



**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA  
COMMONWEALTH EXECUTIVE MASTER OF BUSINESS/PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATION  
FINAL EXAMINATION – 2012/13  
MCP 1603 – HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT  
DURATION: THREE (03) HOURS**

**Date: 04.08.2013**

**Time: 9.30 am – 12.30 pm**

**Answer Question Number ONE (01) from Part A and any THREE (03) Questions from Part B**

**Part A**

01. As David Guest, introducing his renowned paper titled “Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations” says:

*“...The term Human Resource Management is not new, but it is now very much in fashion. Whether it is passing fad or a lasting change in emphasis depends on a number of factors. There include: the persistence of the pressures which have given rise to the interest in human resource management; the distinctness of human resource management compared with established forms of personnel management; the utility and validity of any underlying ‘theory’; evidence of the success of human resource management; and its relevance to differing cultural contexts. The aims of this paper are to explore human resource management within these dimensions, to present a theoretical framework within which the approach can be analysed and to relate it in particular to industrial relations (Guest, 1987:503)”.*

This question relates to the paper: Guest D.E.(1987) Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations in *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 24, No.5, 503-521pp. which you are already familiar with.

Answer the following questions, drawing on your understanding of the paper.

- a) According to Guest (1987) what were some of the key factors that prompted to a change in managerial practices from Industrial Relations (IR) to Human Resource Management (HRM)?
- b) Outline the four *theoretical* goals of HRM as identified by Guest (1987) and assess the extent to which they have materialized in *practice*.
- c) What do you consider to be the key differences between a HRM approach and an IR approach?

- d) Compare the validity of *unitarist* and *pluralist* perspectives on the employment relationship. Which of these perspectives do you think is most appropriate?
- e) How relevant do you think HRM is to Sri Lanka given the present socio-economic context?

(8 x 5 = 40 Marks)

### Part B

02. "... of the various early attempts to explore the emerging impact of workplace change and HRM on the changing roles of personnel managers, one of the most useful approaches was outlined by John Storey. Drawing on case-based research conducted during 1986–88, he proposed a new typology that differentiated four personnel roles on the basis of two bi-polar dimensions: *intervention* versus *non-intervention* and *strategy* versus *tactics* (Caldwell, 2003)".

Identify the four (04) roles of personnel managers as proposed by Storey and briefly describe each. Now, more than two decades later, do you envisage any significant changes in the nature of these four personnel roles? Explain your answer giving examples from local work settings.

(20 Marks)

03. "Performance Appraisal may sometimes cause serious moral damage among employees, leading to workplace disruption, soured relationships and productivity declines. On the other hand, organizations must have a process by which rewards – which are not an unlimited resource – may be openly and fairly distributed to those most deserving on the basis of merit, efforts and results. There is a crucial need for remunerative justice in organizations. Performance Appraisal, irrespective of its practical flows is the only process available to help achieve fair, decent and consistent reward outcomes".

Critically analyze the above statement drawing in practical examples from contemporary work organizations.

(20 Marks)

04. "Interviewing is an important feature of any work organization in that it serves a variety of organizational purposes ranging from selection to performance appraisal to termination of employees. However, there are certain factors that work to undermine the usefulness of interviews in organizations".

Elaborate the above statement highlighting the factors that work to undermine the usefulness of interviews in organizations.

(20 Marks)

05. "Training and Developing employees are a fashionable feature in the modern corporate world. However, sometimes the participants of such programmes are not as enthusiastic about them as the designers. This may be a result of focusing these programmes at the organizational and occupational levels rather than at the individual level".

Critically analyze this statement drawing on your own experiences of 'training and developing employees' as happens in the modern corporate world.

(20 marks)

06. "Recruiting a diverse workforce is becoming increasingly important for the continued existence and growth of business organizations, particularly in the face of diverse and dynamic socio- economic, political and demographic trends and patterns that are fast emerging in the global business environment. ...whether it is single parents, older workers or minorities what is important is to understand the special needs of these groups of workers and to create policies, practices and work environments they can work in safely and productively".

Do you agree with the above statement? Why or why not? Justify your answer.

(20 marks)

07. "The modern individual family argues Engels, is founded on the open or concealed domestic slavery of the wife and the first condition for the liberation of the wife is to bring the whole female sex back into public industry. (1972:137-38). In Engel's view, the emancipation of women will only be possible when women can take part in production in a large, social scale, and domestic work no longer claims but an insignificant amount of her time. This has become possible through modern large scale industry, which does not merely permit the employment of female labour, but positively demands it (1972:221)".

Do you agree with Engel's views on women's emancipation as resulting from participation in public industry? Why or Why not? Elaborate your answer drawing examples of women's participation in public industry *and* her domestic work in the household as commonly happens in the context of a 'third world' country such as Sri Lanka.

(20 Marks)

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