**STUDY UNIT 3: JOB DESIGN**

**INTRODUCTION**

A job consists of a related set of tasks that are carried out by a person to fulfill a purpose. It can be regarded as a unit in an organization structure that remains unchanged whoever is in the job. A job in this sense is a fixed entity, part of a machine that can be ‘designed’ like any other part of a machine. Job design has a great influence on productivity of any organization and the level of satisfaction. Job design greatly affects how an employee feels about a job, how much authority an employee has over the work, and how much decision making the employee has on the job and how many tasks the employee has to complete.

**Learning Outcomes of Study Unit 3**

By the end of this topic you should be able to:

3.1 Define the concept of job design

3.2 Describe the principles of job design

3.3 Highlight the different approaches to job design

3.4 Identify different methods of job design

3.5 Explain the factors affecting job design

**3.1 Define the concept of job design**

Managers realized that job design determines their working relationship among employees themselves. Therefore, job design is defined as the process of deciding on the content of a job in terms of its duties and responsibilities, on the methods to be used in carrying out the job, in terms of techniques, systems, procedures and on the relationships that should exist between the job holder and his superiors, subordinates and colleagues.

**BOX 3.1: The two important goals of job design are:**

(1) To meet the organizational requirements such as higher productivity, operational efficiency, quality of products and services.

(2) To satisfy the needs of the individual employees like interests challenge achievement and accomplishments. Furthermore it is to integrate the need of the individual within the organizational requirements.

**3.2 Describe the principles of job design**

Robertson and Smith (1985) suggest the following five principles of job design:

● To influence skill variety, provide opportunities for people to do several tasks and combine tasks.

● To influence task identity, combine tasks and form natural work units.

● To influence task significance, form natural work units and inform people of the importance of their work.

● To influence autonomy, give people responsibility for determining their own working systems.

● To influence feedback, establish good relationships and open feedback channels.

**3.3 Highlight the different approaches to job design**

There are three important approaches to job design:-

- Engineering Approach

- Human Approach

- Job Characteristic Approach

**1. Engineering Approach** - This approach can be attributed to Federick W. Taylor, (1911) on the issue of the Task Idea. According to him “The work of every workman is fully planned out by the management at least on a day in advance and each man receives in most cases complete written instructions, describing in details the task which he is to accomplish. This task specifies not only what is to be done but how it is to be done and the exact time allowed for doing it. The principles offered by Scientific Management to job design can be seen as follows:

* Work should be scientifically studied
* Work should be arranged so that workers can be efficient
* Employees selected for work should be matched to the demands of the job
* Employees should be trained to perform the job
* Monetary compensation should be used to reward successful performance of the job.

These principles to job design seem to be quite rational and appealing because they point toward improvement in organizational performance. Specialization and routinization over a period of time results in job incumbents’ becoming experts rather quickly, leading to higher levels of output. Despite the assumed gains in efficiency, behavioral scientists have found that some job incumbents dislike specialized and routine jobs.

**2. Human Approach -**The human relations approach recognized the need to design jobs which are interesting and rewarding. Hertzberg’s research popularized the notion of enhancing need satisfaction through what is called job enrichment. One widely publicized approach to job enrichment uses what is called the job characteristics model.

According to Hertzberg there are two types of factors:

i) Motivators like achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement and growth.

ii) Hygiene Factors - Which merely maintains the employee on the job and in the organizational policies, interpersonal relations, pay and job security. This Hertzberg asserted that the job designer has to introduce hygienic factors adequately so as to reduce dissatisfaction and build motivating factors. This Hertzberg has laid emphasis on the psychological needs of employees in designing jobs.

**3. Job Characteristics Approach -** This approach was propounded by Hackman and Oldham which states that employees will work hard when they are rewarded for the work they do and when the work gives them satisfaction. Hence, they suggest that motivation, satisfaction and performance should be integrated in the job design. According to this approach, any job can be described in terms of core job dimensions which are defined as follows:

* Skill variety - The degree to which a job requires a variety of different activities so that the workers can use a number of different skills and talents.
* Task Identity - The degree to which a job requires completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work.
* Task Significance - The degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives of workers and other people.
* Autonomy - The degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out.
* Feedback - The degree to which an individual requires direct and clear information about the effectiveness of his or her performance.

This approach explains that existence of core job characteristic in a job, gives the psychological satisfaction of meaningful work to the job incumbent. The characteristics of autonomy gives the job incumbent a feeling of personnel responsibility for the result and the characteristics of feedback from job which leads to psychological state of knowledge about their own performance of the job incumbent. The core job dimensions can be combined into a single predictive index called the motivating potential score. Jobs that are high on motivating potentials must be high and lead to meaningful work and they must be high both in autonomy and feedback.

**3.4 Job Design Methods**

This is a scientifically structured job design which motivates the employees for higher efficiency, productivity and generates job satisfaction than the one designed on the basis of specification which should be introduced in job design so that the needs of the employees for accomplishment, recognition, psychological growth can be satisfied. Personnel departments use a variety of methods to improve job rotation. Job Enlargement and Job enrichment

**1. Job Rotation**

It also comprises of movement of employees from one job to another in order to reduce monotony by increasing variety. This is a form of accelerated experience to the normal working situation aimed at developing existing knowledge and skills or acquiring new experiences.

Job rotation on its own, do not have a prolonged motivational effect on the job holder but the mere fact of doing something new often times exact a worker especially that which is dynamic, this allows the worker to be more meticulous.

However, frequent job rotations are not advisable in view of their negative impact on the organization and the employee. Nevertheless, job rotation may prove to be useful to managers in that it helps managers to become generalists through exposure to several different operations.

**2. Job Enlargement** which means combining previously fragmented tasks into one job, again to increase the variety and meaning of repetitive work.

When a job is enlarged, the tasks being performed by the same worker expands. Although it actually changes the pace of work and the operation by reallocating tasks and responsibilities, job enlargement does not increase the depth of a job. Enlarged jobs require longer training period because there are more tasks to be learnt. Worker satisfaction should increase because boredom is reduced as the job scope is expanded. However, job enlargement programmes would be successful only if workers are more satisfied with jobs which have a longer scope.

**3. Job Enrichment**

This is an addition of a greater task to a job with increase in autonomy and responsibility. It involves increases in skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. This is also known as verified restructuring because it involves the inclusion of some responsibilities previously performed by a higher authority in the hierarchy of the organization, thus the employee needs additional skills to perform the enriched job. Under job enrichment there is a conscious effort to build into jobs a higher sense of challenge and achievement.

An enriched job has the following characteristics:

* It is a complete piece of work. This means that at the end of the task processes, the worker can identify a definite product emanating from his or her effort.
* It affords the employee as much variety, decision-makings, responsibility and control as much as possible in performing the task.
* It provides direct feedback through the work itself on how well the employee is performing his job.

**4. SELF-MANAGING TEAMS**

A self-managing team or autonomous work group is allocated an overall task and given discretion over how the work is done. This provides for intrinsic motivation by giving people autonomy and the means to control their work, which will include feedback information. The basis of the autonomous work group approach to job design is socio-technical systems theory, which suggests that the best results are obtained if grouping is such that workers are primarily related to each other by way of task performance and task interdependence.

A self-managing team:

● enlarges individual jobs to include a wider range of operative skills (multi-skilling);

● decides on methods of work and the planning, scheduling and control of work;

● distributes tasks itself among its members.

**5. High-performance work design,** which concentrates on setting up working groups in environments where high levels of performance are required

High-performance work design, as described by Buchanan (1987), requires the following steps:

● Management clearly defines what it needs in the form of new technology or methods of production and the results expected from its introduction.

● Multi-skilling is encouraged – that is, job demarcation lines are eliminated as far as possible and encouragement and training are provided for employees to acquire new skills.

● Equipment that can be used flexibly is selected and is laid out to allow freedom of movement and vision.

**3.5 Explain the factors affecting job design**

The content of jobs is affected by the purpose of the organization or the organizational unit, the particular demands that achieving that purpose makes on the people involved, the structure of the organization, the processes and activities carried out in the organization, the technology of the organization, the changes that are taking place in that technology and the environment in which the organization operates. Job design has therefore to be considered within the context of organizational design, but it must also take into account the following factors:

**The process of intrinsic motivation:** The case for using job design techniques is based on the premise that effective performance and genuine satisfaction in work follow mainly from the intrinsic content of the job. This is related to the fundamental concept that people are motivated when they are provided with the means to achieve their goals. Work provides the means to earn money, which as an extrinsic reward satisfies basic needs and is instrumental in providing ways of satisfying higher-level needs. But work also provides intrinsic rewards, which are under the direct control of the worker.

**Characteristics of task structure:** Job design requires the assembly of a number of tasks into a job or a group of jobs. An individual may carry out one main task, which consists of a number of interrelated elements or functions. Or task functions may be allocated to a team working closely together in a manufacturing ‘cell’ or customer service unit, or strung along an assembly line. In more complex jobs, individuals may carry out a variety of connected tasks, each with a number of functions, or these tasks may be allocated to a team of workers or divided between them. In the latter case, the tasks may require a variety of skills, which have to be possessed by all members of the team (multi-skilling) in order to work flexibly.

**Complexity in a job** may be a reflection of the number and variety of tasks to be carried out, the different skills or competences to be used, the range and scope of the decisions that have to be made, or the difficulty of predicting the outcome of decisions.

The internal structure of each task consists of three elements: planning (deciding on the course of action, its timing and the resources required), executing (carrying out the plan), and controlling (monitoring performance and progress and taking corrective action when required). A completely integrated job includes all these elements for each of the tasks involved. The worker, or group of workers, having been given objectives in terms of output, quality and cost targets, decides on how the work is to be done, assembles the resources, performs the work, and monitors output, quality and cost standards. Responsibility in a job is measured by the amount of authority someone has to do all these things.