

## Human Resource Function in the Strategy Process: A Case for Convergence

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The future of human resource management (HRM) as a discipline and a profession is closely linked to the role played by the HR function in the organisational strategy process. Though the debate on HRM and HR function continues, some important issues have not been given the adequate attention they deserve. First, the credibility of management idea is partly determined by its diffusion across the world; such credibility will be enhanced if the idea is viewed to be applicable in various contexts. This issue led to raise the first research question: (a) to what extent does HR function plays a significant role in the organizational strategy process in Sri Lankan companies? The second issue pertains to how (if at all) modern approaches associated to HRM manage to find their way to Sri Lanka. Here, the debate on convergence versus divergence in management practices and the role of Multinational Companies (MNCs) and other drivers of globalisation are explored. Thus, (b) to what extent MNCs and other drivers of globalization can be attributed to play a part in the convergence of HRM practices? The research is also guided by four hypotheses. The answers to the two questions were sought from a sample of 78 HR managers in three categories of Sri Lankan manufacturing companies.

The findings of the investigation led to argue that the transfer of HRM practices and philosophies cannot be solely attributed to MNCs and other drivers of globalization such as efficient communication systems, information technology, ISO standards, and international and professional institutions. The strength of the current local management practices and cohesion of institutions in Sri Lanka, which is arguably due to the colonial legacy and the beginning of unequal interactions with the West, have also played a major role.

Key Words: Colonial legacy; Human resource management; Multi national companies.

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