example, enthusiasm in offering HRD activities and any optimism or cynicism drawn towards these ideas). This gives a researcher cues towards the mood of the discourse and understanding of attitudes towards a phenomenon under study. *Discursive practice* explains the genres drawn upon in discourse. This answer questions such as are there complex patterns or are ideas relatively simple? It explains the homogeneity or heterogeneity of a situation (for example, are there one or two issues standing out or are there multiple perspectives of what we make of HRD and why it succeeds or fails in a particular situation?). Finally, *sociocultural practice* explains what social and cultural features explain the context of management (HRD and organisation) that discourse is part of.

As such these frameworks of CDA are generic tools informing sense-making in research but they do not have to be followed mechanically. Rather these operate as a thought process in analysis. Francis (2007) for example has used CDA as an approach to study the role of HRD in strategic change from critical perspective. Using a variety of ideas she

used the concept of ‘textscape’ emphasising the need to avoid treating context as simply a backdrop but to see its dialectical relationship with discourse (Keenoy and Oswick 2004). Such an approach does not involve mechanical coding normally associated with conventional qualitative analysis (Francis 2007). Rather, it focuses on identification of themes, patterns, contradictions, and elements that build ‘textscape’ in attaining research goals.

Utilising these ideas, I have used three research questions as the basic form of coding. However, in formation of categories and explanation of data within each question, I have not limited myself to mechanical codes. Instead, I have used ideas of ‘textscape’ (relationships of HRD ideologies in discourse and its dialect with examples of equalities in data), metaphors (to explain cultural meanings, analogies and connotations in EduDev context) and have identified contradictions, common patterns, popular discourses, and variations or matches in espoused and in-use HRD discourse.

3.6 Issues of generalisability, validity and reliability or parallel criteria

Irrespective of qualitative or quantitative studies, the quality of research is demonstrated by certain assessment criteria. These usually include generalisability, validity and reliability, having its roots in positivist and statistical research. However, opinions differ in the case study research, and in particular, context specific research. For example, Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe that parallel criteria for qualitative research are dependability, credibility and transferability. Data collected has to be dependable or ‘authentic’ (Silverman 2001) for the time in which it was collected, as the realities of organisations change (Sambrook 2002). The job of the researcher is to provide accurate accounts of what was found. Similarly, for data to be ‘credible’ other researchers should be able to audit it; this is done by providing reasons for including or excluding certain data. As far as ‘transferability’ is concerned, a conclusion can be transferable depending

on the extent to which contextual details and uniqueness of situation are provided (ibid.). Silverman (2005) argues that if concern is with the uniqueness of the context, then generalisability should not be a key issue if data reveals those unique characteristic of the research site. This in itself should be sufficient grounds for organisation specific theory building. Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2002) mention that as far as the researcher demonstrates sufficient 'cultural sensitivity' and reasoning for why explanations are specific to the research site studied, the universal theory is not the biblical goal. However, Yin (2003) and Mason (1996) argue that generalisations are possible even in single case studies because at least a few elements of research would concur to theoretical propositions generated.

Since the argument of the proposed research is for HRD theory to incorporate contextual understanding, the interest is not in finding another universal HRD practice. However, I have used procedures to assess the quality of this research. For example, gathering data using multiple methods, that is through use of triangulation, the findings are credible offering validity in addressing research questions. By detailing the method of analysis, and presenting longer extracts of data in the analysis chapter, it gives authenticity to research because one can trace the process of research (Sambrook 2002) that has resulted in outcomes. I have also given both descriptive and analytical details of context to see replicability of context for future researchers to use. Although the unique aspects of context influencing HRD practice in the case study organisation may not be generalisable, this does not mean that nothing can be taken from this research for the wider body of literature. By comparing some of the findings with studies in other geographic contexts in the last chapter, I have shown the aspects that are generalisable.

Further, within reflexive methodology, details of one's own relationship with the research subject, influences used and ways in which analysis may have been strengthened or weakened adds to the credibility of research (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2003). According to Weick (1999), reflexivity entails that management researchers should engage themselves to think through their own thinking. This thinking can include issues such as

researchers' pre-dispositions towards a setting, method or the research participants. Reflexivity also includes drawing awareness to our purposes of research, for example, whether we are genuinely writing for the benefit of the research participants or our own ambitions (Burrell 2001).

In this particular case, I already had an exposure to the organisation and I was researching solely for the degree of PhD. My pre-conceived understanding was that this organisation was committed to learning and development of its personnel. I knew that the research setting was based in Sindh and I will be interacting with many Sindhi speaking workers, given that my focus was on the employees and not management. I understood that in research there can be both positive and negative outcomes about the research. Although I understood that there can be issues of group conflict, politics and structuration, that is, a set of identities which shapes and organises a social order (Giddens 1986), I did not pre-empt the exact nature or the intensity of it. This was mainly because my previous experience with the organisation had been positive, and that was one of the reasons I selected the organisation - to see the discourse in practice. However, as the data analysis shows in the next chapter, structural forces, such as, Sindhi or non-Sindhi employees as well as social class turned out to be a major contextual factor negatively affecting participatory HRD in the case-study organisation. Related to this, it is reasonable to question whether my own identity of a Sindhi speaking individual has an effect on the interpretation. I would say that although subjectivity is an acknowledged element in qualitative research (Johnson and Duberley 2003), the frequency of this theme in data provides strength to the findings. The personal encounters of the 'self' in the process of research and retrospective views regarding the effect of my identity with relation to the findings and whether things could be done differently are reflected in the last section of the thesis. The issues of ethics in reflexivity, such as, the role of access, familiarity with the context and my personal conduct are covered in the next section.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Blumberg *et al.* (2005, cited in Saunders *et al.* 2007, p.92) define ethics as 'moral principles, norms or standards of behaviour that guide moral choices about our behaviour and our relationship with others.' The choices of access made, methods adopted and position of researcher in setting brings certain benefits and drawbacks. In extensive qualitative approaches, especially if it accommodates closeness with participants, it poses a double challenge of exhibiting respectful behaviour over a period of access without undermining the data collection process. Some of the ethical, political or practical considerations in relation to my method and access are discussed here.

First of all is the question of my previous association with the organisation. There are documented advantages and disadvantages with this. The main strength is that the researcher can use the familiar setting to his or her benefit because of prior knowledge of where and from whom to obtain valuable knowledge (Hockey 1993). On the other hand, the familiarity with settings can lead to subjective or narrowed analysis and failure to pick irregular patterns in data (Spradley 1979). My experience was that my previous association was a benefit. In my previous association with the organisation as a researcher, respondents were selected by management and did not provide any socio-cultural details at work. This time, they had trust and engaged thoroughly in the process of research. As the next chapter on case study analysis shows, the data generated was comprehensive, culturally expressive and included multiple perspectives of the subject studied. In addition, having a sense of the place meant I was able to make intelligent judgements about data rather than guessing at assumptions.

My former association also meant I was able to select participants who were key informants. The ethical side is that as a researcher you are bound to listen and when someone wanted to be interviewed I had to oblige. In any case, given the cultural context and my position as a researcher, declining such requests could have been insulting and may have adversely affected subsequent data collection. Such requests are reflected in the

relatively higher sample size for interviews than those associated with the single case studies. Practically speaking, this sometimes can be frustrating especially when those interviews turn out to be barren and have not much to say about the interest of research.

Similarly, for my role as an observer, I was aware that without knowing me personally, management would not have granted me open access and flexibility to move from one room to the other. Even though I was observing and not participating in work, access type and prior trust meant involvement levels were higher than normally associated with a non-participant role (Saunder *et al.* 2007). In research ethics terms, this put a greater responsibility on me about my conduct. I was careful of not violating this trust in the way I managed myself and the research project. For example, I made sure if during an interview somebody else walked in to the room, I stopped the conversation and audio-taping. I also understood that there was a fine line between friendliness and sharing of information. As Hockey (1993) notes, familiarity of setting can invite extra friendliness or hostility from some groups in the organisation. Personally, I did not experience hostility of any sort but there were instances where I felt I was being probed by respondents. For example, a couple of respondents asked if other members had mentioned anything about them in interviews. In such instances, I had to be direct in telling them, 'I am expected to respect everyone's confidentiality.'

The ethical issues in the research process can also be about power. These can be about participants influencing the research process or probing the interviewer about the motives. The major issues I faced were in resistance to audio-taping. The only time I was probed back was about my methods by an interviewee, who was a statistical researcher. She wanted to know the measures and constructs I was using and why was qualitative research a better method than statistical methods. However, she was not hostile in asking these questions and gave a detailed interview. The power issue can also arise in writing the thesis. This can particularly happen when the researcher has to report findings back to the case organisation and findings are not in their favour. I wrote the thesis in the UK and

was detached from the participants by that time. My motives were purely academic and I am not under any commitment to disseminate findings back to them.

3.8 Summary

This chapter elucidated on research philosophy, research objectives, case study design, data collection methods and analytic strategy. EduDev, an education development agency in Pakistan was chosen as a case study organisation with an aim to advance contextual understanding in equality-based contemporary HRD discourse. The study is framed within the critical interpretivist worldview, which accommodates subjectivity but also lends the analysis to critical interpretation. This progresses critical studies in HRD to an empirical level, which are traditionally based on conceptual critique. In addition, the reflexivity elements about my own position, such as my Sindhi identity and its relation to the context, and my previous association with the case study organisation use some aspects of critical ethnography. Mainly qualitative methods, including interviews, observations/conversations and document analysis are used in this research. In total, 50 semi-structured interviews were conducted. The 'observer as participant' form of participant observation was used. The data is analysed using concepts of critical discourse analysis. The next chapter provides the account of data analysis.

Chapter 4

Case Study Analysis

This chapter presents the analysis of case study data according to the research questions. It is an exploration of the state of HRD in EduDev and a detailed understanding of the context in which HRD is practiced in the case study organisation. Even though the analysis of rich qualitative data has been a daunting task and I have thought over various ways of presenting this data, it is but natural to state that what follows here is my own interpretation and sense-making of the research story. I have exercised calculated judgments to utilise the best information and make it part of the contents in this chapter.

The three research objectives involving the understanding of the espoused discourse, the consumption of the espoused discourse and the understanding of the contextual factors impacting the equalities in HRD, are used as a broad structure for presenting the results. Within each objective, the relevant results are discussed. The espoused discourse and the in-use discourse are discussed on a collective level. The data presented in the discussion of espoused discourse is focused on the providers of HRD and the top management. The data presented in discussion of the in-use discourse is focused more on receivers of HRD interventions. The contextual analysis is advanced thematically. For example, the narratives are broken down into the organisational factors such as design, and socio-political and cultural landscape governing the successful or failed practice of equalities in HRD. This is where the CDA principles are applied. For instance, the inter-textuality in terms of the coexistence of multiple discourses, such as espousing diversity but taking a stand against local ideas, is explained. The narratives are further deconstructed to generate a deeper level understanding of the practice of equalities in HRD, such as, breaking the text into historical roots and politics in the organisation and the self-guarding

interests of social-class and language divisions are explained. This applies the CDA ideas of textscape, the process of continually relating text to a context to see the dialectical relationship of the discourse (Keenoy and Oswick 2004).

Throughout the chapter, the data under each heading, category and theme is drawn from all the sources, which include interviews, observations, and the documents. All the three sources of data are interwoven in the text and referenced accordingly. Arguably, the choice of presenting the data according to research question could be problematic but this was done because the data was coded against research questions and as the producer of case story; it provided me with a logical structure and transparency of the mechanism, that is, it flows from a process of research strategy. I acknowledge that this offers the potential problems of reader difficulty but my considerations are based on presenting longer narratives and triangulating towards studying equality, relationships and HRD in the context of EduDev.

4.1 Dissemination of HRD discourse – The espoused reality

At EduDev, there is strong presence of a contemporary HRD discourse espoused heavily and symbolically. This discursive presence rallies around ideals of new forms of learning, participation, openness, equality, social justice and need for critical dialogue. Although discursive presence is more connected to the term learning than the term HRD, concepts like learning organisation, learning spaces, critical discourse, critical thinking, and praxis are familiar terminologies at workplace. In theory both best-practice/mainstream type and critical type discourses are available in HRD communications.

Data collection sources show there is at least theoretical evidence that contemporary developmental ideas are floated freely and talked about frequently. There are both direct and indirect references towards such learning directed discourse. For example, sometimes respondents cited specific examples (direct references), that is, used terms such as,

‘learning organisation’, ‘reflection’, ‘alternate pedagogies’ and sometimes they used words (indirect references) like ‘openness in exchanging ideas’, ‘participate in learning’ and ‘engaging in meaningful dialogue’; which can collectively be put under ‘learning orientated’ or ‘organisational learning’ texts.

The common questions in interviews when exploring means of discourse dissemination figured around philosophy of HRD/learning, meanings of HRD and type of HRD events/interventions in organisation. Since the main responsibilities of providing learning lay with Director and PSDU, the focus of these questions was elaborated more with providers of HRD. In general, document and website analysis revealed more focused, text-book or published source type discourse such as ‘we continuously challenge assumptions of learning’, ‘belief that everybody on planet has capacity to grow and serve’, ‘the aim is to critically reflect’. In interviews, since respondents were asked to give examples, the terminologies were specific, such as ‘learning organisation’, or ‘praxis week (quarterly presentation week to reflect and share learning on activities of a quarter). In observed data such as routine communication between employees, meetings and project discussions, the discourse was of a generic nature involving terms such as ‘collective learning’, sharing of ideas’, or ‘let us reflect as a team’.

The contemporary learning based ideas were frequently communicated in HRD events, team meetings and planning sessions that I had a chance to witness. This emphasis on learning can be seen from the following observation.

> We are gradually moving towards becoming an organisation that prides itself in learning on continual basis and for that we need to explore opportunities to creating critical learning spaces. I encourage all of you to extensively collaborate and unpack new forms of learning and share them in a more open, challenging and transparent manner. This is not just important for this place’s wellbeing but also to bring positive change in our lives. *(Observation from Director addressing a meeting on the future direction of EduDev)*

As can be seen, the focus is on creation of new forms of learning and for individual exploration to learn continuously. To put its critical nature in context, this is connected to overall well-being and macro perspectives of lives. My broader observation was that there was a greater emphasis on concepts related to learning without signifying any particular meaning for each of them. The discourse was what could be called a generic HRD or generic learning orientated discourse but with a strong underlying focus on need to learn, need to change, creating an environment of openness in learning and developing our own understanding of what learning means to us as individuals and an organisation.

At a formal or planned level, various ways of emphasising and imparting HRD concepts are used at EduDev. This includes strategic/planning meetings, visits by local and foreign speakers/philosophers, management consultants, publications, review sessions or praxis week, professional retreats, workshops, seminars, training, and Director and HRD unit's discussions with employees. A major aspect of the learning discourse is disseminated through the Director or PSDU, whose job is to do extensive internet research on learning and development and then pass on modern concepts through capacity building initiatives.

> We (PSDU team) review our work on a daily basis. Our main goal is to create a positive culture at EduDev. We encourage everybody to share their ideas with us and document what we have learned every quarter. I have assigned responsibilities to Sumbal and Shani (Pseudo names) to do extensive search on internet and introduce modern capacity building theories in a monthly newsletter. I want to tell you we live in changing times... this makes it more important for us to be participative in whatever we do. *(Interviewee no. 24 – Female - Head of PSDU)*

Again, the orientation towards learning is on modern initiatives and being participative in anything EduDev members engage in. In line with the contemporary theme of uncertainty, the assumptions are of changing times and the need to build capacities to face these challenges.

An important element of this discourse is the focus on 'critical thinkers' and 'personalities'. Radical thinkers and pioneers of informal learning and education like Paolo Freire and Ivan Illich are considered inspirational. Such works are widely disseminated via in house-publications. To its credit, the organisation also publishes the country's first magazine on 'critical education and development' and has also established a library on the premises which features best-practice management books such as The Learning Organisation: The Fifth Discipline and also major titles on critical studies in education and development. This is understandable given that this is an organisation engaged in education development and community building programmes and there is a resemblance between their context of work and the work of such thinkers or in strategic HRD terms a natural alignment (Walton 1999) between work and learning required for work. But the discursive construction goes beyond learning theory to incorporate critical thinking ideas of a just society and work of those who critique the capitalistic systems. To this end, scholars of the present age like Noam Chomsky have been called upon to engage with people in critical talk.

> The theory of development needs a re-look... We have to come out of these American values of winning – we need to move to models of learning for attaining the goals of social justice… We must apply our own thinking and value our local knowledge…
>
> Scholars of highest esteem have visited this place. Last year Noam Chomsky from USA was here. We are very lucky that he visited us. I and my team does every bit we can to invite people like him. He spent some days with us... He helped people to think, to be critical. Over the years we have worked hard to become a learning organisation and such efforts take us step further. *(Interviewee no. 15 – Male - Director)*

This type of engaging and 'challenge your assumptions' discourse was observed commonly on various platforms. This was often the starting point for events that focused solely on learning and development. At EduDev, this is the line of reasoning or 'mood of discourse' (Fairclough and Hardy 1997) for engaging with critical theory and coming out of naïve assumptions of learning and development. However, the visibility of local knowledge in the shape of any concept / practice was not noticeable.

Employees or workers in programme units recognise the direction of HRD taken by developmental decision makers. This can be seen in their responses such as 'we have a philosophy of change for learning' (*Interviewee no. 17 - female*), or 'a major part of my life at EduDev has been dealing with knowledge of rethinking development' (*interviewee no. 38 - male*) or,

> The proposed concept of learning here is all about experience, reflecting our work, understanding your and my viewpoint and creating new meanings of work for our-self to rise above the bar. *(Conversation with a male worker in a community school programme)*

Similarly, published material for workshops and stakeholders and work related contents on their website also reveal similar direction of HR Development. In addition it also shows a research based approach towards knowledge.

> 'Personal and Organisational Capacity Development (P&OCD) as a thematic area is one of our major working domain.' *(Published material for a past event)*

> 'The EduDev releases various publications to stimulate a meaningful discourse on the theories and practices of varied educational and developmental efforts, locally and globally. Along with that certain informational material is also compiled to create awareness amongst various organisations and people at the grassroots level. The purpose of this section is to foster an exchange of ideas and research findings

at a global stage to expand knowledge regarding education and development.' *(Website; some words interchanged / replaced, and address not given to maintain confidentiality)*

Table 4.1 summarises the dissemination of an HRD discourse at different levels and channels at EduDev. The table shows the presence of both mainstream and critical discourses. Critical in this context, as discussed in previous paragraphs, means redefining development to attain social justice, and creating space for reflective and informal forms of learning, which draws on local knowledge and shows sensitivity to issues important to a common person. It can be argued that there is a presence of conflicting discourses. One is based on progress in uncertain times with the use of modern business management practices and the other is based on drawing awareness to the self and surroundings, and critically applying knowledge to generate ways for alternative and critical thinking. However, both these discourses have been espoused with a focus on equality. The mainstream practices are used for planning but the intended methodology for disseminating these concepts is based on the values of participation and involvement of the learners. Critical practices 'by content' are based on the principles of equality and respect. At the text level of CDA, it shows the espoused value of equality and participation in learning. However, in terms of its discursive practice, the discourses can contradict due to the contextual factors in action. For example, as the later sections of this chapter will show, the espoused value of management knowledge can be participatory but self-interest of power status can also mean restricting access to developing alternative thinking and equality of giving voice to the learners.

Table 4.1 – Dissemination of the HRD discourse at EduDev

Interventions	People Involved	Nature of Discourse
Reflective Sessions	Director's interaction with programme teams / support units	Radical, Alternate learning, Critical
Interviews, Audio/Video Talks	Chomsky, Manish Jain, Yusuf Progler, educationists / radical thinkers	Truism, Thinking, Human Values, Anti-capitalistic; Technical / Work related
Training / Planned HRD	Reputed consultants, general management trainers both internal and external	Subject specific both work related and organising skills, excellence style material, e.g. Stephen Covey ideas; espoused methodology is participative
Day-to-day work place learning	Teams, employees, inter-group	Discussion around work, sharing of ideas, problem-solving through interaction
In-house publications	Articles by PSDU, employees and external resource person	Theoretical (Concepts of learning), case studies, argumentative, challenging

Overall, there is strong indication of contemporary HRD / CHRD / learning-driven discourse based on equality and participatory principles in the case study organisation. The discourse is generic, usually communicated in abstract terms and comprises themes of learning organisation and organisational learning such as openness, challenging assumptions, awareness and capacity building. The context of discourse is connected to uncertainty, changing times, well-being in lives and challenging dominant meanings of

development. Documents and interviews data revealed that this discourse has prevailed persistently for the last four to five years.

4.2 Consumption of HRD discourse – The in-use reality

The interview questions for understanding the consumption of HRD discourse broadly focused on what is happening with HRD discourse, and the application, perception and usages of this discourse. Similarly, the observations and informal conversations that related to answering these questions or reflected the usage of the discourse were coded under this research objective. In the analysis of the in-use reality of the discourse, data is drawn from a mix of these sources.

Whether equality based HRD discourse communicated strongly has translated in to practice is questionable. Unfortunately, the application of learning based concepts remains scarce in the organisation. There is very little in-use that is espoused so heavily by management. A general finding is employees cannot find much 'relevance' of this and do not necessarily see a great 'value' in utilising modern learning based ideas. Overall, there seemed to be a mixed response to reception of the discourse.

> I was sent to a course on management and self-development. We were taught different subjects. One of the modules was on leadership and change. Lot of topics were covered like teamwork, lifelong learning, learning organisations, learning climate and there were more. I found some useful and some bookish. I have applied some terms in my programme... personally I feel more knowledgeable and like to share that with my team members. Not everything is useful in actual work but it is nice to know about them. *(Interviewee no. 32 – Male)*

And sometimes the views were a bit cynical,

> Boss all the time is talking about learning and growing. I don't understand what he is trying to achieve. OK he says talk to me, talk to others, learn from others but what is so big in this? It is something we all do... I do not see anything new in this except that some of us pretend this to please him and he can feel good that we are growing *(sic). (Interviewee no. 11 – Female – Translated from Urdu/Sindhi)*

Along with this employees do not see any 'real' applicative purpose in this discourse. A bit like Rigg and Trehan's (2008) experiences of critical reflection at the workplace, there is lack of direction as to what is to be achieved from learning ideas. Learners at EduDev understand that these are good things but not necessarily fruitful for them. Perhaps, this is because of over-emphasis on talking HRD without concrete plans for materialising in practice. Generally, respondents felt much of this talk was philosophical without serious intentions to apply them at work. This is illustrated in the following narrative.

> The thing is there is lot of philosophy here and not much action at EduDev. Let me try to explain you more. See, we have this culture of sudden meetings and discussion forums and we keep talking about new concepts. For example, learning organisation was a famous one, praxis was the other and then came the critical thinking. What do these mean to us and how will we achieve them does not seem to be important. But Director and his wings (or) A-team are busy organising speakers to come and spend days talking about these concepts.
>
> … I want to reinforce that the management only talks here and does very little. To say they have been successfully implemented will be wrong. I told you there is haphazard system of HRD here. They should claim they have done a lot, for sure they have but without any impact. They are living in imagination. We all are building castles in the air at EduDev. We are doing things without any direction based on Director's imagination of an ideal world but where is that world? *(Interviewee no. 5 – Male – Parts translated from Sindhi)*

There also seemed to be ‘frustration’ with not knowing how to put these ideas in practice at the workplace. Employees expressed feelings of ‘missing something’ in HRD ideas. Respondents claimed they have attempted to apply ‘reflective’ and ‘participatory’ concepts in practice at the work level, for example, when discussing strategies with stakeholders for improving service they provide to school. They claimed they have been able to do so because they ‘see the point’ there but at the workplace, employees opined they find it frustrating because there has to be ‘something’ on which to apply concepts, ‘when we are saying challenging assumptions, what assumptions are these and how do they matter and how it will make any difference to me? … This is frustrating you know.’ *(Based on conversation with group of programme team employees, both male and female)*

People in PSDU (HRD) believed that EduDev was progressing on an employee development front because of the heavy investments put in over the years by them and efforts by the Director. The PSDU manager claimed that the organisation is ‘shaping up amazingly’ and ‘everyone is motivated to learn and share’ *(Interviewee no. 24)*. She understood that a few concepts may not have materialised or ‘not grasped fully’ by employees but overall the ‘vibes were energetic’ and there was a sense of ‘willingness to learn more’. The Director seemed more aware of people’s perceptions regarding the utility of the learning orientated discourse, ‘perhaps we challenge too much’ but claimed it was ‘part of process’, *(observations)* and ‘it is up to individuals to identify *challenges* while my job is to provide *learning spaces* which as *you will see* I am providing’ *(Interviewee no. 15.)*

One of the PSDU staff, a male assistant manager, who chose to speak informally over a period of research rather than giving an interview, shared employees’ feeling, 'we are expecting people to be creative, learner, critical… this must be confusing… at times I have also confronted myself about this.’ He also gave his thoughts on why a contemporary learning discourse was not translating into meaningful application.

> As part of my job here I have researched (the) learning discourse closely. I think it is not a suitable one for our people. My analysis is what we are saying is, 'fine', no problem if you are a worker or leader, rich or poor, educated or not but there is a chance for everyone to participate and there is respect for everyone. People can ask questions and they can get the answers… So we are neglecting bigger developmental needs and not providing them tangible development where they would see incentive of moving to another level of work.

To an extent, participatory ideas have been consumed in the micro-context of training. A senior female employee *(Interviewee No. 2),* who had spent almost 10 years with the organisation felt, '…recently trainings have become more participatory and there is better exchange between tutor and participants. That is the place where you can see little utilisation of sharing knowledge.' My observations from the training that I attended were on a similar line but the extent of participatory equalities observed varied from event to event and facilitator to facilitator. This was observed by analysing the interactions during training, for example, the engagement level used by the trainers, the level of participation and chances provided to the learners for asking questions, the equality of chances given to the audience, to both the male and the female participants, and to the seniors and the juniors The attitude, the tone of the discourse used by the facilitators and the willingness of the facilitators and participants to listen to each other and acceptance of their ideas was also observed.

Both the support and programme teams believed that they were participatory within their teams and learned from each other. There were occasions of evidence of critical dialogue in practice - 'previously (also) we used to share ideas (but) now we have begun to question each other when we come up with an idea' *(observation; translated)*. However, at an organisational level, and across the levels (between programmes, and PSDU / director), the consumption of learning-orientated ideas seemed to be at a much lower level.

There are cases where employees do see value in these shared approaches to learning but they are in passing and one or two between many. Below, I have included these quotes to give the point of view of those workers.

> I am not trying to criticise anyone but you have to accept some things as well. It is (an) individual's responsibility to 'help themselves' and find relevance to promoted ideas. One needs to take initiative otherwise you can spend your life complaining. That is part of (the) critical thinking that we talk here. That is the way of (a) competitive world. *(Interviewee no. 23 - Male)*

> This is a positive place – look at the value of openness here – the kind of stuff you learn here – the exposure to new ideas – theories, philosophies – kind of people you meet – the level of dialogue – it is great. I feel so learned with this. Professional retreat has been best part of my job here. Well, I gained knowledge, it was fun. You have to take it easy. *(From an informal discussion with a female research associate after a training event – Unrecorded)*

In spite of the lack of value and confusion of utility experienced by the majority of the workforce in dealing with learning ideas, the discourse remains strong. This majority includes 36 interviewed respondents (29 out of 32 of the programme workers and 7 out of 18 support workers). In an uninspiring manner, its usage is confined to building favourable impression and keeping relationships with HRD personnel. To director and PSDU staff, this gives them reason to believe that this discourse is important. From a critical discourse analysis perspective, the context is that this is a flavoured or likeable discourse in the organisation and the way forward for employees is to use it in a way that management feels good about it. If we take an organisational culture context, the 'produced culture' (Trice and Beyer 1983) is one where using contemporary HRD discourse is acknowledged as a parameter of learning. Therefore, primarily, employees are using the discourse as resource to carry on their lives at the workplace without really internalising the conception of the discourse. I found this to be a common observation,

especially in the way they used linguistic resources in meetings, asked questions and justified strategies. The following quote supports this observation and illustrates the point,

> We try our best to be familiar with the terms around human resources, learning, education and change. This is helpful when I want to get project proposals specially training needs approval for my team. Here and there, I try to consciously say a few terms and often repeat them. I am not saying they always get the job done but I can say they leave an impression that our team is learning fast and if lucky I will get the approval... This does not mean I am overly passionate about these ideas. *(Interviewee no. 21 – Male*)

In sum, the consumption of contemporary HRD discourse at EduDev is marginal and not internalised by employees. The gulf that exists between espoused and in-use theories is understood by contextual factors impinging on HRD practice at EduDev.

4.3 Contextual factors shaping HRD practice

A problem in analysis of contextual factors has been its overlapping nature. Because respondents talked about various facets of context in their responses (in one sentence or quote), it was difficult to separate them in distinct categories of contextual influences. Nevertheless, I have attempted to deconstruct this intertextuality of the discursive text (Fairclough 1992) in distinct categories of contextual influences.

4.3.1 The issue of organisational design and relationships

As a matter of convention, I started off with getting basic information regarding flows of communication, organisation chart and observing lines of authorities and employees' interaction with PSDU/HR and Director. I also began to notice any talk that described the

relationship of workers with facilitators of development. The need for smooth communication, lesser channels, and discretion to take learning decision and freedom to speak to top management have been always thought of as key features of the learning environment (Harrison 1997; Eddy *et al.* 2006). However, I noticed that it common to almost always make an appointment for a meeting with PSDU's head and to prepare a 'rationale note' for discussing any idea. Considering it employs only 200, and the hierarchy is not very tall, this did not create any bureaucracy of channels but it did hinder fostering a culture of participation and taking learning initiatives. There seemed to be a high degree of formality in interaction between employees and HRD personnel, which worked against the discursive construction of 'openness' and 'enhancing learning' being espoused in their articulated statements.

There was a feeling of 'unrest' and 'discomfort' in a way programme units and PSDU/HRD interacted and enacted their roles. Despite diffusion of ideals of openness and shared learning, there seemed to be a clash between two groups. While on paper the organisational structure is thematic / team based and HRD / PSDU are known as supporting units, in reality, they operate administratively over programme teams. It would be fair to say that this issue of domination at the hands of those responsible for development came frequently in interviews and observations. This was an issue that the Director sounded aware of but had his own perspective and he spoke of this profoundly,

> 'Life has come full circle in restructuring this place. There was a master-slave relation between programmes-supporting units; I changed it to slave-master between programmes-supporting units – this gave them reality checks – now I have integrated the two on (a) same level and as a result the quality of discussions and learning that is emerging is absolutely fantastic' (*Interviewee no. 15)*

Similarly, the head of PSDU did not think this was a concern. Her thoughts pertaining to the system of the organisation were, 'participatory decision making and accountability is built in the design of this organisation that is why we are growing quite fast' *(Interviewee*

no. 24). In the review and planning documents prepared by PSDU team, there were phrases such as 'over the last year we have exemplified participatory leadership, decision making and accountability in all programmes and units. We plan to continue these efforts in the coming year to achieve even higher levels of organisational and individual capacity development.'

This view of the Director is not shared by the majority of programme team employees, who regularly identified themselves as 'slaves' and 'slaves for ever'. This issue in part is of organisational development and design, that is, there is an organisational structure on paper and there is a contrasting structure in practice. My own sense making was that it created 'confusion' and observed some employees talking about 'not enough role clarity in dealing with HRD personnel'. Still though, the design itself was not the most important concern to workers in participating openly for learning. Reporting to PSDU was a routine for them but the way they operated between them had greater repercussions. A female worker, for instance, said 'I hesitate whenever I have to meet members of PSDU because there are too many justifications to give on every single point we discuss (sic) … I am fine reporting to her but a support unit should act like a support unit' *(Interviewee no. 13).* Another quote reflecting this point is given here,

> '(The) Organisational chart doesn't bother me, relationships do… they want to be up in the authority line or act as support group… that doesn't matter… what matters is them being able to practice what they say… they being able to create atmosphere of openness (sic), to learn from us and to share their expertise with us… charts and diagrams can change according to needs but values of equity and providing equal chances of development, of growth and career remain important irrespective of how your organisational chart looks like…' *(Interviewee no. 19 – Male)*

Cleary then, as the data suggests, the contextual influence restricting participating on an equality basis in learning and development is relationships between these two groups. It is

an issue that emerged throughout the process of research and consistently over interviews and observations. Common narratives and discourse metaphors used by respondents to describe their relationship with PSDU / HRD included 'domination' and 'exploitation'. Employees who are in supporting units such as HRD / PSDU are close to the director and MD. While the Director refers these groups as his 'wings' or 'A-team' and justifies these terms as 'my necessary support to make things happen' *(observation),* these classifications do little good to promote a culture of equality in learning relationships. Sarcastically, learners refer to these groups at their back as 'royal' groups, casting them as holier than thou,

> Exploitation is on the rise and we are subject to complete domination at the hand of royal group on first floor. What learning stuff are you asking me? We are servants to supporting units… this equality, love, brothers, sister talk is hypocrisy… I feel let down on trust… and it's not only me… (*Interviewee no. 10 – Female - Parts translated from Urdu)*

It is painstaking to note that buried under the ideals of social justice and participation are grave concerns of domination and insensitive qualifications of 'A-teams' and' royal groups'. Basically, this arises from manipulative use or interest-driven consumption of discourse (Francis 2007) and protecting the status-quo of power and politics. It has reached the point where employees do not take the word of PSDU or the Director seriously because they do not see the ideas of participatory learning in practice. As one of the respondents commented, 'you cannot give training for someone's intentions.' (*Interviewee no. 21 - Male)*

This failed practice of equality based HRD at EduDev stems from various and complicated facets of organisational context. The theme of depleted relationships is connected to sensitive thread of power and politics, which I now discuss at a deeper level.

4.3.2 Socio-political / cultural landscape

Much that follows is connected to holding power and politicising. I present here its nature and historical connections in the organisation. I then move on to more complex, socio-cultural aspects which also are intimately connected to these issues.

4.3.2.1 Power, politics and its historical roots

The issue of the maintenance of status-quo of holding on to power and not leveraging the espoused developmental promises to the workforce, is both sensitive and serious. Throughout the research process, this seemed to be a critical textscape (Keenoy and Oswick 2004), dialectical relationship in discursive text, defining connection between organisational context and HRD practice. The misuse of power and politicking around developmental ideas to suit one's own interests meant employees' interest in the ideology of learning at work had fallen to low levels, detachment, or quiet resentment towards HRD ideas,

> Very few people dare to question things here and are quietly passing routines here…. We are back to old ways now. Except a few employees, most of us are responding to (the) management decisions as (a) blank audience. *(Interviewee no. 5 – Male - Parts translated from Sindhi)*

The constant but passive tussle between PSDU, Director and some other members as one set of staff and programme units as others not only created 'disengagement' but also affected the emotionality and expression of emotions (Vince 2001) in learning and development . There was a feeling of 'lack of trust' *(observation)* and emotive content such as 'feeling let down and not wanting to express' *(Interviewee no. 29 - Female)* in describing how employees thought of people who mattered in the organisation. There were also observational references found like, 'secrecy culture', 'professional insecurities

of boss's close friends' and 'I told you so they are insecure' during a day's work and in an early childhood development conference/workshop. The following quotes give an explicit indication of the emotionality of staff and the presence of a protective culture,

> I see a decline in emotional satisfaction of employees from the time I joined. People are hiding their feelings... trust level is mediocre… In this place nobody is willing to give away anything… management wants people to share and learn from each other openly but also wants to protect insecurities of their friends – 'the A-team', who occupy above our head (sic) … both cannot happen at one time… Because of this people have stopped to participate… (*Interviewee no. 36 – Male – Parts translated from Sindhi)*

So what was meant by 'back to old ways' and what was so much about 'friends' and whose professional insecurities were these that developmental goals could not be realised? This had become an important element to understand the basis of 'negative use' of power and politicising around the learning discourse. The issue of how A-team type classifications have come in to existence or to borrow Sambrook's (2000) phrase, discursively 'talked into being' were traced to the historical context of organisation.

> They (Director, associate directors, and heads/members of Admin, PSDU, HR and some other support units) are related in a sense that they know each others' secrets and weaknesses. If you go in to history of EduDev you will know most of (the) key people are the Director's friends who worked under him in his unit before he came up with (the) idea of restructuring and became director. (So) the loyalties are divided. I don't think he's been bold enough to resist their insecurities… Over the time this core group became very strong and has become a close circle called the A-team. *(Interviewee no. 14 - Male)*

I had noted the Director's referring with names in routine meetings saying, 'Mubi and Neem (changed names) are my best friends. They have always been with me in good and

bad times and have done a lot for this place.' But this was in the early days of research and my own sense was this was only a means of encouragement. Increasingly, it became apparent that there was something based on long-standing ties that was more than professional and had a political angle to it. In a conversation during the tea-break of a training event, a male software programmer shared that 'my manager (Mubi) has too many professional insecurities but he is boss's friend... he is always worried that my team members know lot more than me… he is not as technically expert as expected… that's why he is hardly in our room and spends most of the time flattering his friend' *(translated from Urdu).* On similar lines and with a hint of citing the weakness of leadership, another respondent commented,

> I think he's (the Director) bowed down to pressure – pleasing two sets of expectations (and) there is a conflict in him of wanting people to learn and grow (and) at the same time making sure any secrets are not revealed and his personal friendships are not disturbed and his less competent close allies are not finger pointed. *(Interviewee no. 20 - Female)*

The historic account of how this group was placed in key positions during restructuring was elaborated by the Director himself. Describing his years at EduDev and his achievements, he narrated his vision for development and how he went about the process,

> … When I came up with the proposal of expansion, I had a vision of developing staff and society, the people in communities we work for. I always thought we were not making any change in people's lives because the theories of learning were outdated. People who go to average schools end up in average colleges. People who go to top private schools end up in Harvard. A few who go to average schools and make it to top universities are exceptions – they are in spite of (the) system, not because of system so (the) system had to change how we thought of learning. But I did not want to make any 'godly' promises like other NGOs, developmental sector firms, consultants and charities. I wanted to create critical

> awareness amongst people that we need to change our mindset about development… Before I decided to take this initiative, this was an inefficient place with no concern for each other. I presented my vision to MD and with her permission I completely changed the outlook of this place. I had eight members working under me in the Monitoring and Evaluation Department at that time. I took them into confidence, created new units and put them in charge of these units…. I had to rely on resources I had at the time… I trusted them and they are still with me… I know you will find people who think I have hijacked this place but it's not like this… *(Interviewee no. 15)*

Coming to the question of 'we are back to old ways', it appeared that there were times when employees appreciated the vision and direction mapped out by the Director and his developmental team. But the struggles of power and fear of losing authorities that followed adversely impacted the developmental path to the detriment of people and organisation. The following accounts explain this change of attitude of employees from 'giving a chance to developmental ideas' to that of a 'feeling uninterested' discourse.

> …His vision was legendary, he was everything for us but it failed to materialise because he could not cope up (sic) with competing interest. At that time nobody spoke of programme or support, or the language or our background… we liked work, we wanted to learn what he could give us and there was a sense of inspiration. It later waned because he fell for the trap, these issues were blown up and little stories became big. Ever since then he's only lost control and he's never regained (the) confidence of people in him… *(Interviewee no. - 19 - Male)*

> …Before 2003, we had little freedom… you can say breathing space for employee development did not exist… then came his (the Director's) plans… and it became (a) very participatory place… everybody seemed to get involved in something… then came some good hiring… but then it did not last because personal ambitions took over… Especially PSDU group became very strong… we were never able to

> sustain conditions needed for sharing our learning… sometimes it seems it was all pre-planned to takeover… but I also feel boss was not able to carry on the awareness to sustain it … he'd only trust small number of people… *(Interviewee no. 33 – Male - parts translated from Sindhi)*

> Initially we took lot of interest… it was a period of excitement… even in that period there was no output of what we were achieving (sic)… it was lot of ideas… but I realised they are not serious so I don't show much interest as well… *(Conversation with Female participants)*

The above accounts also show some sympathy towards the Director's vision such as 'he was everything for us' and reflect early interest of people during the phase of change. Even though some believed that he was let down by people he trusted, there were others who out-right termed him and his ways as 'intellectual domination through sweet talk', 'Machiavellian' and 'a group of dictators' (observations). There were also respondents (fewer though) who thought this division of support units and programme teams was 'over blown' and 'talked in to being.' Mostly this was reflected by members of support units (11 out of the 18 interviewees) and in rare instances, by workers in programme teams (3 out of the 32 interviewees). For example, the HR manager believed,

> 'problems are everywhere… but people here only concentrated on this… the more they talked about it, the more this became an issue… nobody stopped them participating on equal terms but they spent their time thinking (that) if they are A team then we must be B teams… uff (a local expression to show displeasure)'. *(Interviewee no. 22 - Female)*

In a similar but less sarcastic manner, a programme worker from the women's literacy programme noted,

> ‘I cannot deny the political struggle here and over-rule of PSDU personnel but some of us have also over-blown this… everybody is affected to a different level so maybe they also have a point.’ *(Interviewee no. 26 – Male)*

Extending the analysis further, unlike the common perception that HRD aims are not fully realised because developmental professionals do not have a powerful role in organisations (Fenwick 2005), the case evidence shows how this status can create a context of politics negatively impacting practice of developmental discourse. Not only has this situation of exerting power and politicising HRD discourse created inequitable interest representation or uncritical acceptance of participation for leaders (Burrell 1988), it has also led to subtle impressions of political struggle (Deetz 1992). For example, in describing the circumstances of power games, entirely in opposition to espoused discourse of social justice and equity, a respondent recited the following couplet of Urdu poetry from Poet of the East Dr. Muhammad Allama Iqbal,

> *The positions of theirs have altered their minds*
> *That they are free to raise their voices*
> *(Interviewee no. 25 – Female - Translated from Urdu)*

This is not a perfect translation; in Urdu poetic sense it means that position they have granted to themselves gives them license to use any discourse they wish to (e.g. ideas of equality, challenging foundations of HRD) and get away without fulfilling their promises.

Likewise, the tension of HR/PSDU/Director as one dominating force of power with little accountability of their actions and employees as the other group has also resulted in ‘social withdrawal’ from workplace learning. For example, in one of the routine meetings PSDU associates came up with some learning ideas for the future, to which people laughed afterwards and commented, ‘nice – at least they have something to do for coming days – be ready for lots of talk – all in our name – for our sake’ (sic).

Most of this analysis summarises the view of the majority of participants. To round-off the other side of story, there are people (very few of them) who despite the stated differences with the Director and his circle recognise the responsibility in learning and acknowledge the contribution of organisation even in the face of crisis as noted from following excerpt,

> '… There are much better jobs for me in market… good salaries too… if I am here it's because of the Director and only one or two other members of his team – I had a fight with him, he told me you leave this place and I told him you leave because you are the one who don't know anything, who has no work to do in a full day… but I am here and so is he… it's his ability to face, his charisma, his personality… He has given many people (a) chance to learn, to think further. (Long pause) That enthusiasm has slowed down or stopped but without those initiatives he took, employees who see him as a problem won't even be thinking anything… he gave them that sense of believing' *(Interviewee no. 28 – Male – Parts translated from Urdu)*

4.3.2.2 Social class and language

The preceding section has shed light on power and politics as a contextual factor influencing the practice of HRD in the case study organisation. However, the manifestations of the political context are deeply seated in social class, status and language. To restate, the differences of social status and class are the resources around which the ideological politics are played (Parkin 1972) and developmental discourse is manipulated. Staff in supporting units and programme units is not only divided on the basis of friendly or historic bonds they share with each other, but also they are separated on the basis of their social class and societal status. Even though the prevailing discourse is that of valuing individual learning and local knowledge, staff involved in the HRD function or those close to management belong to the higher social class, rich families and are relatively young graduates (aged 23-30) of elitist educational institutes. On the other

hand, those working in programme teams who are supposedly 'learners' come from rural backgrounds, not so privileged economic background and are graduates of public universities with average age 35 plus. At the same time, one of the facets of the Director's system changing vision is, 'people who have lived in rural set-ups and have not been exposed to modern business school type education are more worthy of their expertise because they have an open mind compared to those who have been exposed by capitalistic models of education and materialistic concepts of progress' *(Conversation with Director; Also reflected in his written articles)*. Considering that the Director so keenly talks about redefining development and attaining social justice and yet leaves out those who have potential to create local learning practices is surprising. To employees, all this boils down to maintaining the stranglehold of top management through mechanisms of status, class and power. These themes are echoed in the following views,

> HRD professionals in EduDev live in their own world. They do not care about an ordinary member of the organisation. I am here for five years now but no one has ever bothered to ask me about my learning needs. It is against their class to speak to everyone. They do not even return your greetings. They are less educated than many of us but they consider themselves experts because they come from rich families and are close to the Director. They enjoy politicising small things and presenting them as big HRD opportunities. After that they organise some training or course… they want to show they know a lot. *(Interviewee no. 30 – Male – Translated from Sindhi)*

> It is in their interest to secure power. It is in their minds that if the real open learning culture comes in to practice, the dominating groups - the young elites and the Director may lose their power over us. *(Interviewee no. 41 – Female – Parts translated from Sindhi)*

In critical discourse analysis terms, these narratives indicate that the 'distal context', for example social class, ethnicities of participants or sites of discourse (Wetherell 2001), is

impinging on the learning and development practice. The effect or counter-effect of this distal context again leads to tensions in learning and detachment or in Turner *et al.'s* (2006) terms, 'non-learning' and in Hamblett and Holden (2000) words, 'disempowerment' or 'learning means learning to take blame' (p518). The following field notes illustrate the discursive texts identifying such patterns,

> When the Director gives the feedback, it is called Critique and when our team gives feedback to the Director, it is called Criticism. I am not saying this; it is he who calls it. *(Interviewee no. 10 – Female)*

> The battle is between elitist mindset and a common person. This means developmental opportunities for a certain group are limited… But *InshaAllah* (God willing) things will change… they will be exposed one day… (*Conversations/observations after a training event)*

The negative effect of making social class and status a factor in equality in HRD is further compounded by separation of staff on the criteria of language. Perhaps the hardest hitting contextual factor badly affecting HRD practice at EduDev is demarcation of language, the divide of Sindhi and Non-Sindhi speaking personnel in the organisation. Right at the start of the fieldwork, one of the things that the Director said in the very first meeting was both annoying and curiosity evoking. During the discussion on what I intended to do in my field work, the Director commented, 'massive investment has been done in training but you may find many disagree because I am not a Sindhi!'

Being a Sindhi or non-Sindhi has become a big deal at EduDev. Again the problem is connected to the social class and privileged groups in organisation – those in so called A-teams are pre-dominantly non-Sindhi workers with fluent English speaking abilities while those in programme teams are usually Sindhi speaking workers without much command of conversation or fluency in English. The education levels of both groups in most of the cases are same, that is graduates or postgraduates. But generally in public universities

(where most of the programme team members were educated), even though the medium of curriculum language is English, the operational language of communication is Urdu or Sindhi. In addition to this, the young generation of support units speak English even outside work, in their homes and with their friends. This bifurcation based on language, class, status and to an extent emphasis on aesthetics / appearance reveals a glaring story of inhibiting HRD factors covered under discourse of local practices and participation. From the radical HRD or critical theory perspective, this identity representation based on suppressed struggle of language has become a social technology of control; a 'distinction dimension' of group relations justifying that 'certain things are worthy of being distinguished from others' (Deetz 1992, p29). The reason why Sindhi identity is important or at least familiarity with language is required is connected to the organisation's purpose of existence – to contribute to the education and people development of the province of Sindh. The following accounts explain the importance of this,

> First you need to understand the culture of EduDev. There is no concept of facilitation here and everybody is trying to suppress employees. Sometimes you feel like servants as if your needs are secondary. Actually there are many influences affecting equality in learning at this place. Internal division, social status, who you are, what are your professional ties etc they are all having impact on learning capacities. But I would like to focus on the Sindhi and Non-Sindhi division because this is the main problem. I will try to explain the situation as well as I can.

> There is bifurcation here and it is explicit. If anybody says this is not true he or she is not speaking the truth. This place is internally divided in two parts. One is Sindhi speaking and the other is non-Sindhi speaking. Why this has become so apparent is because baseless persons have come to higher positions. Our purpose of existence here is working for education in Sindh and it is in the mandate of the organisation that we should be able to communicate in the local language. Now

> the people who are leading this organisation and the command right after that have no roots with Sindhi. If you are standing for someone's welfare and you do not even understand their values, how can you be interested in doing your job with honesty? All this is disguised under the slogan of 'celebrating diversity for learning'. These people are surviving because of our MD who is fully aware of what is going on. But Director and his allies have brainwashed her and her perception now is that they are right and we are wrong. *(Interviewee no. 5 - Male)*
>
> "…oh there is no point in taking this idea to boss, he does not understand this language, he is running this organisation for nine years now and only things he has failed to learn is communicating in Sindhi and 'aahh' he stands for our welfare…" (*Observation)*

The question of whether this meant non-Sindhi people should not be working for the organisation, generated some strong remarks like, 'I don't mean this but why then should this be criteria of success', '… but can't they make an effort to learn?' *(Interviewee no. 27 - male)* and '... (At least) show some concern for (the) people for whom you get paid for (sic)...' *(Interviewee no. 25 - Female)*

A more insightful finding was the MD's reference in the quote, 'These people are surviving because of our MD who is fully aware of what is going on.' She has been an inspiration not just to people of Sindh but to the whole of Pakistan. Her services are well accredited in many quarters. My own few interactions that I have had with her have always given me the same impression. But the comments describing her and some top management's staff on 'Sindhi' identity went as far as to say, 'Non-Sindhi is a learner, Sindhi is a non-learner propagandist.' It also seemed to be the case that the Director's strong discursive pursuit and his core group have played a part in the MD's thinking,

> 'MD is an inspiration; she is known nationally, whatever EduDev is today is because of her efforts but she too suffers from same problem. She thinks Sindhi

> people are not hardworking, their learning capacities are limited; she has openly said this on TV… in this situation how can you go and discuss the problem with her when she also believes this… she is not really the good self we all know through media, one who talks about tolerance and equity… hmm (pause) may be… may be people at the first floor have captured her mind… whenever you go to her room, someone from them is always sitting… you just cannot speak…' *(Interviewee no. 21 – Male)*

The case of EduDev shows language has been the prime force of exclusion of members from learning targets. For background understanding, to a small extent, this socio-cultural aspect is a societal influence. Sindhi is considered to be a *'mithri boli'* sweet language. In fact the region of Sindh has been described as land of sweet language and hospitality in folklores and cultural history (Baloch 1985). As such there is no inferiority attached with the language but some of the marginalising of Sindh comes from national political structure of resource distribution and its comparatively lesser say in the economic decision making of the country (Siddiqui 1996). But this has got no clear links with the condition in EduDev. It comes more from trends of modernisation of society and English becoming the principal language of people of affluent class (Rahman 1996), who in this case are in seats of power. In a way this could have been predicted because there is no unified national language and there have been signs of modernisation based on English language as one of the means. But one could have also assumed that the power-base would rest in the favour of the Sindhi speaking workforce as they have historically protected their identity. Also, the majority of the workforce is Sindhi speaking and the programmes are also based on the empowerment of the province, so it was not without possibility that they could have used their powers. And as Acker (2006, p44) has observed, even if inequalities in organisation are not in congruence with society, 'the owner or boss still has class power in relations with employees'. The impact of this collective dynamic of complex contextual reality on HRD practice is understood by the following elaborations from research participants,

> I feel sickening to tell you there are different criteria for some groups. If you are smart, are able to portray a particular kind of image, are able to speak vocabulary that pleases high-ups – Director, his gang, the PSDU team, you may find yourself on list for sponsored up-scale developmental initiatives that may be in Dhaka, Egypt or Portugal as there has been recently. And, if you are one like me confined in his office, who does not get easily impressed with the self-praising, labelled as critical and celebrating diversity discourse, and is not comfortable in involving on the basis of impression techniques then you may find yourself in position of stale learning and wondering about the way out from this tension. *(Interviewee no. 36 – Male - parts translated from Urdu/Sindhi)*

One of the things this quote points out is management's 'defensive routines' to protect belief and practice gaps (Argyris 1991) by means of restricting 'equal access to learning and controlling formats of training' (Rusaw 2000; Clark 2003)'. This discursive account also shows problems of employees being 'not comfortable' in involving themselves in developmental interactions. In a metaphoric sense, it creates a tribe and territory of social interaction or forms a 'culture of adjustment problems' (Clegg *et al.* 1999) between two groups. A specific HRD related example of a rare Sindhi employee kept for translating publishing material in the Marketing department, (another powerful supporting unit) epitomises these multiple issues,

> "Researcher was asked by a marketing team member, 'How are you finding today's event?'
>
> Researcher: Very nice.
>
> Researcher: Why are you sitting here alone, your team members seem to be having a good time at the coffee table?
>
> Marketing Associate: (after some eye-rolling and taking assurance of confidentiality from researcher) I am allowed to be with them but I feel uncomfortable with them – they only speak English, pass sarcastic comments and can make you feel unwanted – it does not work like that. (On further probing) they

all are not bad people but I find it difficult… they get attention all the time because they are impressive… they speak fast English, can wear new dress daily… they are good for their circle but not for a poor guy like me

Researcher: Coming back to this learning seminar, what are your thoughts?

Marketing Associate: I know you like it a lot… they are talking colourful language… you feel they love us, care for us… but why do we need someone from Emirates and USA to tell us these things… we recommended many people for this event, they did not invite any of them… they want to build local learning practices but don't want to involve them… Sindhi scholars won't appeal to them… they don't speak English like them… haha… I tell you why you like it… because you don't work here and you think 'wah' (great)… my friend (literal translation of Sindhi phrase), you did not notice that we never got chance to participate in last two sessions and yes, we tried, I raised my hand a few times... someone had even asked us to wear good dress for the event… all the speakers, trainers on the podium are to impress participants… and management wants to show we can invite xyz…"

(Unrecorded conversation during learning event)

The views described so far are those of the majority. Again, these are not free of subjectivities and there are some who thought of these issues as 'talked in to being'. For instance, Neem, another of the Director's best friend (and Sindhi speaking) believed '…these issues are there but they only became the talking point when people started talking about this… Once he (boss) noticed this is happening he started defending what he was doing… maybe he could have done something differently… but if people would have chosen to not to take this to another level, it could have been controlled as well…' *(Interviewee no. 18 - Male)*

Similarly, in programme units there is some representation of Urdu speaking employees but not of higher social status. Their summarised responses on language based or status based classifications affecting learning in the organisation were not of the same extent but

believed ‘management’s English speaking group cannot come to the level of common worker which affects communication needed for learning.’ There was still an acknowledgement from these workers of existing class disparity, ‘this is (an) organisation of rich working for poor… cool’ *(Observation - comment following receiving a document of ‘training memo: ideas for next quarter’).*

There were also a couple of Sindhi speaking employees in Admin/HR who intentionally or unintentionally gave their interviews in Urdu. I could make out from their accent and surnames of their Sindhi origin. They spoke of language demarcation but did not want to discuss the issue. One of the girls whispered in Sindhi, *‘Ada please chaey ju na keh khay… theek aa?’* (Brother, please don’t say this to anyone here about this, ok?’) (*Interviewee no. 31 – Female*).

In addition, although people did not support the rule of English as a means of exploitation, respondents also noted that, ‘if English is important for development then instead of marginalising on this basis, the organisation should offer training for improving our ability so that we can communicate at the same levels’ *(summarised views of a number of participants from interviews and observations).*

These findings are consistent across gender (that is in male and female responses towards these inequalities as obstacle to learning). This is possibly because of homogeneity of class within the two groups but heterogeneity across them. I had also inquired if a female (PSDU head) being the main point of contact for HRD decisions had anything to do with it, but a common response was negative or that ‘she is not the only female here’ *(Interviewee no. 9 - Male)* and ‘…in her particular case, it’s just her serious nature but sometimes she also does nice work.’ *(Interviewee no. 37, Female)* Further, the hesitation in dealing with her was felt by both male and female workers.

4.3.2.3 Anti-Western, anti-American, pro-local and diversity?

Closely connected to the theme discussed above is the context of 'Western bashing' and an 'Anti-American stance' in EduDev. An aspect raised equally by respondents and observed by me was the Director and MD's continual reinforcement of liberation and not bowing down to the dominant foreign learning discourse. This reinforcement was almost to the level of 'everything is wrong with the USA'. However, those affected by discourse see no common thread between what they say and how they go about these things. Respondents identified this discourse as a means of diverting attention from problems and exploiting people.

> This is all an agenda of exploitation. They are stage actors who are playing different roles. Their original personality is different from what they present. They like being centre of attention by diverting minds of people towards philosophical concepts. They want to secure the place and earn the money. There is not a single learning model they can say they have been able to implement. They do not have guts to stand to their words. Let me tell you an interesting thing – they are in habit of criticising Western and American values yet most of the foreign scholars that come here are from America. There is a saying in Urdu *'Crow tried to walk like a Swan and forgot his own too'*. The same is the situation at EduDev. *(Interviewee no. 5 – Male – Parts translated from Sindhi/Urdu)* – [This saying means in trying to imitate someone you fail to do so and also forget your own identity.]

Employees considered this ideology of continual criticising of the West as a political resource. Even though programme staff wants to make local knowledge valuable and advance local learning ideas, they did not necessarily appreciate the non-stop criticism of everything American. A few of them thought that the Director tries to play with a common public sentiment with thrashing America and West for all problems of theories of learning. A couple of participants also referred this sentiment to common public perception of anti-Americanism because of the war in the region post 9/11 attacks,

‘Maybe he thinks because so much is happening around with war (sic) and American forces in country… he can play with us in that name and talks about same thing again and again...’ *(Observation from an informal discussion within a group of employees)*

The anti-American criticism is not only limited to their ideologies of worldviews but even their universities are also targeted. As one respondent commented, ‘Harvard is their special target.’ Yet, when comparing the talent pool of their organisation, they compare themselves to Harvard. This again leads to disengagement in HRD activities. For example,

> It doesn’t help when you spend a workshop telling your audience we must not aspire to go to Harvard because we will be schooled and profit will be our ultimate goal. And, you say things like we are best employers because we attract talent of best schools just like American organisations would from Harvard. You do not expect people to learn with active mind and throw up ideas in such cases. If that is what matters in reality then there is no need to sympathise for such an illogical discourse. *(Interviewee no. 43 - Male)*

Parallel to this is top management’s continual reinforcement of finding home grown theories of learning and development. Interestingly, while management has only superficially focused on finding local inspirations but have relied on scholars like Chomsky, a group of learners identified local poets in the history of Sindh who have given similar messages of equality and critical thinking hundreds of years ago which perhaps have more relevance for them.

> ‘Allah je wastay’ (For God’s sake) they are talking about people development, sharing, learning from local knowledge but they are so fixed on imported terms. Because they are so self-conscious about status, their appeal to influential audience, and prestige that they never bother to look for anything that the employee can come up with (sic). We (have) got brains too – we want them to

> come and sit with us – we have local poets like Shah Bhittai who have given (the) same message of learning, for seeking knowledge, for liberating and for respecting human beings – they are much more touching and practical than what he (director) talks in the conference room. *(Observed data from a team discussion in one of the programme units)*

In response to being asked what makes management invite scholars from abroad and USA, employees believed it was again related to status symbol, a sense of 'glorification' and 'self-glorification' or 'their spirit is showing-off, it is a PR campaign' *(observations from seminar).* This also seems to affect work related learning even if the motives of invited speakers itself are sincere. For instance, a female programme associate noted, '… there is a consultant from New Zealand who is helping us to learn monitoring performance of community interventions… she is a likeable lady…a fine professional at her task… but I also feel she has more importance than I have and my own knowledge is undermined…' *(Interviewee no. 17 - Female)*

Much of what is discussed above is justified under the slogan of 'celebrating diversity in learning' at EduDev. My observation was that if someone questioned the logic of inviting foreign scholars, the reply from HRD was usually on the lines of 'we must celebrate diversity.' So, quite like Byrd (2007) apprehension that diversity is embraced in a way that racial problems may have become part of the diversity language, any arguments to question marginalising at EduDev are attended by the 'claims of practicing diversity'. This reasoning did not seem to have an impact on employees' perception on how they thought about this.

> People are fooled in the name of diversity here. Over the past two years, "Celebrating Diversity" has been one of most promoted slogans here. By this they do not mean races but (acceptance of) thinking and ideas of people to advance learning and attaining "Social Justice" as they emphasise. To me this is a collective planned effort of domination of mind because whose ideas are

> celebrated here is a choice of personal liking/disliking and protecting interests and they are well-known. *(Interviewee no. 21 - Male)*

However, in the Director's words, this criticism of espousing local but taking help from foreign even if he disagreed with their developmental paradigm is a 'reductionist view.' To him, '… this is a narrow view some people have… this is such a reductionist analyses… you only know when you listen to them...' He looked to be fully aware of the situation and how people felt about this. Talking about disinterest of people in learning initiatives, focusing on local learning theories led by foreign scholars, his response was prompt, diplomatic and slightly out of place, 'I feel this is the reflection of general apathy that (this) country suffers from, information bombarded from right, left and centre on media, this is all you and me read in newspapers, these forces have hijacked us so much that we have forgotten to apply ourselves and learn' (*Interviewee no. 15).*

Overall, this 'discourse of empowerment', of encouraging local and celebrating diversity, has become a 'discourse of control' for people (Francis 2007) in EduDev. So much so that people do not care anymore. An observation of this was made when the Director of PSDU in a discussion with one of the programme team repeated this focus of pro-local, anti-Western. As soon as she left the room, a team member nodded the head saying 'not again... not again…' and continued , 'The issue is I have heard it so many times I can't believe it anymore... if this has been working you would see people going up the ladder... ... everything needs a balance in life...'

4.3.2.4 Shades of religion

The theme of two Muslim sects of different identities as a contextual factor in HRD is discussed here. It did not appear to be a prominent factor as there were only two or three instances of evidence. However, considering Weir's (2003) assertion that Islamic religion play a major role in interpersonal relationships in the Muslim world and managerial decisions are affected by sectarianism and ideological assumptions rather than practical

and academic qualifications (Agnala 1998), it is still worth noting. The MD and Director are followers of a Shiite sect of Islam, a sect whose ancestry directly links to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be up on him). The majority religion of Pakistan and people at EduDev is Sunni Muslim. For understanding, the ancestry or belonging to direct family of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be up on him) is the major distinction between the two. In addition, Shiite Muslims patronise the teachings of the fourth Caliphate of Islam, Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), as he was the son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad (peace be up on him). The teachings of Ali are well-known for his wisdom and meaningful knowledge.

My observation was that in meetings or routine talk, the Director sometimes quoted sayings of Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) about knowledge and showed his love or inspiration towards him. I did not find that distressing. On one occasion though, in a friendly exchange he told me the group that can take Pakistan towards righteous development is Shiite Muslims. A more emotional, serious and an angry response came in one of the participant's interviews,

> 'He was once going on and on with his ideologies of changing the foundations of HRD and he said "you will never understand this because you are not a Shiite" This put me off badly… after all what does ability to understand a concept have to do with me being a Shiite or a Sunni… you tell me is this not against the teachings of Quran (The Holy book of Muslims) and teaching of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be up on him)?...' *(Interviewee no. 30 - Male)*

It is hard to establish how forceful this trend has been in EduDev but this thought is in contradiction to teaching of Islam which emphasises 'seeking education', 'acquiring beneficial knowledge' and 'searching meaning' in the Quran without any reference to Shiite or Sunni. The Quran also explicitly mentions that the tribes are only for your identification of families and the best amongst you in God's eye is one who is steadfast in his deeds (summary of Verse 49, Chapter 13; The Holy Quran).

4.3.3 Micro context of training and development

The contextual factors explained above also influence the micro context of trainings or planned developmental activities. Some such examples were noted in the analysis so far. A broader analysis and a few specific examples are given here.

The questions about the shared participatory approach in training and development were framed around the traditional training life cycle of need, design, delivery and evaluation (Gibb 2002). The views of participants varied and depended on their relative experience. Many, however believed that the only realistic chance of participating is during the event (delivery phase); that too depends on the conduct of the facilitator and composition of the group. Common opinion was that employees are told which training they have to attend although they seldom receive any evaluations of training back. Respondents also added that if they wanted to take an initiative and attend any external course, this was possible but needed lot of convincing in some cases.

There were diverse opinions but no uniform answers on factors in developmental interactions providing equality in learning. For instance, some respondents felt it is better to have an internal trainer because he or she can understand the particular needs of trainees while some felt it is better to be trained by an external trainer because he or she does not bring the organisational political issues and allows the chance to participate without fear. Respondents also opined that gender is not as important as their behaviour during an event is. If they can be facilitative and are good listeners, they are happy with either male or female trainers. For example,

> About the presence of equalities in events, it depends on (the) person who is conducting the session and various factors. The last one I went to (by ITA) was not a good experience. They were external trainers and we were told good things about them by the Director so we had our expectations. The attitude(s) of trainers

> were very dominating so much so that one of us had to calm them down. They did not appreciate any questions. My complaint with HRD is that they sent anyone who was available. This was supposed to be training for managers but they also sent junior support officers and we kept wandering from topics to topics without learning anything meaningful. *(Interviewee no. 5 - Male)*

The wider social issues analysed in the last section turn out to be having an effect on developmental interactions as well. That is, not only contextual influences inhibit distal context but also 'proximate context'; an immediate context of event and interaction (Wetherell 2001). For example, composition of participants in events turned out to be a factor. At times composition is made on the basis of giving cover to politics or the group relations evident in a case study. My observation as a training participant was that if people from support units were present, everyone tried to 'out-talk' each other to make an impression or 'to be counted'. This resembles findings of Thomas and Al-Maskati (1997) whose study of learner-tutor orientations showed application of Goffman's (1969) 'situated activity system' and 'coherent self-image' in training situations, which calls on learners to make decisions shaped by the expectations of role-partners. This does though give an illusive picture of participatory equalities in events. The similar views along with the problem of wrong composition, can be seen in the following examples,

> HRD staff does not know (the) difference between donkeys and horses. They put skilful, unskilled, managers, employees all in same room. Everybody participates to show presence. The facilitators also pretend. (The) participant thinks (the) facilitator's feedback will go to HRD so it will be good if they can recall me by name. Facilitator thinks participant's feedback to HRD would determine my future role in such activities. This varies from person to person but this is my general observation so far in the trainings I have been to. *(Interviewee no. 28 – Male - translated from Urdu)* (Donkeys and Horses is an Urdu idiom to describe same treatment of all irrespective of obvious differences).

> At this place a lot of things are artificial. Two years back when learning ideas were popular here and we were excited... were taking them seriously; all the employees were asked to attend Professional Retreat for 12 days... so much money was spent... it was a highly participative event... everybody seemed to be participating... but I remember at the end of day when we used to have reflection session... we were asked what have we learned new today... out of some 150 in the hall nobody raised hand... honestly I enjoyed those 12 days but when I look back it was not something from the moon... the fact is nobody really learned many new things... but everybody participated (in) whole day because the Director, MD, seniors all were there (sic) ... everybody wanted to be counted. *(Interviewee no 45 – Female – Translated from Sindhi)*

Similarly, trainers or facilitators can also employ such methods to leave an impression. In an Early Childhood Development workshop for example, there was a much awaited session on media influences by a well known English language and communication trainer. Before the session, a couple of participants sitting close to me had told me about his attitude. They told me how big was his ego and that he claimed, 'there is an Imam (kind of head Priest or a spiritual leader) to guide people for every generation (this is a Shiite concept), and I am the Imam for language training of present times.' Once the session started, I found it very engaging and humble. Later I joined him in lunch where he was surrounded by participants of both EduDev and other organisations. When one of them told him it was a great lecture, his response was, 'I know, I know… if there was no lunch break I know you would have carried on and you would have listened to me for the whole evening'.

About the perception of celebrating a diversity discourse as a means of manipulation and 'withdrawal' of people from engaging in learning events, the following metaphoric narrative explains the situation,

> '… At the beginning of every seminar I do two things: I switch off my mobile and I also switch off my brain. It's gone redundant. First, they will tell you we must celebrate diversity in learning and then they will tell you the only way to do things is their way – they feel superior with this' *(Interview no. 9 – Male – Parts translated from Sindhi)*

The major factor of how power and politics is encapsulated in HRD partnerships and how employees can surrender or oblige to such pressures is aptly exemplified here,

> Every quarter we have a praxis week in the MD's office (a week of PowerPoint presentations to share and reflect on quarterly activities, performance and learning). In all presentations, the last slide is 'lessons learnt' and 'support provided by PSDU'. All lay-outs and contents are checked and approved by PSDU director in advance. Then the last and longest presentation of the week is of PSDU which is the collection of last slides (support provided by PSDU) of all the presentation. Then we all clap for them together and are reminded to keep up the good work. *(Interviewee no. 10 - Female)*

4.4 Summary

This chapter has provided an in-depth analysis of the HRD discourse and its practicing context at EduDev. Various themes are highlighted in this case study. The analysis of the espoused discourse showed the strong intent of learning-orientated discourse and a focus on participatory and equality-based ideas of HRD at EduDev. The narrative accounts revealed presence of both a mainstream management style discourse, such as the importance placed on a learning organisation, and the critical HRD-type discourse, such as redefining the developmental agenda based on the principles of equality and tolerance and challenging assumptions of the taken for granted ideas in HRD. The analysis also revealed that EduDev sought inspiration from personalities and critical thinkers for

formulating the vision for learning and development. Such focus is apparent from the articles published in EduDev's magazine and the invited speakers leading the HRD interventions. The results showed that various types of HRD interventions, for example, training, seminars, conferences, public debates, praxis, and meetings, were used for disseminating the HRD discourse.

The consumption of the discourse or in-use reality revealed the opposite picture to the espoused discourse. It showed that the consumption of the discourse is weak and is not internalised or owned by the employees. The findings also pointed out the problems with understanding the nature of the espoused discourse. Employees felt that the discourse was generic and did not offer a significant direction for work and development. The analysis also highlighted the clarity issues in making sense of the HRD ideals espoused by the management. The findings showed the presence of various concepts without much applicative value and specific implementing ideas for them. This created confusion regarding the meaningfulness and the purpose of such discourse. Such confusion and lack of purpose was also admitted by a few PSDU staff members, who are responsible for providing the HRD. An important finding in the context of this case study is that the equality orientated HRD discourse was taken seriously by the employees in the initial phase but now they were of the view that this discourse was a form of symbolic power and means to involve employees without actually meaning to empower them. This has led to the consumption of discourse for impression management purposes and to please the Director by using the espoused vocabulary of the HRD discourse at EduDev.

The analysis of the contextual factors explains the reasons for the failed practice of the equality-based HRD discourse in the case study organisation. The significant contextual themes generated from the data could be categorised as organisational design issues and issues related to the socio-political / cultural landscape within which the HRD is framed and practised.

The organisational design factor showed that both the programme teams and the supporting units are placed as 'equals' or at the same level of work on the formal documented organisational structure. However, in practice, the flow of communication, the directions of HRD interventions and the learning initiatives flow hierarchically from the Director to the employees in the programme teams or from the supporting units to the programme teams. The findings showed the disagreement between the views of the Director / PSDU Head and the employees in this regard. The Director believed that the successful restructuring in terms of the organisation of work had changed the Master-Slave relationship between the Supporting and Programme units to that of 'equals', and had transformed EduDev into a place of 'fantastic learning'. However, employees in programming teams did not believe this to be true. They expressed the feelings of being 'exploited' at the hands of the Director and the supporting units who formed a strong group of decision-makers. The data showed that there exists a lack of trust in the relationships between the employees and the HRD providers, reflected by the labels of A-teams and Royal groups. Such weakened relationships and low levels of trust between the work groups have done little to promote the culture of equality in learning relationships at the EduDev.

The analysis of the socio-political and cultural factors showed a sub-theme of power, politics and its historical roots in the organisation. The presence of the strong decision-making group at the Director and the Supporting Unit level, and the weak relationships between them and the employees is understood by the historical context of the organisation from where the powerful group emerged. This is based on the 'friendly' connections that the Director has with the heads of the Supporting Units. Such connections come from his previous role before the restructuring of the organisation. The members of the powerful group in the organisation, especially those responsible for providing HRD were his subordinates at one time. Although, there is some evidence of the Director's sincerity about his vision of making EduDev into a truly learning orientated organisation, the data shows a continual effort to protect the status quo of the informal network of friends. The fear of losing authority by this group has led to maintaining a

stronghold on the powerful and political relationships between them, which in turn restricts the employees' opportunities for participating in the learning initiatives. In some cases, the management's dominance of power by means of suppressing the voice of the employees has also led to the social withdrawal from workplace learning. The minority of the participants, however, showed appreciation for the Director's effort in developing employees' potential and giving them confidence in their abilities. They argued that the talk of the division of the Supporting Units and the Programme Units was over-blown.

The other major sub-theme within the socio-cultural and political context is social class and language. On the one hand is the Director's espoused discourse of valuing people from rural backgrounds, while on the other hand he has divided the organisation on the basis of urban-rural, Sindhi and non-Sindhi speaking and higher and lower social class. The data showed that the employees working in the Supporting Units, those close to the Director because of his previous ties belong to the higher social class, come from non-Sindhi backgrounds and are fluent speakers of the English language. The employees working in the Programming Units, those responsible for implementing the EduDev programmes, come from lower social structures and Sindhi speaking backgrounds. The findings showed that the Sindhi speaking employees are marginalised on the basis of their inability to converse fluently in English and are dominated by the Supporting Unit workers of higher social class in the decision-making process regarding choosing the HRD initiatives. The marginalisation is to the extent that the Sindhi speaking groups are labelled as non-learners and incapable of understanding the espoused developmental ideas. This class-structuration and language as a source of this structural barrier is not only hindering the practice of equality in HRD at EduDev but is also creating a sense of negativity towards the developmental discourse itself and contradictory meanings of what is understood by the critical meanings espoused by the Director and his teams.

Another notable contextual factor influencing the practice of equality discourse in HRD at EduDev is the management's emphasis on promoting local knowledge for learning and development, and at the same time criticising Western and American ideologies of HRD

practices. However, the data showed that few tangible efforts have been made to promote, conceptualise and make use of the local wealth of knowledge. Moreover, many of the Director's invited developmental experts come from Europe or America. The employees' responses suggested that the Director and the PSDU team maintain Westernisation for their personal selves and any criticism of the differences between their words and action is received as an attack on celebrating diversity. The findings showed that the equality-orientated learning discourse under such conditions have merely become a way of self-glorification for the HRD providers and has shifted the focus away from building localised developmental knowledge.

To a lesser extent, the findings also showed the elements of different religious identity that is, Sunni Muslim or Shiite Muslim, influencing the reception and understanding of the equality-orientated HRD discourse. The MD and the Director's affiliation with the Shiite sect, at times, have led them to equate Shiite Muslim as a person of higher learning ability and as an agent of successful change. Although there was no substantial data to conclude this as a prominent theme, the idea of a particular sect contributing to learning ability is against the spirit of espoused discourse of equality-orientated HRD.

The themes summarised above also influenced participatory equalities in the micro context of training and development. For example, the data showed that the issues of power and politics impacted the process of selecting participants for training activities. Such compositions of training participants may show some form of equality because the management would want to have their own observers to guide the activities in their preferred direction. Although the extent of participation and equality in the planned activities depended on the employees' relative experience, the data showed that for the learners, the delivery phase of the planned activities is the most realistic platform for actively participating in their learning. The findings also showed that similar to the learners playing impression games to please the Director, the trainers also seem to be employing similar techniques to seek positive evaluation.

In summary, the equality-based contemporary HRD discourse at EduDev is inhibited by the contextual factors of design, power, politics, social status and language barriers. The issues analysed in this chapter have far reaching implications in building up HRD relationships and our conception of the conflict-free nature of the field, which are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusions

The previous chapter provided analysis of the case study using the data collected through multiple sources, and mainly explicating on the story revealed through the process of research. In this chapter, I further the analysis by providing commentary using theoretical resources. As the aim of the study is to advance understanding of HRD by bringing issues of context (socio-cultural-political) into the field rather than to advance theories of social, cultural and politics in organisation studies, I begin with an overall holistic discussion of what is found vis-à-vis the case study and its relation to HRD. This discussion embeds various threads of contribution this study makes to the field of HRD. I then specifically talk about how this study falls in comparison with some previous contextual studies in HRD, and consider that as a theoretical output of the project. I then briefly present my reflective thoughts on the case of CHRD as in what my impressions are for way forward of CHRD in light of my experiences of encountering with the field. This is followed by the contribution to practice and methods. I then end this project with a statement of conclusion and a passage on the limitations and reflexivity that may have influenced the analysis.

5.1 The interplay of context and equalities in HRD: Furthering the debate

EduDev makes an intriguing story of how equalities are breached and buried under fancy labels of learning and HRD. It poses serious questions about cultural, social and ethnic notions of considerations in HRD. Even though the dominant discourse in the case study organisation is not of performance but of participation, the ignorance to larger organisational context has resulted in competing discourse of resistance or

disengagement. By raising these fundamental issues, the research significantly moves the agenda of critical inquiry in HRD research, primarily by giving voice to the 'marginalised and repressed', those concealed by illusive identities of homogeneity and criss-crossed by lack of examination for socio-political positions and uncontested territories of ethnicities, culture and histories in organisational context (Fenwick 2005). A common facet of all critical studies is the breaking up of grand narratives of globalisation, competition and performance and unmasking discourses of the muted voices affected by the theoretical resources of betterment, which in this case is the discourse of learning. Given that even the studies aimed at cultural aspects in HRD have generally focused on management development learning and top level change (Valentin 2006) and have mainly studied context of 'organising' HRD rather than social, political and cultural context of HRD, this research by keeping the individual learner at stage and deconstructing discourses of the disadvantaged fills an important gap in the context-dependent nature of the field.

The research shows that no matter how symbolic the discourse, the context of HRD production cannot be taken lightly. The reason learning rationales are employed by organisations is that such a discourse has persuasive power (Holmes 2007). However, persuasion alone is no good if intellectual investments are driven by face-value appeal of concepts and not by the needs of employees and organisations. As per the case study evidence, developing trust worthy relationships and maintaining them over time are far more important than a particular HRD or pedagogical concept. The need for learning culture cannot be over-emphasised and has been advocated for long in the mature tradition of learning in organisations. Without healthy relationships and awareness to cultural sensitivities, HRD programmes and ideas merely become self-defeating leading to 'social withdrawal' from learning or creating discourse of resentment.

These findings also apply to the organisations where the dominant discourse is not participatory HRD. These could be both Western and non-Western organisations. For instance, even in a simple service organisation, the workforce would at least expect a sense of respect, and nobody would expect to be treated as a person of inferior capacities

on the basis of their ethnicity or language. Such generalisations are based more on the system and organisational behaviour aspects of the workplace rather than a commitment to a particular discourse. For example, in order to improve the service delivery for end customers, service organisations tend to focus on the task delegation and autonomy for employees (Buckley and Caple 2005). In such systems, the HRD discourse can be purely functional, such as focusing on skills to improve productivity. But if the contextual factors contributing to work are unhealthy and are affected by the political milieu, it is unlikely that employees will take initiative without fear. However, the amount of dissatisfaction towards HRD programmes might not be as high as compared to a situation where the dominant discourse is the equality orientation in learning and development. This is because in such a scenario, there can be a feeling of being let-down on the espoused promises and there can be a tendency to withdraw from HRD initiatives as seen in the previous chapter.

The findings suggest that despite the suggestive focus on logical linkages between HRD, OD and Learning (orientated) Organisations (Stewart, 2005), there is no definite answer to such linkages promoting equality in learning. Respondents have opined that even though the 'role clarity' issues are important, they are not bothered by whether the organisational chart looks like a top-down model or equally distributed. What matters to them is that HRD providers deliver their promise and make available the 'atmosphere of learning'. This is why the relationship question is of priority. This is consistent with the observation made by Fraser (2003) whose research on leadership and relationships in the health sector concluded that boundaries do not exist until things go wrong. That is, the issue of boundaries and structures is only raised when change is unsuccessful. In my earlier research with the same organisation (Siddiqui 2004), I found a top-down traditional hierarchical design but in a sample of 22, almost 80 % believed that the organisation was participatory and geared for shared learning. The reversal of both design and employee's view on participatory equality in learning does not establish any direct cause and effect relationship by itself. However, it shows that even though OD remains an important contextual influence, it does not create a learning climate by itself. Rather,

success or failure of equality discourse in HRD is largely an outcome of handling social, cultural and political contexts of managing HRD.

The analysis of EduDev specifically highlights socio-cultural and ethnic context of language, social class and power as obstacles to attaining participatory equalities in HRD. For a deeper understanding, Rahman's (2002) Pakistan-India specific analysis of culture shows how the thinking of class divisions and command over English as a source of power still prevails in the society and education system of the country which has its roots in colonial rule before independence. He shows that in the education set-up the aims of learning are superseded by the formation of groups on the basis of English speaking skills and affluent class. The use of language as a source of expert power in education translates from 'same mindedness' and trickles down sub-consciously to limit advancement of those who did not have the same opportunities but not because they were any less capable. This builds emotional pressures and lowers self-esteem when continuously faced by such forces of power. In EduDev since this expert power and also the position power (Joy-Matthews *et al.* 2004) lies with members of such class while employees need to negotiate with them on regular basis, this has led to suppression of emotions and disengagement from active participation in HRD activities.

This analysis of language working as a resource for exercising expert power is not new; but this study extends Rehman's (2002) analysis of Pakistan's education setting into the organisational domain. In addition, it highlights the powerfulness of these sources of structuration to maintain unequal relationships in the presence of equality-orientated discourse. It also challenges Budhwani's (2002) view that developmental sector organisations by their intent are formed on the principles of equality and are thus the most suitable sites for taking participatory learning practices from the ideological level to the practical level.

Khilji (2001) also notes that the national culture of Pakistan is a mix of British inheritance, American influences and local emotionalism. According to her assessment,

while there are changing perceptions of corporate culture mainly influenced by American influences and market competitiveness, the HR policies are still made in isolation from a common worker and feedback is rarely sought. It is the result of elitism and distant social class left by legacy of the colonial masters that those in the influential positions are favoured for better training opportunities. Knowing that literacy rates of the country are amongst the worst in Asia and in the world (World Bank report 2008), it is a dangerous and misplaced outlook for leadership at EduDev to make English speaking ability a criterion for successful development. What is more ironic though is they are able to do this in the face of espoused discourse of 'valuing shared learning, local knowledge, practices and language'. As Acker (2006, p453) has asserted that social class is an oxymoron and its visibility varies with the position, 'One privilege of the privileged is not to see their privilege.' People in dominant groups generally see inequality as existing somewhere else and not where they are. Therefore, people who for the sake of it disseminate discursive constructs of 'thinking critically', 'celebrating diversity' and 'appreciating local' can go away with political manoeuvring of putting the blame somewhere else, for example on the outside world as commented by the Director, 'I feel this is a reflection of the general apathy that the country suffers from….'. Moreover, they can sideline the already marginalised, who question the foundation of diversity by simply labelling their viewpoint as 'reductionist.' This also strengthens Rigg's (2005) argument that critical HRD leaders, when empowering individuals with critical discourses, are aware of its influences and political consequences. This in turn provides them resources to promote or withhold certain discourses regardless of the psychological experiences felt by individual learners.

What is apparent from the case analysis is that native language is a central identity of people in distinct cultures. This can neither be undermined nor considered reductionist; this is what shapes people in daily life and in the workplace. In a collectivist culture and emotionally binding ties (Hofstede 1991), if the imported concepts are to be materialised, they have to be by involving people and involving them in their own language. Of course the organisation would do a better service without criticising every Western theory or

accepting every Western theory. Purely in my opinion, 'completely' abandoning contemporary HRD discourse and theories developed in a foreign culture is not an option because the local inspirations and ideas are not sufficiently conceptualised to become theoretical resources yet. In any case, the ideals of participation, learning and humanity are still same, be it imported concepts or local or others. The way forward is in identifying inspirations of substance which may be a blend of local and global, those which are not just discursive constructions but also have ability of discursive action (Sambrook 2001). The implication for HRD professionals in the *'context of adaptation'* then should be to realise the potential of participation in evaluation of such discourses *before* they are formally diffused through mechanisms such as training/workshops. It is by meaningful involvement of workers in HRD activities in conjunction with those who have expertise that potentials can be realised and socially constructed learning obstacles of 'sect of religion' and 'language' can be minimised.

Trehan and Rigg (2003), Reynolds and Trehan (2003) and Trehan (2007) have expanded the understanding of incorporating emotions, power/politics and diversity as a difference in HRD. These authors under critical HRD are concerned with psychodynamics. Using their experiences with university teaching, Trehan and Rigg (2003) observed that alternate pedagogies focusing on the value of consensus deny power and emotional dynamics superficially. In EduDev for example, because people are not openly expressing their emotions because of 'perceived intellectual authority' of those responsible for development, it creates 'illusions of equality' for the management. As understood by the Director's viewpoint, 'I have integrated the two (HRD and employees) on the same level and as a result the quality of discussions and learning that is emerging is absolutely fantastic.'

There are important lessons to be learned from Reynolds and Trehan's (2003) conceptualisation of 'learning from difference' and celebrating diversity in the true sense. One way is acknowledging the differences as a 'difference' – without this becoming a subtle manifestation of 'common interest' (p 164). This would mean downplaying the

emphasis that in the work-setting all of us can adjust as ‘same’; rather the efforts should be focused on accommodating each other without considering it an offence. Although fully accepting this view, I argue that when the power dynamics are of the nature found in EduDev which stems from flaws in the system, oppressing the oppressed and no accountability for leadership, any effort without addressing the socio-political imbalance would not reap the fruits. From the practitioner and practice point of view, a higher challenge to HRD community is if we are to learn from difference, how do we maintain that this does not become a debate in itself but becomes part of the process of HRD that over a period of time would allow us to work and learn collectively without disrespecting our colleagues at the workplace?

In sum, the case of EduDev shows a hypocritical nature of espoused and in-practice discourse formed around seemingly transparent ideals for goodness of learning. It brings in to debate the unspoken issues of power, politics and cultural dimensions of HRD. It also shows how much vested and veiled power rests with those who gain expertise on both mainstream HRD and critical learning discourse, and can use influences to the detriment of those who are supposed to be the beneficiaries of HRD. The study raises challenges for how we build up leadership that is suitable for critical practice of HRD and does not become all-powerful in the name of an equality discourse of learning and change. One possible way that I can think of to answer this question is by researching the process of the development of local leaders, who have demonstrated a significant public trust and have brought meaningful changes in the lives of common people. Such leaders may or may not have taken the formal route of education, can be from small communities but must still be actively involved in the developmental process of learning and change. This might need some informal research on the identification of such individuals, depending on the availability of contacts and publicly available information and in a specific setting.

5.2 Advancing contextual understanding in HRD: A theoretical output

As noted earlier, one of the conceptual rationales for this research is to advance the contextual understanding in HRD. In this section I compare the present study with some previous contextual works in HRD. There are a few published researches against which this study can be compared and contrasted. I choose here to compare my work with Sambrook and Stewart (2000) and Colley (2003) because these studies provide meaningful contextual factors/influences to produce a comparison. Table 5.1 summarises some of the works in contextual studies in HRD/learning along with the addition of this project.

Table 5.1 – Layers of contextual influences in HRD – A theoretical output

	Sambrook and Stewart (2000); Tjepekama *et al*. (2002)	**Colley (2003)**	**Ellinger and Cseh (2007)**	**This study**
Concept tested	Learning orientation	Engagement mentoring	Workplace learning / experiential	Participatory equalities in HRD / critical practice
Geographical context	Large European organisations	England (one to one/mentor to menteee)	USA (large manufacturer)	Pakistan (developmental organisation)
Perspective	Management practice (factors of learning)	Policy making / social exclusion	Facilitation of incidental learning / performance	Organisational / Socio-cultural context influencing HRD
Contribution	Comparative practice across Europe/Non-prescriptive, effective practices	Critical feminist analysis, exposition of myths of mentoring	Interplay of learning and workplace environment, management as a role model	Organisational Dynamics, Critical of the critical, voices of the unheard

As the table shows, the present study was conducted with the very aim of understanding the practice of participatory and equality-orientated discourse of HRD, a concept that has been challenged by critical scholars but not specifically tested at the empirical level. This

study has expanded the theorising of contextual factors in HRD to a broader social and organisational level. While Sambrook and Stewart (2000) have elaborated on management issues and influences of motivation and commitment in large learning-orientated organisations in Europe, this study brings forward engaging and relatively muted issues of social class, language and power dynamics in participatory approaches to learning and development in a different geographical culture. The findings of this study confirm their reflection that differences of context exceed far beyond operational issues. Their research, employing mixed methods, studies issues of clarity and time resources, and brings a reasonably healthy state of learning orientation at work but it does not go into macro perspectives of socio-political thought of organising HRD. However, this research brings forth what Vince (2001) has called 'organisational dynamics' and the definitive need of HRD research to move beyond individual learning outcomes to addressing organisational learning issues of awareness of power, politics and emotions. Vince's argument is that organisational learning has to be separated from individual learning because the understanding of organisational dynamics comes from the study of the interplay between power, politics and emotions, which are mediated and transformed at the organisational level. This research, though, suggests that while the transformation or failure of HRD programmes mediates at the organisational level, the concern of giving 'voice' to the learners makes the individual level of analysis no less important. It is the feelings of individual marginalised learner that have brought forward all these important issues in the case study analysis. This lack of individual voices in HRD implementation also resonates with Sambrook and Stewart's (2000) recommendation that cultural change programmes in learning need to alter their stance from mimicking the other to integrative participation of developers and learners.

The present study shows that the level of acceptance and preparedness for learning-orientated discourse varies across countries or more established organisational settings. Sambrook and Stewart's (2002) study was set in the large European organisations and Ellinger and Cseh's (2007) study was set in a large American organisation. The data in their studies shows acceptance of meta-theoretical discourses such as the incidental

learning processes and shared experiential learning. Although these studies do not tap into the socio-cultural context of the practice, there is a certain degree of understanding of the purpose of HRD discourse and its linkages with personal development and organisational outcomes. However, the present study suggests that local learning-orientated organisations operating in developing countries are experiencing difficulty in making sense of the contemporary HRD discourse, and that their struggle is at a deeper level of equality in the organisations, which includes practicing equality-orientated HRD in the presence of issues of social-status, language and ethnic differences.

This research has both similarities and differences with Colley's (2003) work. For example, HRD practitioners in EduDev have put their pre-dispositions of class and elitist values ahead of learners in the same way mentors have done in Colley's research. Both the studies also reveal similar metaphors and narratives of master-slave, domination and exploitation in learning relationships. In both cases it is the values and knowledge of the educated / support providers that are imposing over individuals / learners in a manner that is disempowering. However, this research departs from her work and considers inclusive organisational context in which presence of group dynamics and sub-systems make the goals of equality in learning relationships more challenging to accomplish. While Colley's work is based on the public policy initiative of bringing the unemployed in the labour market through mentoring but leading to further exclusion, the case of EduDev shows how some members can be socially excluded in HRD interventions even in an inclusive employment context.

The present study also advances some of the linkages between HRM and HRD. The recent scholarships of HRD, such as, Swanson and Holton (2001) and Stewart (2005), have argued that HRD is a distinct entity with the larger aims of developing people, and is separated from HRM, which is based on the management of the workforce through rules and procedures. But the EduDev story indicates why HRD's aims of a distinct entity separated from HRM are not workable. For example, the issues of clarity in structures, or the problems of class disparity between the Supporting Units and the Programme Units

reflect wider HRM issues of recruitment, selection and placement at various levels of hierarchy. Even if the HRD discourse in the organisation was purely functional and bottom-line focused, the wide disparity of class structuration between management and the employees would still result in power struggles, conflicts and insecurities. However, if the HRM systems, policies and work designs necessary for the fair working environment are taken into account and then HRD is framed on the discourse of equality, the practice of critical ideas and learning-orientated concepts may become more facilitative and useful for employees.

5.3 Reflections on critical HRD: Some future directions

Critical HRD has much to offer to the practice of learning in organisations. If done sincerely, it has the impetus to accomplish aims of emancipation, truth and democratic workplaces. But the evidence that critical concepts can be practiced without fear and with confidence is little. This research, for example, fulfils the 'political' and 'investigative' aims of the CHRD (Burrell 2001 cited in Sambrook 2007), meaning, it explicates the influence of the powerful and resultant political dimension in the practice, and it also identifies the 'taken for granted' and 'voices of the excluded' in research but it does not give much sense of how critical practice can be materialised? I argue that it is sympathetic to listen to the voice of the disadvantaged but if being critical does not have the power to get them out of a disadvantaged situation then it is nothing more than sympathy. In effect, I am positing that giving voice to the oppressed in the mainstream serves an important academic goal but not necessarily a practice goal. If we keep in mind the oft cited position, 'HRD is an ethical endeavour because it is a discipline of practice' (Stewart 2003:2005) and assume our role as critical practitioners, then we need to start thinking of ways in which learning and development ideas can transform from giving 'voice' to the oppressed to doing something 'real' for the oppressed.

To this end, I 'cautiously' state that strict adherence of CHRD to either/or labelling is problematic. My impression of various CHRD readings is that people in organisations are either oppressors or oppressed. The repercussion of this is that assuming once 'disadvantaged' voices are emancipated in practice, they are likely to become part of some 'advantaged' group in terms of their social circle or group relations at workplace, so should we then become critical of their newly acquired position because it may bring higher status?

I also want to further the point of a common criticism of CHRD or CMS in general. It is well-known that historically, critical studies have been discussed theoretically and not applied in practice. In this case study, the critical learning discourse was diffused in 'practice' albeit with mixed or failed outcomes. Given some of the scepticism raised by respondents about 'applicative value' of critical ideas, I propose that we must address the utility issue of critical HRD seriously. Without foreseeable tangible benefits of adopting critical practice of HRD, in some form of sustenance, improved career or the long-term quality of organisational/employees lives, it only raises Sambrook's (2007) fears that CHRD is created as no more than a professional niche for academicians.

The final question to reflect on here is whether critical practice of HRD is for every organisation? Had the case study organisation not belonged to the development sector, what would have been the relevance of discourse for them? Had this been a corporate entity involved in production of branded items, would they still be talking about 'coming out of American values of development', 'critically reflecting' and 'social justice' discourse? And if such an approach cannot be sustained in an organisation where at least at the theoretical level there was a strategic linkage, then what scope does this discourse have for organisations committed to making profit? Perhaps, the ideals of humanism, ethics and trust in 'HRD' are not as much dependent on large versus small, learning versus performance, service versus money as they are on positively exercising our knowledge of the social, political and cultural influences in HRD. However, if future

research evidence indeed suggests that the goals of CHRD are organisation specific, then the thinkers of the field will have to rethink its scope.

My own position about the future of CHRD, informed by the present research, is that it will continue to grow as an academic field but mainstream practices will continue to shape the role of HRD in work organisations. My understanding is that both streams have their place for academics and practice but CHRD's lack of connection with organisational purposes makes its adaptability to workplaces problematic. Unless critical HRD studies come out of the conceptual confusion and move from the pedestrian critique of materialism to solving the problems of marginalised workers, we might continue to see the repetitive critiques of mainstream practices in CHRD scholarship. I suggest that, while both mainstream and critical HRD research can grow at the same time, there is a need to form some convergence between the two. A good starting point for CHRD scholars can be to re-evaluate their positions about the 'good and bad' of mainstream concepts and re-align their ideas according to the revised understanding of the mainstream critique.

5.4 Practice contribution

The findings of the study raise pertinent practice implications. Some of them have been embedded in the discussion covered so far in this chapter. To highlight a few more points, the study, by raising cultural sensitivities, reveals insights for practitioners for rethinking their roles and listening to unheard voices in learning programmes. It also yields the amount of preparedness needed both in terms of emotional and cognitive (knowledge) for successfully managing learning activities. Particularly with the rising trend of inviting foreign scholars and consultants for HRD interventions, the study shows the need for them to address their perceptions in an alien culture, where even their 'own' good intentions might be seen as a showdown of public relations initiated by the leaders of the organisation. It means for visiting scholars to spend some time in understanding lone

workers at their own level, understanding the meanings they attach to learning and development and facilitating them in their own expressions and language.

At the practice level, it will be good for trainers or foreign consultants to build close contacts and mingle with the people. On the basis of Hofstede's (1991) research, Bateman and Snell (2009) have suggested that organisations should maintain a distance with people in a high power distance culture, because that is valued as per societal norms. But the findings in this case study show that Hofstede's high power distance measure for Pakistan does not necessarily mean that employees actually appreciate the power distance. In fact, for implementing participatory HRD practices, they see power distance as a contextual obstacle to equality in learning. This may be generalised for Pakistan and other Asian developing countries in the post-colonial era, which are also going through the liberation process, media freedom and human rights' movements, though this is subject to further testing.

The case of EduDev highlights that not all HRD ideas are fascinating for everyone all the time. The findings reflect that the discourse espoused was critical in nature but the 'approach' of using discourse was not. It was generic and not well-thought in terms of conceptualisation of what it will mean for individual or work related learning. This supports Callahan's (2007) apprehension of pitfalls of following CHRD blindly and indiscriminately. It means HR developers will have to critically evaluate and predict the outcomes of the espoused discourse and materialise the concepts at specific levels.

From the observations and reflections of interviews, the study has opened up the potential of incorporating local practices, traditions and inspirations in learning programmes. These may have been done implicitly and on an ad-hoc basis but there seems to be a large unearthed scope of studying scholarship of local poets, philosophers and teachings of saints to produce theories that are conducive to particular cultures and societies. The challenge for practitioners would be to strategise them in theoretically consumable resources and do this by engaging the common workforce as part of the process. In order

to meet this challenge, practitioners can attempt to undertake research to answer the following questions.

- How can we develop local knowledge and methods through which HRD can empower the Sindh province or similar local contexts?

- Who should be the stakeholders involved in making sense of the grounded knowledge that can lead to localised non-Western theories?

- How can HRD practitioners engage management academicians in this process to make local knowledge relevant for business education in a particular region?

5.5 Methodological contribution

Elliott and Turnbull (2005) and Callahan (2007) have opined that critical in CHRD refers to the very foundation in which the subject is studied. It is not solely based on critique of a concept but also in the way we research HRD. It is about trying research methods that are holistic and capture interrelatedness, break away from the norm of equilibrium (Lee 2007) and, have potential to bring out unheard voices in research. To this end, the methods used in this study have generated the data that supports these purported aims of CHRD. By employing a critical interpretivist worldview, this research also responds to Elliott and Turnbull's (2005) call for variety in philosophical traditions in HRD. The contribution is not in discovering a new philosophy for seeing the world but rather in using a philosophical position which has been rarely used in HRD research. Critical studies in HRD or CMS have typically focused either on the critical realist extreme, undermining the power of discourse, or on the post-modernist extreme, exaggerating the power of discourse. But the combination of critical and interpretivism, which accommodates the subjectivity of the 'researched' with a critical analysis, has been far

less common in HRD studies. This case study moved away from the norm of critical realist or post-modernist extremes and was philosophically framed with the critical interpretivist world-view. Importantly, the results have shown its potential to illuminate learners' understanding of participatory HRD, a concern fundamental to critical scholarship.

The data also shows the advantages of doing research in learners' (respondents') own language. This is reflected in the locally expressive, metaphoric and detailed form of data obtained. From my experience with respondents in the case study organisation, my understanding is that it would be difficult for non-native researchers to carry out research at that scale because their reception towards research would not be of the same level. The issue will not really be of the perceptions of a foreign researcher but that of the communication means available to respondents at their disposal for having their views counted. In all likelihood, if the same research was to be done by an international researcher, say for example of English origin, he or she will have to rely on management to select participants. This would possibly mean the sample would comprise of people who can speak the researcher's language to a reasonably good standard. This in turn will have a major impact on the nature of data collected and the findings. Importantly, for research of this type, it may mean that oppressed voices remain unheard.

Reflecting on how methodology served research aims, even though it was time consuming it has answered research questions. I found this is not an easy topic to research because at times asking direct questions like, 'how equal are you in developmental roles?', or 'what is affecting social equality in learning?' can lead to tensions in research. If such problems are predictable, the key is to let respondents speak as much as possible during interviews and then as an iterative process let contextual issues emerge and build on questions from there. Inevitably, this would mean getting a lot of information that is unrelated to research but in it there would be key points leading to issues of interest.

The research also shows some logic in researching a topic a few years after a discourse is launched or a change programme is undertaken. My previous research (Siddiqui 2004) had shown that this organisation was on its way to becoming a successful learning organisation and therefore for this research my pre-disposed thoughts were focused on positives as well. Doing research after a few years brings in to play the long-term outcome state of discursive interventions rather than earlier enthusiasm which may turn out to be short-lived.

To a lesser extent, the case study also shows issues of emotions around HRD, without touching it as a direct object for research. Vince (2001) has argued that we need to find ways to research emotions in HRD and organisational learning. Asking questions about the emotional state, especially in this culture where the direct translation of the word emotion (*Jazbaat/Ahsasaat*) would refer to more negative than positive could be a real problem. Methods employed here show that allowing people to speak would reveal manifestations of emotional state as depicted by respondents' referrals to the 'lost trust in management', 'lowering self-esteem' and 'not in entire love with developmental ideology here'. This though is only one suggestive way of researching but is neither all encompassing for studies of emotions in learning nor claims to be the best approach.

The last contributing point I want to make here is that for any researcher aspiring to undertake research in this type of geographical setting, long waiting-times and people postponing interviews are common occurrences and electricity breakdowns are a norm. An off-site interview may also mean meeting people over a lunch break at a road-side un-hygienic and overly crowded noisy place where recording may serve little or no purpose. The research implication is that it requires a different kind of mental preparedness and ability to adapt to such settings.

5.6 Conclusions and further research

The above analysis shows only one case study of an evidence-based account of the equality theme in contemporary HRD practice. These findings are credible and dependable (Lincoln and Guba 1985) as they can be understood through presentation of data and extensive explanation of context. Although the purpose of the research is to highlight uniqueness of context and to reduce the prescriptive nature of HRD text, some of the findings can be generalised to the extent of similarity in contexts. The comparisons with other studies in previous sections reflect this point. Perhaps, in Mason's (1996) terms, one of the generalisable implications of this research is how not to do HRD? Also, the themes identified are likely to influence equalities in HRD programmes albeit their presence, absence, positive/negative role and specific detail will depend on relevance of a particular theme to the context and culture. This research contributes in generating an empirical base for contemporary HRD practice in a little researched geographical context that is non-European and non-North American. In doing so, the study addresses two main gaps highlighted in this piece: putting context back into HRD and the need for strong empirical evidence in theory.

Further, on the basis of culturally distinct paradigms of management, Weir (2003) has termed HRD in Arab (Muslim) Middle East as the 'fourth paradigm' (the other three being Anglo-American, Japanese and European). Considering the locality of this case study setting in a Muslim country, the expansion in the knowledge base of HRD can be seen as an 'extended' fourth paradigm.

Theoretically, the research contributes in fulfilling aims of Critical HRD by giving voice to the marginalised and giving worker emancipation from the oppressed at least at the research level (Elliott and Turnbull 2005; Fenwick 2005; Trehan 2007; Callahan 2007; Sambrook 2009). Consequently, this contributes to exploration of organisational

dynamics of power, politics, ethnicities and language in HRD research and constraints of these on aspirations of social justice and equity (Fenwick 2005). In this process, the research has also responded to areas of further research proposed by Ellinger and Cseh (2007, p450) such as 'interviewing all parties involved for deeper understanding of who initiates learning and how it gets facilitated' and 'integrating perspectives of employees who are more racially and ethnically diverse may expand our understanding of (learning) phenomena'.

The research also concludes that the practice of contemporary HRD, especially radically critical ideas in organisation settings is complicated. Recently, there have been some successful attempts of teaching critical curriculum at classroom levels (Rigg and Trehan 2003; Sambrook 2007) but the evidence of its practice in organisational context still remains problematic. From the analysis, it can be safely concluded that facilitative processes, based on participatory equalities in an organisational environment has a lot more complications than teaching this discourse in a classroom. Although both can be conceptualised as political sites, the classroom context is a narrower context of operation and offers relatively lesser risks and stakes than that of the organisation (Rigg and Trehan 2008). However, it must be kept in mind that those who were exposed to practicing critical learning concepts in the case study organisation did not have any formal training of these concepts so they were at the mercy of a discursive route taken by leaders. It is possible that those who have obtained some properly facilitated education in critical management / HRD studies have been able to make positive use of this discourse in their work lives, as some available evidence of Sambrook's (2007) efforts to teach social care leadership from critical perspectives point out. Therefore, an important area of further research is to do a multiple-point or longitudinal research with those who have formally studied critical HRD and then have gone on to apply those concepts in organisation settings. This would help improve both the teaching and practice of CHRD.

Overall, this research has accomplished its aim of contextual understanding of the equality theme in contemporary HRD discourse. More explanatory case studies are

recommended in different international contexts tackling one or more specific aspects in participatory HRD (e.g. structure, gender, ethnicity, leadership, culture) for us to reach a more wholesome and coherent understanding of sensitivities involved in HRD practices. Especially, the role of HRD leadership and the binding context of managing diversity with emotionality in learning and change are in need of careful examination.

The following specific research questions are suggested for future research.

- What are the experiences of the workforce members in practicing CHRD in the workplace, who also obtained a formal university education in CHRD? How are their experiences different from groups who are exposed to critical challenges in organisations but have no prior formal exposure to a critical HRD discourse? Do these differences explain the ability to manage the contextual issues in a more informed manner?

- What should be the leadership role for the practice of CHRD? What are the pressures that restrict the leaders to deliver the espoused promises of equality in HRD? Are HRD providers fully aware of the learners' emotionality during the process of discursive interventions and the consequent effects of social withdrawal when the expectations are not met? Can HRM / OB theories of justice and fairness help HRD scholars to understand and manage these issues?

5.7 Limitations and reflexivity

This research is based on a single case study that is revealing and has much to offer for advancement of HRD practice. However, it may be used with caution. While some of its elements are generalisable, many are not and cannot be generalised even for Pakistan. For example, language identities and cultural expression vary from province to province, rural

setting to urban setting and so on (Rahman 1994). While it is common for people from other provinces to work in the industrial capital Karachi, it is not so common for people from Sindh to go and work in Punjab for example. Therefore, the dynamics of resistance and negotiated identities will vary considerably in terms of ethnicity composition, and homogeneity/heterogeneity of a setting. Also, from my own experiences with a consultancy firm in the past, I can sense that characteristics of this organisation are atypical and unlike other organisations in Karachi. Therefore, instead of generalisability, the uniqueness of the context should be appreciated.

There may have been instances where my sense of translation has not been very precise or the meanings respondents attached to particular concept may have varied from my own understanding based on academic literature reviews. Particularly, somewhat confused understanding of critical HRD practice / pedagogies in organisations is in itself limited by generic/non-differentiated use of terms by employees. However, because I interviewed and translated data myself, and was native to the culture and languages of respondents, I did not find issues of isolation from data as experienced by third-party translators in cross-cultural research (Esposito 2001).

Also, the contextual influences extracted in research cannot be seen as a finite list. It is possible that there were sensitive issues that respondents did not open up to. For instance, the issue of religious identities could be much more than a couple of comments noted but may be too personal or uncomfortable for people to share with someone.

Coming to the more personal aspects of reflexivity, there were times where I had to manage my own emotionality and psychological self during the fieldwork. My own worries were that the Director allowed me to conduct research because he thought I believed in his ideology of learning and development. This was partly true; EduDev was the place where I had my first ‘practical’ exposure of contemporary HRD ideas and those were inspiring enough for me to choose this place as a research site. But once grim realities of how discourse was being constructed and exercised on learners appeared clear

to me, I was worried about the Director actually asking me for a short report or findings, maybe with the aim of improving HRD in the organisation. Even though there was no such formal agreement between us, I did think about what I would present if my fears came true.

The relevant question is whether I could have actually reported the findings back to the organisation and was there an opportunity to empower workers in practice by doing that? First of all, to me this was not an option because that would have been a breach of research ethics and also the breach of confidentiality and assurances I had provided to the participants in research. In addition, I think this would have been wishful thinking because reporting findings back to the organisation from my side would not have changed the power basis in the organisation. I feared that people might end up losing their jobs by this, and, I would have been responsible for taking their livelihood away. The implications at the personal and political level would be me losing the social capital and trust of the people and generating negative publicity in the job market for myself if I was to return to the developmental sector after completing this project. As I have mentioned earlier in this chapter, the emancipation in practices continues to be the unfulfilled promise of CHRD. Unfortunately, researchers' personal fears and the political implications only add to this problem. However, I still have the hopes that things will change as workers become more aware of their rights, and their own understanding of the purposes of critical practices become clearer. Personally, I believe that after obtaining my PhD, and developing my own credibility in the field, I will be in a better position to make an impact in the practice and can do this without the fear of breach of ethics attached to a research project.

A related issue was of feeling 'powerlessness' in research situation. Sometimes, I wished I could say 'No' to do more interviews, when I already had enough data. This though was more about making my own research manageable. But I also wondered whether they had found someone to share their concerns with; to speak out about what they otherwise could not. From the research aspect, it was a good thing because I was getting more insights.

However, as a person and given my own linguistic identity as a Sindhi and religious values of a Sunni-Muslim, I did ask myself, how would I have responded, 'if someone told me Sindhi speaking people are non-learners and propagandists' or 'I was not good enough to understand certain concepts because I was not a Shiite-Muslim?' I also wondered if any of the participants actually expected me to pass on these findings to management so that they would know what employees thought of them. But no matter what my own feelings were towards their problems, all I knew was there was nothing I could do for them as a researcher. So, the powerlessness experienced was not only about controlling the amount of data but also in terms of emotionality faced in a situation.

Regarding the impact of my being a Sindhi and Sunni on the interpretation of the data, I do not have an absolute answer to this. I interviewed as many respondents as I could and picked up on the important themes that emerged from the data and the ones I thought were particularly relevant to understanding contextual influences on participatory HRD. The data has shown consistency on language identity being an important influence and I believe that to be true with a certain degree of confidence. I think that if the employees were happy with HRD and management's role in it, the data would have shown that irrespective of whether I was a Sindhi or not. However, I do believe that my identity gave them a sense of security to share because they might have felt I would be sympathetic to what they were saying. I am not sure how it would have turned out if I was a non-Sindhi speaking person. I think it would have also been dependent on whether I was a non-Sindhi or from an elite class. My personal take on this is that the closer they would have associated me with top management in terms of my identity, the scarcer would have been the data provided to me. The issue of Sunni-Shiite differences only showed up a couple of times in the data so I am hesitant to say if my Sunni identity gave them an extra comfort in their responses. But I am quite sure that if I was a Shiite, the issues would not have surfaced as the Shiites are in the minority and they would have avoided the issue knowing my own sentiments towards the subject. One thing I could not have done was to change my identity. But, if I have to expand the scope of this research in future, what I might do differently is to spend more time in the offices of top management, non-Sindhi speaking

and Shiite employees, to understand their interpretation of these differences and its role in the learning. This will help understand if the interpretations could be different and to what extent can these differences be attributed to my Sindhi and Sunni identity.

All these issues and others that I am unaware of may have some bearing on the research. I did though discuss the general findings with a few respondents in July 2007 on my visit to Pakistan and they in principal agreed with my thoughts on the context and HRD practices.

References

Acker, J. (2006), 'Inequality Regimes: Gender, Class, and Race in Organisations', *Gender & Society,* Vol. 20 (4), pp: 441-464

ADB (2005), *Improving Technical Education and Vocational Training Strategies for Asia*, ADB Manila

Adler, P. S., Forbes, L. C. and Willmott, H. (2007), 'Chapter 3: Critical Management Studies', *The Academy of Management Annals,* Vol. 1 (1), pp: 119-179

Agnala, A. A. (1997), 'Management Training and Development within its Environment: The Case of Libyan Industrial Companies', *Journal of European Industrial Training,* Vol. 21 (3), pp: 117-123

Alvesson, M. (2002), Postmodernism and Social Research – Understanding Social Research, Open University Press: Buckingham

Alvesson, M. and Deetz, S. (1996), 'Critical Theory and Postmodern Approaches in Organisational Studies' in Clegg, S. R., Hardy, C. and Nord, W. R., (Eds.), *Handbook of Organisation Studies,* Sage: London, pp: 191-217

Alvesson, M. and Deetz, S. (2000), *Doing Critical Management Research,* Sage: London

Alvesson, M. and Sköldberg, K. (2003), *Reflexive Methodology, New Vistas for Qualitative Research,* Sage: London

Alvesson, M. and Willmott, H. (1996), *Making Sense of Management: A Critical Introduction,* Sage: London

American Society for Training and Development (2007), Policy Brief URL < http://www.astd.org/NR/rdonlyres/8C6FDB15-3861-4C27-86DF-7F35917E4A57/12977/January2007APB.pdf> Accessed: [February 2009]

Amjad, R. (2005), 'Skills and Competitiveness: Can Pakistan Break Out of the Low-Level Skills Trap? *The Pakistan Development Review,* Vol. 44, pp: 4-15

Anderson, V. (2008), 'View from the Top: Executive Perceptions of the Value of Learning', *Strategic HR Review,* Vol. 7 (4), pp: 11-16

Argyris, C., Putnam, R. and Smith, D. (1991), Action Science, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA

Armstrong, M. (1999), *A Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice*, 7th Edition, Kogan Page, London

Baig, Q. and Babar, S. (2005), 'Capacity Building of NGOs', NGORC Journal: Civil Society Enhancement', Vol. 6 (1), pp: 4-7

Baloch, N. B. (1985), *'Sindh: Cultural Studies',* SAB: Jamshoro

Bateman, T. S. and Snell, S. A. (2009), *Management: Leading and Collaborating in the Competitive World', (Eighth Edition),* Tata McGraw-Hill: Nagar

Bennett, R. (1991), 'The Right Role', in Bennett, R., (Ed.) *Improving Training Effectiveness,* Gower Publishing Company: Aldershot

Bierema, L. L. (1996), 'Development of the Individual Leads to More Productive Workplaces' in Rowden, R. A. (Ed.), *Workplace Learning: Debating Five Crucial Questions of Theory and Practice,* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp. 21-28

Bierema, L. and Cseh, M. (2008), 'Evaluating AHRD Research using a Feminist Research Framework: A Longitudinal Study – Working Paper', *Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Human Resource Development Research and Practice across Europe ',* I'ESEG School of Management, Lille

Blumberg, B., Cooper, D. R. and Schindler, P. S. (2005), *Business Research Methods,* McGraw-Hill: Maidenhead

Bourdieu, (1986), *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste,* Routledge: London

Boydell, T. and Leary, M. (1996), *Identifying Training Needs*, IPD London

Buckley, R. and Caple, J. (2004), *The Theory and Practice of Training*, 5th Edition, Kogan-Page: New Delhi

Budhwani, N. A. (2008), 'Human Resource Development in Pakistan: An Overview – Working Paper', *Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Human Resource Development Research and Practice across Europe*, I'ESEG School of Management, Lille

Budhwar, P. S. and Debrah, Y. A., (Eds.), (2001), Human Resource Management in Developing Countries – Routledge Research in Employment Relations, Routledge: London

Burgoyne, J., Pedler, M. and Boydell, T. (1994), *Towards the Learning Company: Concepts and Practices,* McGraw-Hill: London

Burrell, G. (1988), 'Modernism, Post-modernism and Organisational Analysis 2: The Contribution of Michael Foucault', *Organisation Studies,* Vol. 9 (2), pp: 221-235

Burrell, G. (2001), 'Critical Dialogues on Organisation', *Ephemera,* Vol. 1(1), pp: 11-29

Byrd, M. (2007), 'Educating and Developing Leaders of Racially Diverse Organisations', *Human Resource Development Quarterly,* Vol. 18 (2), pp: 275-279

Chalofsky, N. (1992), 'A Unifying Definition for the Human Resource Profession', *Human Resource Development Quarterly,* Vol. 3 (2), pp. 175-182

Chang, W. (2009), 'Cross-cultural Adjustment in the Multi-national Training Programme', *Human Resource Development International,* Vol. 12 (5), pp: 561-569

Cheetham, G. and Chivers, G. (2001), 'How Professionals Learn in Practice: An Investigation of Informal Learning Amongst People Working in Professions', *Journal of European Industrial Training,* Vol. 25, (5), pp. 247-292

Clegg, C., Hardy, C. and Nord, W. R. (1999), *Managing Organisations: Current Issues – Vol. 2,* New Edition, Sage: London

Clutterbuck, D. (1998), *CIPD - Learning Alliances: Tapping into Talent,* Wiltshire, England, The Cromwell Press

Cockburn, C. (1989) 'Equal Opportunities: The Short and Long Agenda', *Industrial Relations Journal*, Vol. 20 (3), pp" 213–225

Coff, R. (1999), 'When Competitive Advantage doesn't Lead to Performance: The Resource-based View and Stakeholder Bargaining power', *Organisation Science,* Vol. 10 (2), pp: 119-133

Colley, H. (2003), *Mentoring for Social Inclusion – A Critical Approach to Nurturing Mentor Relationships,* RoutledgeFalmer: London

Daly, M. (1978) *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism,* Boston, MA: Beacon

David, M. and Sutton, C. (2004), *Social Research: The Basics,* Sage: London

Deetz, S. (1992), 'Disciplinary Power in the Modern Corporation', in Alvesson, M. and Willmott, H. (Eds.), *Critical Management Studies,* Sage: London pp: 21-45

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. (2000), *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* Sage: USA

Dirani, K. M. (2009), 'Measuring the Learning Organisation Culture: Organisational Commitment and Job Satisfaction in the Lebanese Banking Sector, *Human Resource Development International,* Vol. 12 (2), pp: 109-208

Dixon, N. (1994), *The Organisational Learning Cycle: How can we Learn Collectively?,* McGraw-Hill: Maidenhead

Donaldson, L. (2001), 'Position Statement for Positivism', in Westwood, R. and Clegg, S. (Eds) *Debating Organisation: Point-Counterpoint in Organisation Theory,* Blackwell Publishing: England

Easterby-Smith, M. (1997), 'The Disciplines of Organisational Learning: Contributions and Critiques', *Human Relations,* Vol. 50 (9), pp. 1085-1113

Easterby-Smith, M., Burgoyne, J. and Araujo, L. (Eds.) (1999), *Organisational Learning and the Learning Organisation: Developments in Theory and Practice,* Sage: London

Easterby-Smith, A., Crossan, M. and Nicolini, D. (2000), 'Organisational Learning: Debates Past, Present and Future', *Journal of Management Studies,* Vol. 37 (6), pp. 783-796

Easterby-Smith, M. and Lyles, M. A. (2005), *The Blackwell Handbook of Organisational Learning and Knowledge Management,* Blackwell Publications: England

Easterby-Smith, M.., Thorpe, R. and Lowe, A. (2002), *Management Research: An Introduction,* 2nd Edition, Sage: London

Eddy, E. R., D'Abate, C. P., Tannenbaum, S. I. Givens-Skeaton, S. and Robinson, G. (2006), 'Key Characteristics of Effective and Ineffective Developmental Interactions', *Human Resource Development Quarterly,* Vol. 17 (1), pp: 59-84

Eisenhardt, K. M. (2002), 'Building Theories from case Study Research' in Humberman, A. M. and Miles, M. B., (Eds.), *The Qualitative Researcher's Companion: Classic and Contemporary Readings,* Sage: Thousand Oaks, pp: 5-36

Ellinger, A. and Cseh, M. (2007), 'Contextual Factors Influencing the Facilitation of Others' Learning through Everyday Work Experiences', *Journal of Workplace Learning,* Vol. 19 (7), pp: 435-452

Elliott, C. and Turnbull, S. (2005), 'Critical Thinking in Human Resource Development: An Introduction' in Elliott, C. and Turnbull, S. (Eds.), *Critical Thinking in Human Resource Development – Routledge Studies in Human Resource Development,* Routledge: Oxon, pp: 1-7

El-Sawad, A. (2002) 'Human Resource Development' in Pilbeam, S. and Corbridge, M. (Eds.), *People* Resourcing*: HRM in Practice, (2nd Edition),* Prentice-Hall: London, pp: 284 - 308

Esposito, N. (2001), 'From Meaning to Meaning: The Influence of Translation Techniques on Non-English Focus Group Research', *Qualitative Health Research,* Vol. 11 (4), pp: 568-579

Fairclough, N. (1992), *Discourse and Social Change*, Polity Press: Cambridge

Fairclough, N. (1995), *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language,* London: Longman

Fairclough, N. and Hardy, G. (1997), 'Management Learning as Discourse', in Burgoyne, J. and Reynolds, M., (Eds.), *Management Learning: Integrating Perspectives in Theory and Practice,* Sage: London, pp: 144-160

Federal Bureau of Statistics (2009), URL <http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pco/index.html> Accessed: [February 2009]

Feldman, M. S. (1995), *Strategies for Interpreting Qualitative Data,* Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA

Fenwick, T. (2001), 'Questioning the Concept of the Learning Organisation', in Paechter, C. F., Preedy, M., Scott, D. and Soler, J., (Eds.), *Knowledge, Power and Learning – Learning Matters: Challenges of the Information Age,* Paul Chapman Publishers/Open University, pp. 74-88

Fenwick, T. (2003), 'Emancipatory Potential of Action Learning: A Critical Analysis', *Journal of Organisational Change Managemen*t, Vol. 16 (6), pp: 619-632.

Fenwick, T. (2004), 'Towards a critical HRD in theory and practice', *Adult Education Quarterly*, Vol. 54 (3), pp. 193–209

Fenwick, T. (2005), 'Conceptions of Critical HRD: Dilemmas for Theory and Practice', *Human Resource Development International*, Vol. 8 (2), pp: 25-238

Findlay, P., McKinlay, A., Marks, A. and Thompson, P. (2000), '"Labouring to Learn": Organisational Learning and Mutual Gains', *Employee Relations,* Vol. 22 (5), pp: 485-502

Flaherty, J. (2005), *Coaching: Evoking Excellence in Others,* Elsevier Buttersworth-Heinemann: Oxford

Foley, G. (2000), 'A Framework for Understanding Adult Learning and Education', in Foley, G., (Ed.), *Understanding Adult Education and Training,* 2nd Edition, Allen and Unwin: St. Leonards, NSW:, pp: 7–22

Fournier, V. and Grey, C. (2000), 'At the Critical Moment: Conditions and Prospects for Critical Management Studies', *Human Relations,* Vol. 53 (1), pp: 7-32

Francis, H. (2007), 'The mutation of HRD and Strategic Change: A Critical Perspective' in Rigg, C., Stewart, J. and Trehan, K. (Eds.), *Critical Human Resource Development: Beyond Orthodoxy,* Prentice Hall-Financial Times: England, pp: 107-128

Fraser, S. (2003), 'Leadership Principles and Reflections for Unravelling the Stranglehold of Organisational Boundaries: Challenges for Health Sector' in Lee, M. (Ed) *HRD in a Complex World – Routledge Studies in Human Resource Development,* Routledge: London, pp: 195-203

Froud, J., Johal, S., Leaver, A. and Williams, K. (2006), *Financialisation and Strategy: Narrative and Numbers,* Routledge: London

Fucini, J. and Fucini, S. (1990), *Working for the Japanese: Inside Mazda's American Auto Plant,* Free Press: NY

Garavan, T. N., Gunnigle, P. and Morley, M. (2000), 'Contemporary HRD Research: A Triarchy of Theoretical Perspectives and their Prescription for HRD', *Journal of European Industrial Training,* Vol. 24, 2/4, pp. 65-93

Garavan, T. N., Heraty, N. and Birnicle B. (1999), 'Human Resource Development Literature: Current Issues, Priorities and Dilemmas', *Journal of European Industrial Training,* Vol. 23, 4/5, pp. 169-179

Garavan, T. N., Morley, M., Gunnigle, P. and McGuire, D. (2002), 'Human Resource Development and Workplace Learning: Emerging Theoretical Perspectives and Organisational Practices', *Journal of European Industrial Training,* Vol. 24/2/3/4, pp. 60-71

Garavan, T. N., O'Donnell, D., McGuire, D. and Watson, S. (2007), 'Exploring Perspectives on Human Resource Development: An Introduction', *Advances in Developing Human Resources,* Vol. 9 (3), pp: 3-10

Garrick, J. (1998), *Informal Learning in the Workplace,* Routledge: London

Gellerman, W., Frankel, M. S, and Ladenson, R. F. (1990), *Values and Ethics in Organisational and Human Systems Development: Responding to Dilemmas and Professional Life,* Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA

Ghoshal, S. (2005), 'Bad Management Theories are Destroying Good Management Practices', *Academy of Management Learning and Education,* Vol. 4 (1), pp: 75-91

Gibb, S. (2002), *Learning and Development: Processes, Practices and Perspectives at Work,* Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire

Giddens, A. (1986), *Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration, (Reprint Edition),* University of California Press

Gilbert, J. (1996), "'A Job for Life' into 'A Life of Jobs': The New Employment Contract", *The TQM Magazine,* Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 36-42

Giley, J. W. and Maycunich, A. (2000), *Organisational Learning, Performance, and Change: An Introduction to Strategic Human Resource Development,* Cambridge, MA: Persues

Gill, J. and Johnson, P. (2002), *Research Methods for Managers,* 3rd Edition, London: Sage

Gillespie, R. (1991), *Manufacturing Knowledge: A History of the Hawthorne Experiment,* Cambridge University Press: NY

Githens, R. P. (2007), 'Critical Action Research in Human Resource Development', *Proceedings of the Academy of Human Resource Development Conference, Indianapolis,* URL <www.rodgithens.com/papers/critical_ar_ahrd_2007.pdf> Accessed: [February 2009]

Goffman, E. (1969), *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life,* Penguin: Harmondsworth

Gray, K. (1997), "Seeking the 'tie that binds': Integrating Training and Development / Human Resource Development and Teacher Preparation", *Journal of Industrial Teacher Education,* Vol. 34 (4), pp: 80-85

Grey, C. and Willmott H., (Eds.), (2005), *Critical Management Studies: A Reader – Oxford Management Readers,* OUP: Oxford

Habermas, J. (1971), *Knowledge and Human Interest,* Boston: Beacon Press

Hamblett, J. and Holden, R. (2000), 'Employee-led Development: Another Piece of Left Luggage?', *Personnel Review,* Vol. 29 (4), pp. 509-520

Hardy, C. and Clegg, S. (1997), 'Relativity without Relativism: Reflexivity in Post-paradigm Organisation Studies', British Journal of Management, Vol. 8, Special Issue, S5 – S17

Hardy, C., Palmer, I. and Phillips, N. (2000) 'Discourse as a Strategy Resource', *Human* Relations, Vol. 53(9), pp: 1227-1248

Hardy, C., Phillips, N. and Clegg, S. (2001), 'Reflexivity in Organisation and Management Theory: A Study of the Production of the Research 'Subject'', *Human Relations,* Vol. 54 (5), pp. 531-560

Harrison, R. (1997), *Employee Development,* Institute of Personnel and Development, London

Healy, G. (1999), 'Structuring Commitments in Interrupted Careers', *Gender, Work and Organisation*, Vol. 6 (4), pp: 185-201

Hill, R. (2002), *'Researching HRD in Small Organisations'* in McGoldrick, J., Stewart, J. and Watson, S. (Eds.), Understanding Human Resource Development: A Research Based Approach, London, Routledge, pp: 122-145

Hochschild, A. R. (1983), The Managed *Heart: Commercialisation of Human Feeling,* University of California Press: LA

Hockey, J. (1993), 'Research Methods - Researching Peers and Familiar Settings', *Research Papers in Education,* Vol. 8 (2), pp: 199-225

Hofstede, G. (1991), Cultures *and Organisations: Software of the Mind,* McGraw-Hill: USA

Holland, R. (1999). 'Reflexivity', *Human Relations,* Vol. 52 (4), pp: 463–83

Holmes, L. (2004), 'Challenging the Learning Turn in Education and Training', *Journal of European Industrial Training,* Vol. 28-8 (9), pp. 625-638

Holmes, L. (2007), 'The Learning Turn in Education and Training: Liberatory Paradigm or Oppressive Ideology?' in Rigg, C., Stewart, J. and Trehan, K. (Eds.), *Critical Human Resource Development: Beyond Orthodoxy,* Prentice Hall-Financial Times: England, pp: 221-238

Hussain, I. (2003), *HRM Trends in Pakistan: Some Case Study Examples,* SBP Papers Pakistan

IPD (1996), *Managing Diversity: A Position Paper,* London: IPD

Ismail, M., Osman-Gani, A. M., Ahmad, S., Krauss, S. E., Ismail, I. A., and Hajaraih, S. K. (2006), 'Human resource development in Asia - Thriving on dynamism and change: Reflections from 2006 Asian AHRD conference', *Human Resource Development International,* Vol. 10 (2), pp: 215-223

Jamal, A. (1998), 'Can we Learn Something from the Perceptions and Consumption Practices of Transnational South Asia Communities Living in the West?' *Paper Presented at the Inaugural Conference of Asia Academy of Management,* Hong Kong

Jamal, A. (2005), *Comparisons of HRM Practices in South Asia,* Vanguard: Lahore

Jewson, N. and Mason, D. (1986), 'The Theory and Practice of Equal Opportunities Policies: Liberal and Radical Approaches', *Sociological Review,* Vol. 34 (2), pp: 307–334

Johnson, C. (2000), 'The Practice of Human Resource Management in New Zealand: Strategic and Best Practices?', *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources,* Vol. 38 (2), pp: 69-79

Johnson, P. and Duberley, J. (2003), 'Reflexivity in Management Research', *Journal of Management Studies,* Vol. 40 (5), pp: 1279 – 1303

Joy-Matthews, J., Megginson, D. and Surtees, M. (2004), *Human Resource Development,* 3rd Edition, Kogan Page/London

Kandola, R. and Fullerton, J. (1994), 'Diversity: More than just an Empty Slogan', *Personnel Management,* (November), pp: 16–19

Kanter, R. M. (1989) *When Giants Learn to Dance,* Simon and Schuster: London

Kazmi, S. W. (2007), 'Vocational Education and Skills Development: A Case of Pakistan', *SAARC Journal of Human Resource Development,* Vol. 2 (1), pp: 105-117

Keenoy, K. and Oswick, C. (2004), 'Organising Textscapes', *Organisation Studies,* Vol. 25(1), pp: 135-142

Khan, A. K. and Fariduddin, S. (2006), *An Inquiry into Facilitators of Change: A Case Study of Pakistan State Oil Co. Ltd.,* Unpublished MS Study, Available: SZABIST Library: Karachi

Khilji, S. E. (2001), 'Human Resource Management in Pakistan' in Budhwar, P. S. and Debrah, Y. A., (Eds.), *Human Resource Management in Developing Countries – Routledge Research in Employment Relations,* Routledge: London, pp: 102-120

Kim, D. (1993), 'The Link between Individual and Organisational Learning', *Sloan Management Review,* Fall, pp. 37-50

King, N. (1994), 'The qualitative research interview', in Symon, G. and Cassell, C. M., (Eds.), *Qualitative Methods and Analysis in Organisational Research: A Practical Guide,* London: Sage, pp: 14-36.

Kolb, D. A., Rubin, I. N. and McIntyre J. M. (1974), *Organisational Psychology: A Book of Readings,* Prentice Hall, NJ

Kontonghiorghes, C. (2003), 'Factors Affecting Training Effectiveness in the Context of the Introduction of New Technology - A US Case Study', *International Journal of Training and Development,* Vol. 5 (4), pp: 248-260

Knowles, M. S. (1995), *Designs for Adult Learning,* Alexandria, VA: ASTD

Kuchinke, K. P. (2002), 'Institutional and Curricular Characteristics of Leading Graduate HRD Programmes in the United States', *Human Resource Development Quarterly,* Vol. 13 (2), pp. 127-144

Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991), *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation,* Cambridge University Press: NY

Lawler, E. E. III. (1992), *The Ultimate Advantage: Creating the High Involvement Organisation,* Josey-Bass, San Francisco, CA

Lee, M. (2003), 'The Complex Roots of HRD' in Lee, M. (Ed) *HRD in a Complex World – Routledge Studies in Human Resource Development,* Routledge: London, pp. 7-24

Lee, M. (2004), 'A Refusal to Define HRD' in Woodall, J., Lee, M. and Stewart, J., (Eds.) *New Frontiers in HRD – Routledge Studies in Human Resource Development,* London: Routledge: London, pp 27-39

Lee, M. (2007), 'Human Resource Development from a Holistic Perspective', *Advances in Developing Human Resources,* Vol. 9 (1), pp: 97-110

Legge, K. (1995), *Human Resource Management: Rhetoric and Realities:* Basingstoke: MacMillan

Lesser, E. L., Fontaine, M. A. and Slusher, J. A. (Eds.) (2000), *Knowledge and Communities,* Butterworth-Heinemann: Woburn, MA URL <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=VG0G3clyi0QC> Accessed: [February 2009]

Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, G. (1985), *Naturalistic Enquiry,* Sage: London

Lofland, J. and Lofland, L. H. (1995), *Analysing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis,* Third Edition, ITP: USA

Lynham, S. A. and Cunningham, P. W. (2006), 'National Human Resource Development in Transitioning Societies in the Developing World: Concept and Challenges', *Advances in Developing Human Resources,* Vol. 8 (1), pp: 116-135

Lynn, G. S., Skov, R. B. and Abel, K. D. (1999), 'Practices that Support Team Learning and their Impact on the Speed to market and New Product Success', *Journal of Product Innovation Management,* Vol. 16 (5), pp: 439-454

Marchington, M. and Wilkinson, A. (2005), *Human Resource Management at Work: People Management and Development,* 3rd Edition, CIPD London

Marsick, V. J. and Watkins, K. E. (1999), *Facilitating Learning Organisation: Making Learning Count,* Gower/US

Marsick, V. J. and Watkins, K. E. (2001), 'Informal and Incidental Learning', *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education,* Vol. 89 (Spring), pp. 25-34

Mason, J. (1996), *Qualitative Researching,* Sage: London

Menezes, L. (2006), *The Changing Role of Human Resources,* PHRMS Article Series, Karachi

McGoldrick, J., Stewart, J. and Watson, S. (2002a), 'Postscript: The Future for HRD Research' in McGoldrick, J., Stewart, J. and Watson, S. (Eds) *Understanding Human Resource Development: A Research Based Approach,* Routledge: London, pp 395-398

McGoldrick, J., Stewart, J. and Watson, S. (2002b), 'Researching HRD: Philosophy, Process and Practice' in McGoldrick, J., Stewart, J., and Watson, S., (Eds) *Understanding Human Resource Development: A Research Based Approach,* Routledge: London, pp 1-17

McGuire, D., O'Donnell, D., Garavan, T. N., Saha, S. K. and Murphy, J. (2002), 'The Cultural Boundedness of Theory and Practice in HRD?', *Cross Cultural Management,* Vol. 9 (2), pp: 25-44

McLean, G. N. (2000), 'It Depends', *Advances in Developing Human Resources,* Vol. 2 (1), pp. 39-43

McLean, G. (2006), 'Rethinking Adult Learning in the Workplace', *Advances in Developing Human Resources,* Vol. 8 (3), pp: 416-423

Mello, J. A. (2002), *Strategic Human Resource Management,* South-Western College Publishing: Cincinnati OH

Memon, Z. (2004), *Pakistan kay Haalaat aur Karobaar ka Rukh*, Nawaey Waqt, September 8, p6

Mumford, A. (1997), *Management Development: Strategies for Action*, 3rd Edition, IPD London

Musson, G. and Duberley, J. (2007), 'Change, Change or Be Exchanged', *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 44 (1), pp: 143-164

Newell, S. (1999), 'The Transfer of Management Knowledge to China: Building Learning Communities rather than Western Textbooks?' *Education + Training*, Vol. 41 (6/7), pp: 286-294

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2003), *Beyond Rhetoric: Adult Learning Policies and Practices*, France, OECD Publications

Ortenbläd, A. (2005), 'Are the Right Persons Involved in the Creation of Learning Organisation?', *Human Resource Development Quarterly,* Vol. 16 (2), pp: 281-284

Owen-Pugh, V. (2007), 'Acknowledging Conflict in 'Communities of Practice': A Figurational Perspective on Learning and Innovation in the Workplace' in Rigg, C., Stewart, J. and Trehan, K. (Eds.), *Critical Human Resource Development: Beyond Orthodoxy*, Prentice Hall-Financial Times: England, pp: 205-220

Özbilgin, M. (2000), 'Is the Practice of Equal Opportunities Management keeping Pace with Theory? Management of Sex Equality in the Financial Services Sector in Britain and Turkey', *Human Resource Development International,* Vol. 3 (1), pp: 43-67

Pakistan HR Society (2001), *PHRMS Publications*, Karachi

Pakistan HR Society (2008), *PHRMS Publications*, Karachi

Palmer, R. (2005), 'The Identification of Learning Needs', in Wilson, P. J. (ed.), *Human Resource Development: Learning & Training for Individuals and Organisations (2nd Edition)*, Kogan Page: London, pp: 137-155

Parkin, F. (1972), *Class Inequality and Political Order: Social Stratification in Capitalist and Communist Societies*, Praeger: NY

Pedler, M., Boydell, T. and Burgoyne, J. (1989), 'The Learning Company', *Studies in Continuing Education',* Vol. 11 (2), pp. 91-101

Pfeffer, J. (1981*), Power in Organisations*, Ballinger: Cambridge MA

Phillips, D. C. and Soltis, J. F. (1998), *Perspectives on Learning*, Third Edition, Teachers College Press: USA

Phillips, N. and Hardy, C. (2002), *Discourse Analysis: Investigating Processes of Social Construction*, Sage: Thousand Oaks

Pilbeam, S. and Corbridge, M. (2002), *People Resourcing: HRM in Practice, (2nd Edition),* Prentice-Hall: London

Poell, R. F. and Tijmensen, E. C. M. (1998), 'Using Learning Projects to Work towards a Learning Organisation: Two Cases from Professional Work', in Poell, R. F and Chivers, G. E. (eds.), *Continuing Professional Development in Europe: Theoretical Views, Fields of Application, and National Policies,* Sheffield, University of Sheffield, pp: 43-57

Prange, C. (1999), 'Organisational Learning – Desperately Seeking Theory?' in Easterby-Smith, M., Burgoyne, J. and Araujo, L. (Eds.), *Organisational Learning and the Learning Organisation: Developments in Theory and Practice,* Sage: Lonson, pp: 23-43

Qureshi, Z. I. (1994), 'Impact of Management Practice on Employee Effectiveness in South Asia', *CMER Working Paper Series, 94-01,* LUMS: Pakistan

Rahman, T. (1994), *Language Policy: English, Urdu or Regional Tongues,* The Pak Literary Society, Available: Karachi University Library: Karachi

Rahman, T. (1996), *Language and Politics in Pakistan,* Oxford University Press: Karachi

Rahman, T. (2002), *Language, Ideology and Power: Language-learning Among the Muslims of Pakistan and North India*., Oxford University Press: Karachi

REDC (2009), *The Executive Education Experience*, REDC Promotions / LUMS

Rees, C. J. and Metcalfe, B. D. (2007), 'Feminism, Gender and HRD' in Rigg, C., Stewart, J. and Trehan, K. (Eds.), *Critical Human Resource Development: Beyond Orthodoxy,* Prentice Hall-Financial Times: England, pp: 87-105

Reid, M. and Barrington, H. (1999), *Training Interventions: Managing Employee Development*, Fifth Edition, IPD: London

Reynolds, M. (1997), 'Towards a Critical pedagogy', in Burgoyne, J. and Reynolds, M., (Eds.), *Management Learning: Integrating Perspectives in Theory and Practice,* Sage: London, pp: 312-328

Reynolds, M. (1998), 'Grasping the Nettle: Possibilities and Pitfalls of a Critical Management Pedagogy', *British Journal of Management,* Vol. 10 (2), pp: 171-184

Reynolds, M. and K. Trehan (2003), 'Learning from Difference?', *Management Learning,* Vol. 34 (2), pp: 163-180

Rigg, C. (2005), 'Becoming Critical: Can Critical Management Learning Develop Critical Managers', in Elliott, C. and Turnbull, S. (Eds.), *Critical Thinking in Human Resource Development – Routledge Studies in Human Resource Development,* Routledge: Oxon, pp: 37-52

Rigg, C., Stewart, J. and K. Trehan (2007), 'Introduction: A Critical Take on a Critical Turn in HRD' in Rigg, C., Stewart, J. and Trehan, K. (Eds.), *Critical Human Resource Development: Beyond Orthodoxy.* Prentice Hall-Financial Times: Essex, pp: 1-16

Rigg, C. and Trehan, K. (2004), 'Reflections on Working with Critical Action Learning', *Action Learning: Research and Practice,* Vol. 1 (2), pp: 151-67

Rigg, C. and Trehan, K. (2008), 'Critical Reflection in the Workplace: Is it just too Difficult?', *Journal of European Industrial Training,* Vol. 32 (5), pp: 374-384

Rogers, C. (1983), *'Freedom to Learn for the 80's',* USA, Merill

Ruona, W. E. A. (2000), 'Core Beliefs in Human Resource Development: A Journey for the Profession and its Professionals', *Advances in Developing Human Resources,* Vol. 2 (1), pp. 1-28

Ruona, W. E. and Gibson, W. E. (2004), 'The Making of Twenty-first Century HR: An Analysis of the Convergence of HRM, HRD, and OD', *Human Resource Management,* Vol. 43 (1), pp: 49-86

Rusaw, A. C. (2000), 'Uncovering Training Resistance: A Critical Theory Perspective', *Journal of Organisational Change Management,* Vol. 13 (3), pp. 249-263

Russ-eft, D. (2004), 'In Search of Ethics and Integrity in HRD', in Woodall, J., Lee, M. and Stewart, J., (Eds.), *New Frontiers in HRD - Routledge Studies in Human Resource Development,* Routledge: London, pp: 43-57

Sambrook, S. (2000), 'Talking of HRD', *Human Resource Development International,* Vol. 3 (2), pp: 159-178

Sambrook, S. (2001), 'HRD as Emergent and Negotiated Evolution', *Human Resource Development Quarterly,* Vol. 12 (2), pp. 169-193

Sambrook, S. (2002), 'Writing the Research Story' in McGoldrick, J., Stewart, J. and Watson, S., (Eds), Understanding Human Resource Development: A Research Based Approach, London, Routledge, pp. 226-254

Sambrook, S. (2007a), 'Exploring the Notion of 'Time' and 'Critical' HRD' in Rigg, C., Stewart, J. and Trehan. K., (Eds.), *Critical Human Resource Development: Beyond Orthodoxy.* Prentice Hall-Financial Times: England, pp. 23-42

Sambrook, S. (2007b), 'Developing a New MSc in Leadership and Social Health Care Leadership from a Critical Perspective: Issues and Challenges', *Proceedings of the Fifth International Critical Management Studies Conference,* Manchester Business School, Manchester, URL < http://www.mngt.waikato.ac.nz/ejrot/cmsconference/2007/proceedings/criticalpublicsectormanagement/sambrook.pdf> Accessed: [February 2009]

Sambrook, S. (2009), 'Critical HRD: A Concept Analysis', *Personnel Review,* Vol. 38 (1), pp: 61-73

Sambrook, S. and Stewart, J. (2000), 'Factors Influencing Learning in European Learning Oriented Organisations: Issues for Management', *Journal of European Industrial Training,* Vol. 24/2/3/4, pp: 209-219

Sambrook, S. and Stewart, J. (2002), 'Reflections and Discussion' in Tjepkema, S., Stewart. J., Sambrook. S., Mulder. M., Horst, H. T. and Scheerens, J., (Eds), *HRD and Learning Organisations in Europe,* London: Routledge, pp: 178-187

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2003), *Research Methods for Business Studies,* Third Edition, Prentice Hall-Financial Times: England

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2007), *Research Methods for Business Studies,* Fourth Edition, Prentice Hall-Financial Times: England

Schied, T. M. (2001), 'Struggling to Learn, Learning to Struggle: Workers, Workplace Learning and the Emergence of Human Resource Development' in Sheared, V. and Sissel, P. A., (Eds.) *Making Space: Merging Theory and Practice in Adult Education,* Greenwood: USA, pp 124 - 137

Schön, D. A. (1983), *The Reflective Practitioner,* Basic Books: NY

Senge, P. (1990), *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of Learning Organisation,* Century Business London

Shamsi, A. F. and Jalees, T. (2004), *Change Elements and Cultural Transformation at Habib Bank Limited,* Unpublished MS Study, Available: SZABIST Library: Karachi

Siddiqui, S. (1996), *Ma'eshat ki Jhalikiyan,* First, Volume, Jang Group Press: Karachi

Siddiqui, M. A. (2004), *(EduDev) as a Learning Organisation,* Unpublished MS Study: Available: SZABIST Library: Karachi

Silverman, D. (2001), *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction,* 2nd Edition, Sage: London

Silverman, D. (2005), *Doing Qualitative Research,* Second Edition, Sage: London

Spradley, J. P. (1979), *The Ethnographic Interview,* Holt, Rinehart and Winston: NY

Stake, R. E. (2005), 'Qualitative Case Studies' in Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S., (Eds), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research,* Third Edition, Sage: CA, pp: 443-466

Stewart, J. (2003), 'The Ethics of HRD' (83-99) in Lee, M., (Ed) *HRD in a Complex World,* London: Routledge, pp: 89-99

Stewart, J. (2005), 'Viewpoint: The Current State and Status of HRD Research', *The Learning Organisation,* Vol. 12 (1), pp. 90-95

Swanson, R. A. (1998), Demonstrating the Financial benefit of Human Resource Development: Status and Update on the Theory and Practice, *Human Resource Development Quarterly,* Vol. 9 (3), pp: 285-295

Swanson, R. A. and Holton III, E. F. (2001), *Foundations of Human Resource* Development, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc San Francisco

Tang, R. and John, S. (1999), 'The 'I' in Identity: Exploring Writer Identity in Student Academic Writing through the First Person Pronoun', *English for Specific Purposes,* Vo. 18, Special Edition, S23-S39

Thomas, A. B. and Al-Maskati, H. (1997), 'Contextual Influences of Thinking in Organisations: Learner and Tutor Orientations to Organisational Learning', *Journal of* Management *Studies,* Vol. 34, pp: 852-870

Thompson, R. and Mabey, C. (1994), *Developing Human Resource,* Butterworth-Heinemann: Oxford

Tjepkema, S., Stewart. J., Sambrook. S., Mulder. M., Horst, H. T. and Scheerens, J., (Eds), (2002), *HRD and Learning Organisations in Europe,* London: Routledge

Townley, B. (1994), *Reframing Human Resource Management,* Sage: London

Trehan, K. (2004), 'Who is not Sleeping with whom? What's not being talked about in HRD?', Journal of European Industrial Training, Vol. 23 (1), pp. 23-38

Trehan, K. (2007), 'Psychodynamic and Critical Perspectives on Leadership Development', *Advances in Developing Human Resources,* Vol. 9 (1), pp: 72-82

Trehan, K. and Rigg, C. (2003), 'Propositions for Incorporating a Pedagogy of Complexity, Emotion and Power in HRD' in Lee, M. (Ed) *HRD in a Complex World,* London: Routledge, pp. 204-217

Trehan, K., Rigg, C. and Stewart, J. (2006), 'Critical Human Resource Development – Editorial', *International Journal of Training and Development,* Vol. 10 (1), pp: 2-3

Trehan, K., Rigg, C. and Stewart, J. (2007), 'Going Beyond a Critical Turn: Hypocrisies and Contradictions' in Rigg, C., Stewart, J. and Trehan, K. (Eds.), *Critical Human Resource Development: Beyond Orthodoxy*. Prentice Hall-Financial Times: England, pp. 239-249

Trice, H. M. and Beyer, J. M. (1993), *The Cultures of Work Organisations,* Prentice Hall: Turkle

Turner, J., Mavin, S. and Minocha, S. (2006), 'We will Teach you the Steps but you will Never Learn to Dance', *The Learning Organisation,* Vol. 13 (4), pp: 398-412

Valentin, C. (2003), 'How can I Teach Critical management in this Place? Contradictions and Compromises in the Multi-Cultural Masters Programme in HRD: A Study of Work in Progress: *Proceedings of the Third International Critical Management Studies Conference,* Lancaster University, Lancaster URL <http://www.mngt.waikato.ac.nz/ejrot/cmsconference/2003/proceedings/criticalturn/Valentin.pdf> Accessed: [February 2009]

Valentin, C. (2006), 'Researching Human Resource Development: Emergence of a Critical Approach to HRD Enquiry', *International Journal of Training and Development,* Vol. 10 (1), pp: 17-29

Van der Krogt, F. J. (1998), 'Learning Network Theory: The Tension between Learning Systems and Work Systems in Organisations', *Human Resource Development Quarterly,* 9 (2), pp: 157-177

Vince, R. (2001), 'Power and Emotion in Organisational Learning', *Human Relations,* Vol. 54 (10), pp: 1325 – 1351

Vince, R. and Booth, C. (1996) 'Equalities and organizational design', *Paper Presented at the International Research Symposium on Equality and Diversity,* Birmingham

Vinten, G. (1994), 'Participant Observation: A Model for Organisational Investigation', Journal of Managerial Psychology, Vol. 9, (2), pp: 30-38

Virakul, B. (1998), 'HRD, Equality and Reality', *Human Resource Development International,* Vol. 1 (3), pp: 263-265

Walton, J. (1999), *Strategic Human Resource Development,* Prentice Hall-Financial Times: England

Watkins, K. E. and Marsick, V. J. (1995), 'Toward a Theory of Informal and Incidental Learning in Organisations', *International Journal of Lifelong Learning,* Vol. 11 (2), pp. 287-300

Weick, K. E. (1985), 'Systematic Observational Methods' in Lindzey, G. and Aronson, E. (Eds.), *The Handbook of Social Psychology* (Third edition), Random House: NY

Weick, K. E. (1999), 'Theory Construction as Disciplined Reflexivity: Tradeoffs in the 90s', *Academy of Management Review,* Vol. 24. (4), pp: 797–810

Weir, D. (2003), 'Human Resource Development in the Arab Middle East: A Fourth Paradigm' in Lee, M. (Ed) *HRD in a Complex World – Routledge Studies in Human Resource Development,* Routledge: London, pp: 69-82

Wenger, E. (1998), *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity,* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge MA

Wetherell, M. (2001), 'Debates in Discourse Research' in Wetherall, M., Taylor, S. and Yates, S. J. (Eds.), *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader,* Sage: Thousand Oaks, pp: 380-399

Wilson, P. J. (2005), 'Human Resource Development' in Wilson, P. J. (Ed) *Human Resource Development: Learning & Training for Individuals & Organisations* (2nd Edition), Kogan Page: London, pp: 3-25

Woerkom, M. (2004), 'The Concept of Critical Reflection and its Implications for Human Resource Development', *Advances in Developing Human Resources,* Vol. 6 (2), pp: 178-192

World Bank Reports (2008), URL <www.worldbank.org>, Search: Literacy Rates. Accessed: [February 2009]

Yang, B. (2004), 'Can Adult Learning Theory Provide a Foundation for Human Resource Development?', *Advances in Developing Human Resources,* Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 129-145

Yin, R. K. (2003), *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Third Edition, Sage: California

Zhu, M. (1998), 'Human Resource Development in China during the Transition to a New Economic System', *Asian Pacific Journal of Human Resources,* Vol. 35 (3), pp: 19-44

Appendix A: Interviewing Guide / Questions Used

Date:
Interview number:
Interview language:
Audio Taped:
Gender:
Designation:
Education:

Interviewer = I, Respondent = R

Good Morning – My name is Muhammad Athar Siddiqui and I will be interviewing you today.

Interview Brief

This interview is for PHD research on equality and relationships in HRD/learning in this organisation. The focus of this interview is on the system and processes of HRD at this workplace, how concepts are disseminated, and what kind of HRD interventions are used, how you use those concepts and what is their impact? Specifically, the interest of research is in understanding contextual factors influencing learning relationships – whether they encourage or discourage participation and equality.

Statement of Confidentiality

I assure you that this interview is confidential and will not be used for any purpose other than my own PHD research. If you do not wish to carry on this interview at any point or stop audio taping or part of it, please feel free to choose so.

- First of all, thank you for agreeing to participate in my research. Tell me about yourself, your background, education and association with this organisation. (O)

- How do you see the time you have been with EduDev? Take me through an overview of your experience here and your thoughts about this place. (O)

- Coming to the Human Resource Development or HRD function of this organisation, who is responsible for carrying out HRD activities in the organisation and how well placed is the system? (O)

- What is the philosophy of HRD/learning here? What are the ways through which employees are developed in the organisation? I would appreciate if you can provide as much detail as possible and narrate your own views about these. (O)

- Are meetings and discussion forums the main methods of HRD here? You mentioned speakers coming here for interventions, what kind of resource persons are they?

- You've mentioned the introduction of learning organisation and other new concepts? How have these been incorporated and implemented in work life? What do you do with these concepts and ideologies? Are there any examples you can quote that show them in practice?

- To what level do you see the practice of equality and participatory based learning initiatives here? (O)

- How do you see your developmental graph here? How many learning events have you been to in these three years? (O)

- How have you found these trainings vis-à-vis principles of equality and participation? Can you also comment on the process of needs analysis, design, delivery and evaluation? (O)

- How active have you been in initiating learning activities here, in your team, at the organisational level etc? How much freedom of choice and access do you have? What is the nature of it? (O)

- Tell me about the context of this place? What are the contextual factors affecting participation in learning relationships here which can have either positive or negative effect? (O)

- Which one of these complex problems are the most important ones? Can you analyse the situation in terms of say, whether social class is a bigger issue or language division?

- How much of what you have just explained is societal and cultural rather than EduDev specific?

- You mentioned that things looked promising at one stage. What happened after that and why did it look promising then and not now?

- You said that the right people are not involved; they do not take advantage of diversity in learning? Can you narrate any personal experience to explain your point or any other examples?

- How do you see your emotional self here? How emotionally learned do you feel? (O) Tell me a bit more about awareness things that you mentioned. For example, what kind of feelings are these and what is their effect on learning relationships or with members of the organisation?

- What do you mean by withdrawal from learning activities? Give me an example.

- The Managing Director of this place is a public figure. The outside world knows her as a role model. Your opinion is that she is protecting the problems of EduDev which has a negative effect on employees, their learning and careers. Can you please tell me more about these negative effects and the situation?

- How do you see the future of HRD and work at this place? Your own role; what are your hopes/expectations? (O)

Thank you once more for giving the time. I reassure you of the confidentiality and anonymity of this interview.

(O) indicates originally planned questions.

Appendix B: Interview Recording Details

Interviewee No.	Male (M) /Female (F)	Programme Unit (PU) / Support Unit (SU); Key Informant (KI)	Audio Tapped (AT) / Penned (P) / Unrecorded (U)
1	M	PU, Team	AT
2	F	PU, Prg Mgr	AT
3	M	PU, Team	P
4	M	SU, PSDU	AT
5	M	PU, Prg Mgr; KI	AT
6	F	PU, Team	AT
7	M	PU, A. Mgr	AT
8	F	SU, Mktg.	AT
9	M	PU, Team	AT
10	F	PU, Team	P
11	F	PU, Team	AT
12	M	SU, Finance	P
13	F	PU, Team	U
14	M	PU, Team	AT
15	M	Director Operations; KI	AT
16	M	SU, Admin/HR	AT
17	F	PU, Team	AT
18	M	SU, Research/M&E	AT
19	M	PU, Team	P
20	F	PU, Prj Mgr	U
21	M	PU, Prg Mgr; KI	P
22	F	SU, Mgr HRM	AT
23	M	PU, Team	AT
24	F	SU, PSDU Head; KI	AT
25	F	PU, Team	P
26	M	PU, Team	AT
27	M	PU, Team	P
28	M	SU, IT	AT
29	F	PU ,Team	P
30	M	PU, Team	P
31	F	SU, Admin/HRM	U
32	M	SU, M&E	AT
33	M	PU, Team	AT
34	M	PU, Team, Discarded	AT
35	F	SU, Mktg.	AT
36	M	PU, A. Mgr; KI	U

37	F	PU, Team	AT
38	M	PU, Prg Mgr	P
39	F	SU, PSDU/Admin.	AT
40	M	SU, M&E/Quality	P
41	F	PU, A. Mgr	AT
42	M	SU, Finance	AT
43	M	PU, Team	AT
44	F	SU, M&E/IT	U
45	F	SU, Finance	AT
46	M	PU, Team	AT
47	M	PU, Team	AT
48	M	PU, Prj Mgr	P
49	F	SU, PSDU/HRM	AT
50	M	PU, Team	AT