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[Field Research]

# A Case Study on Position Descriptions for the Testing Department at CESC Limited

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The study is primarily aimed at framing "Position Descriptions" for some key positions in the executive cadre of the testing department of CESC Limited.

**Research design, data, and methodology** – The questionnaire, interview, and observation methods have been used for the purpose of data collection. The position descriptions are validated by superiors belonging to the respective departments.

**Results** – It has been found that there is overlapping of job duties and job responsibilities in the department. This overlapping is quite alarming for the organization and may even become a hurdle in the path of its progress. It can be seen as a classic case of de-layering.

**Conclusions** – The study concludes that good communication along with interpersonal and negotiation skills are absolutely essential to facilitate the performance of the day-to-day duties of a job, including handling the union, solving IR related issues, development of the subordinates, job setting, distribution and allocation, etc. Position descriptions will help in the alignment of the employee direction, and can be a useful tool to aid the communication between management and employees.

**Keywords:** Position Description, Performance Appraisal, PMS, KRA, Counseling, Negotiation.

**JEL Classifications:** M00, M1, M1, M00, M1, K00.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. What is a position description?

The Position Description - commonly referred to as the PD - briefly describes the key or major duties and responsibilities of

a position or a number of positions. The primary use of PDs is for classification and pay purposes. However, a PD also serves as the basis for preparing an employee's performance plan/objectives, preparing a formal training plan, or reviewing and evaluating employees' current or prior work experience.

### 1.2. Why are Position Descriptions important?

A. Purpose of position description for human resources department:

#### 1. Recruitment and Selection:

- As a mechanism for recruitment (determining qualifications)
- Recruit for vacancies
- Counsel people on career opportunities
- Provide guidelines for the recruitment process;

#### 2. Training and development:

- For advising on employee training and development
- Identify training requirements;

#### 3. Performance Appraisal:

- For establishing and updating performance standards
- Establish performance requirements
- Identify a performance standard of work that can be measured in terms of quality, quantity, time and cost;

#### 4. Human resource planning:

- For reorganization/realignment/reductions in force planning.
- For succession planning or organizational development (for example, what additional tasks can be applied for the growth of the organization as a whole?).

#### 5. People management:

- Obtain mutual agreement between supervisors and subordinates with regards to the functions, job content and the performance standard attached to a specific post.
- For assigning jobs.

#### 6. Compensation:

Position description can be used in compensation to identi-

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fy or determine:

- Job factors of compensation.
- Work environment (e.g., hazards; attention; physical effort) etc

### 1.3. Problems related to position description

Position Description is a valuable tool for performing human resources management functions. Nevertheless, several problems are frequently associated with position description. It includes the following problems:

1. Employee position descriptions become outdated as soon as you write them in a fast-paced, changing, customer-driven work environment. They must be constantly updated as job duties or job specifications change. Especially, if the goals and job accomplishments are tied to salary or bonus, you must take a look at where the employee is investing his time. If the employee position descriptions provide a wrong picture, change the employee position descriptions.
2. Employee position descriptions that sit unused in a drawer are a waste of time; they must be an integral part in the hiring process. Use employee position descriptions to support for the position and to trace the parameters of the skills and abilities you seek for the position. In hiring, well-written employee position descriptions can help you make good hiring decisions.
3. If they are poorly written, using vague rather than specific terms, they will provide little guidance to the manager or supervisor.
4. Make certain employee position descriptions have enough flexibility so individuals can "work outside of the box." They often limit the scope of activities of incumbents, reducing organizational flexibility. Employee position descriptions must be flexible so that employees are comfortable cross-training, helping another team member accomplish a task, and confident they can make appropriate decisions to serve their customers. You want people who are comfortable taking reasonable chances and stretching their limits. You don't want to encourage people to think, "That's not my job."

## 2. Literature Review

David et al. (2013), Six of the original dimensions of extreme jobs, identified in commercial settings, apply to hospital management: long hours, unpredictable work patterns, tight deadlines with fast pace, broad responsibility, "24/7 availability", mentoring and coaching. Six healthcare-specific dimensions were identified: making life or death decisions, conflicting priorities, being re-

quired to do more with fewer resources, responding to regulatory bodies, the need to involve many people before introducing improvements, fighting a negative climate.

Pennell (2010), Traditionally, job descriptions have been constructed with a very narrow focus and could be construed to limit the ability to provide various opportunities for growth, particularly in a unionized environment.

Dikkers et al. (2010), Analyses revealed that proactive personality was associated with an increase in engagement 18 months later. Moreover, proactive employees perceiving high social support reported the highest levels of engagement over time.

Farajpahlou & Danesh (2009), It was found that in Iran information sciences librarians require assistance from computer experts, since the IT training programme on offer does not meet the required standard. This has resulted in a reduced ability to perform their duties adequately, prompting the proposed survey for the purpose of producing a revised job description.

Gan & Kleiner (2005), A job description can best be thought of as a blue print of the position. It outlines the essential duties and responsibilities that are expected of the employee and the basic purpose of the work the employee is expected to perform. It also defines account ability in an organization, which helps to prevent overlap of duties and assigns task responsibility.

Friday & Friday (2003), The study revealed that there are differences with respect to job satisfaction and the intrinsic motivation racioethnically-diverse individuals derive from their jobs.

Michalska (2002), Indicates that a precise job description and its implementation in a job position linked to the strategic goals of an organization make the structure clear and, consequently, efficient.

Baruch & Lessem (1995), Suggests a different concept for such areas based on the idea that managerial roles can be analyzed in terms of managerial styles or types. The spectral management theory is such an approach. Presents three case studies; in the first two a traditional job analysis was performed successfully whereas the third case exemplifies the new approach and its outcomes for managerial development and effective performance.

Campbell (1989), Jobanalysis is the common basis for designing a training course or programme, preparing performance tests, writing position (job) descriptions, identifying performance appraisal criteria, and job restructuring. Its other applications in human resource development include career counseling and wage and salary administration. Job analysis answers the questions of what tasks, performed in what manner, make up a job. Outputs of this analytical study include: (a) a list of the job tasks; (b) details of how each task is performed; (c) statements describing the responsibility, job knowledge, mental application, and dexterity, as well as accuracy required; and (d) a list of the equipment, materials, and supplies used to perform the job. Various techniques for conducting a job analysis have been used.

Mills (1973), Although job content has very wide repercussions for the personnel area, job design is frequently left by default to the technical and engineering specialists, who seek to make their work system function effectively in production rather than human terms.

### 3. Research Methodology

The **objective** of the paper is "To prepare the Position Description of the testing department at CESC Limited."

The **methodology** used in preparing the position descriptions was:

Research Design: Descriptive Research design has been used, in which; Questionnaire Method, Personal Interview Method and Observational Method has been adopted.

Data Collection: The data is collected from Primary sources only.

Data Validation: The data is validated by responsible officers of Testing Department.

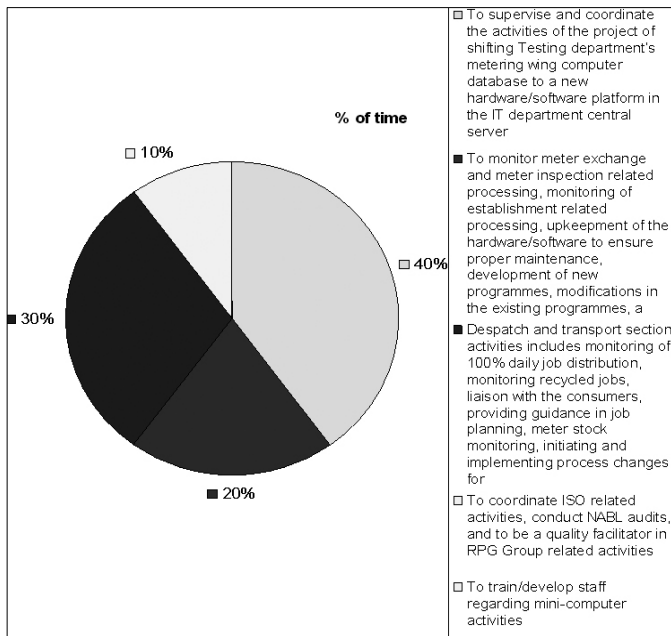
### 4. Data Analysis and its Interpretation

MS-Excel is used as a technique to analyze the findings of the data collected through Questionnaire method.

#### 4.1. Testing Department

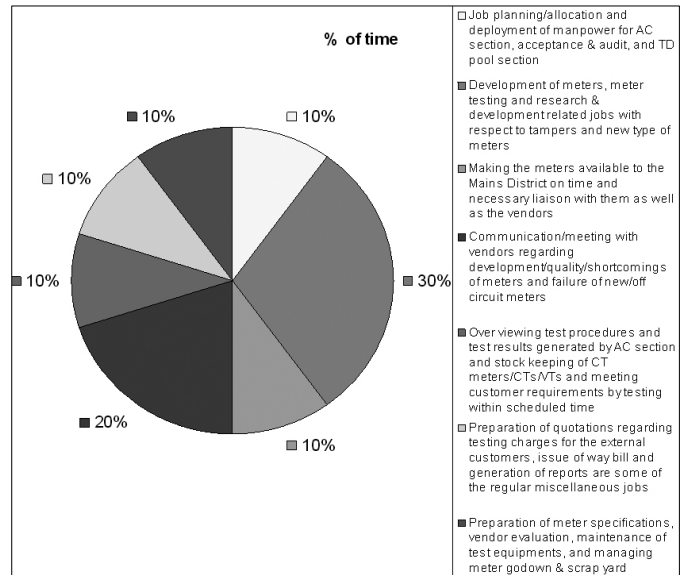
##### 4.1.1. Metering Division

##### Sr. Deputy Manager – Testing Department



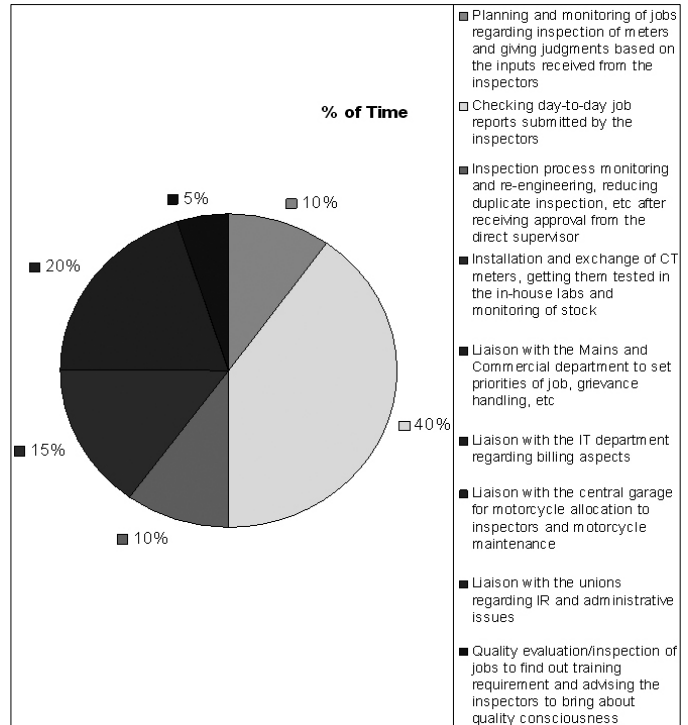
<Figure 1> Contains duties performed by the Sr. Deputy Manager (Testing Department) and the percentage of time allotted to each duty.

##### Deputy Manager – Testing Department



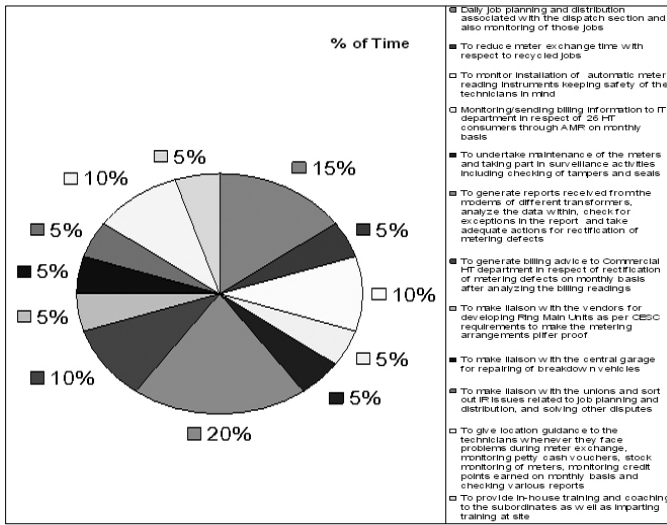
<Figure 2> Contains duties performed by the Deputy Manager (Testing Department) and the percentage of time allotted to each duty.

##### Deputy Manager – Testing Department



<Figure 3> Contains duties performed by the Deputy Manager (Testing Department) and the percentage of time allotted to each duty.

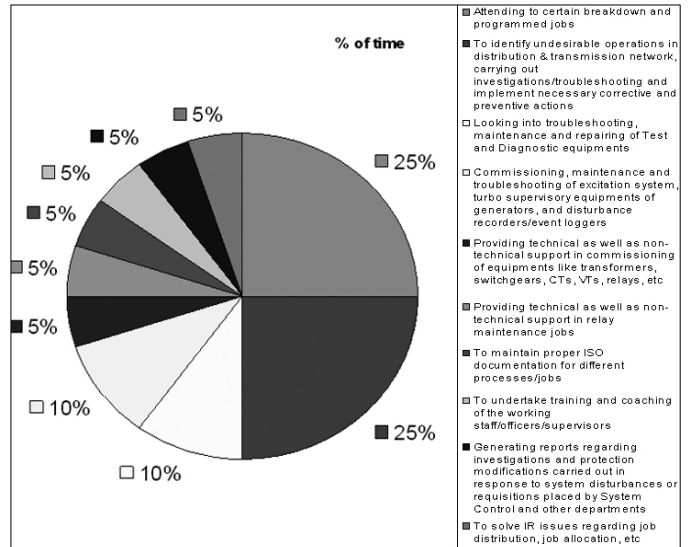
Assistant Manager – Testing Department



<Figure 4> Contains duties performed by the Deputy Manager (Testing Department) and the percentage of time allotted to each duty.

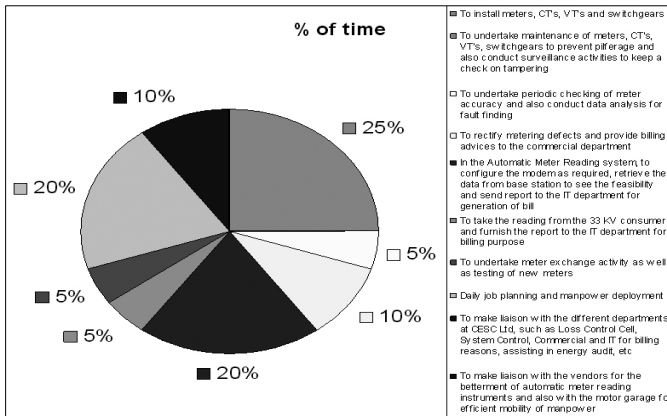
4.1.2. Testing & Commissioning Division

Deputy Manager – Testing Department



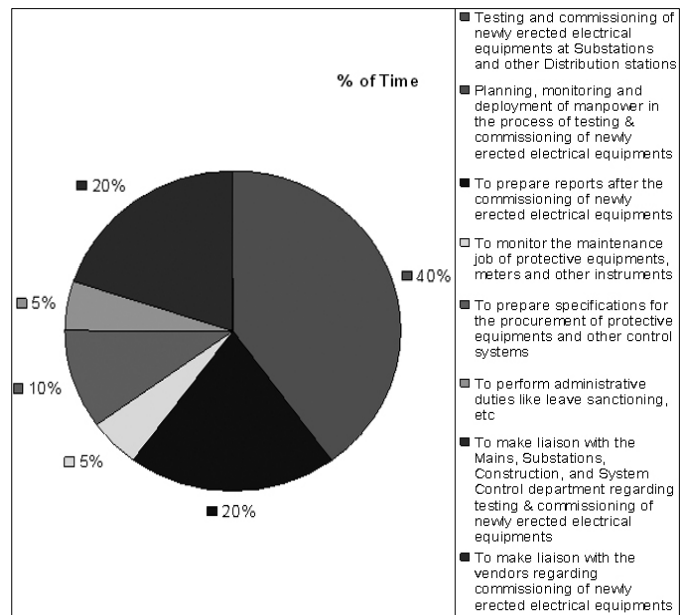
<Figure 7> Contains duties performed by the Deputy Manager (Testing Department) and the percentage of time allotted to each duty.

Sr. Engineer – Testing Department



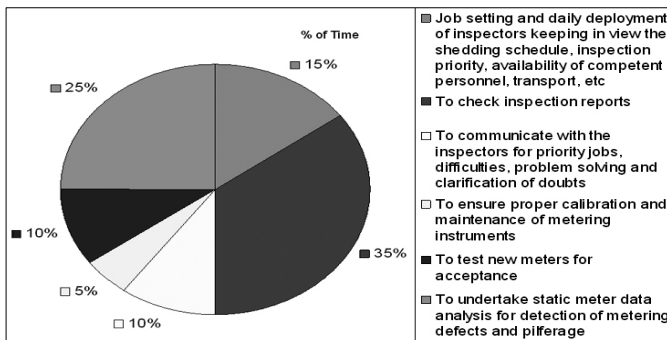
<Figure 5> Contains duties performed by the Sr. Engineer (Testing Department) and the percentage of time allotted to each duty.

Deputy Manager – Testing Department



<Figure 8> Contains duties performed by the Deputy Manager (Testing Department) and the percentage of time allotted to each duty.

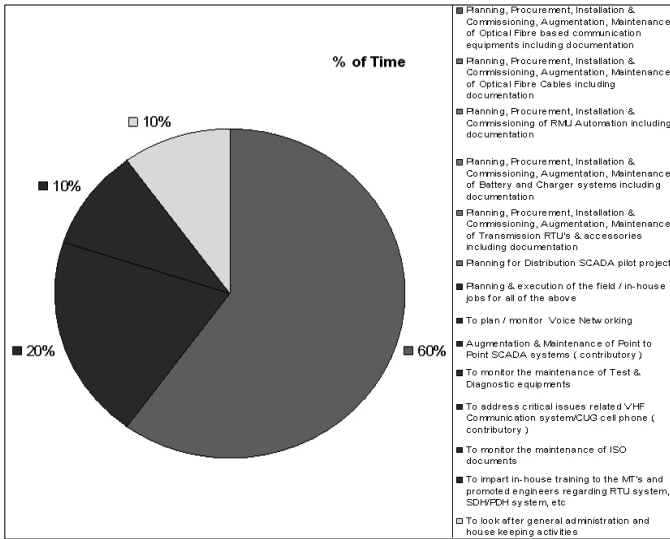
Engineer – Testing Department



<Figure 6> Contains duties performed by the Engineer (Testing Department) and the percentage of time allotted to each duty.

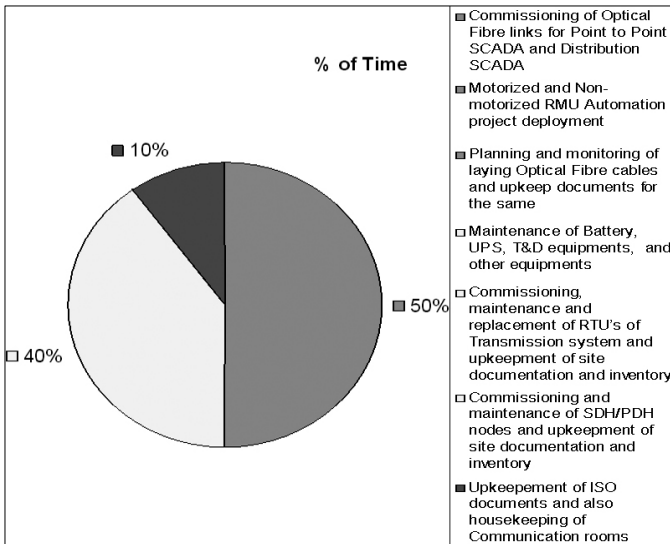
4.1.3. Distribution Automation Division

Sr. Deputy Manager – Testing Department



<Figure 9> Contains duties performed by the Sr. Deputy Manager (Testing Department) and the percentage of time allotted to each duty.

Engineer – Testing Department



<Figure 10> Contains duties performed by the Engineer (Testing Department) and the percentage of time allotted to each duty.

5. Data Interpretations

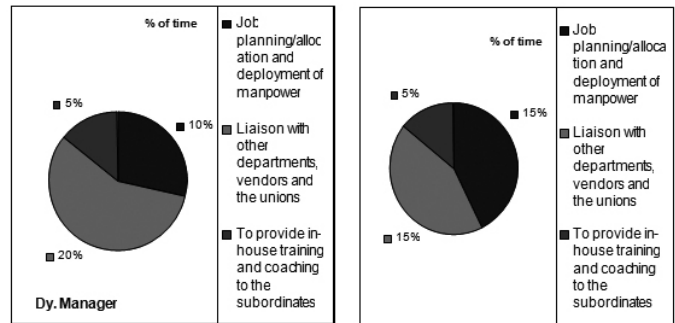
CESC Limited is a large organization and to firmly operate this big organization everything should be pre-planned and effectively executed. People work in this organization because of its name and its value in the market. CESC Ltd. has a big name in the Power Sector in India.

Position Description of the different departments at CESC Limited will play a crucial role in the overall development of the organization. After analyzing the graphs obtained by the survey and comparing the position descriptions, I got a view of the common areas of job duties and job responsibilities

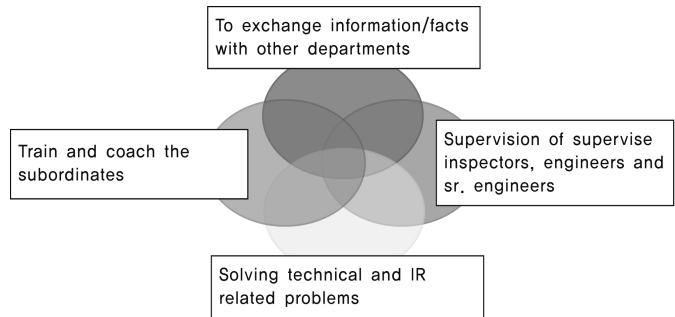
Certain interpretations are done on the basis of these data obtained:

**Department – Testing  
Division – Metering  
Job Title – Deputy Manager and Assistant Manager**

Job Duties:

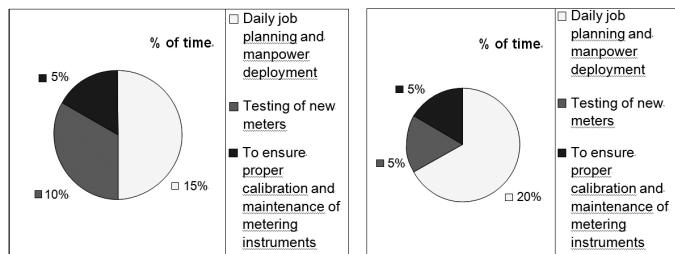


Job Responsibility:

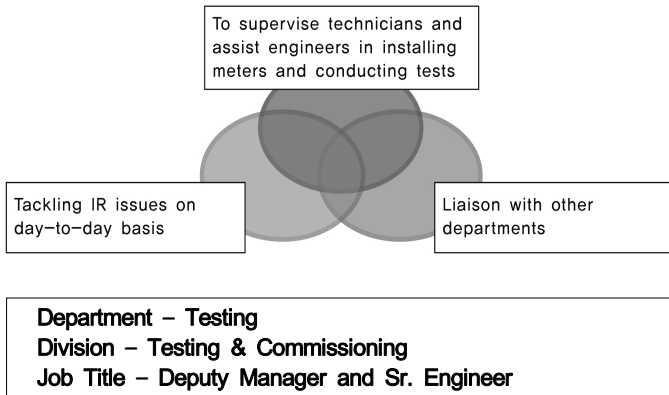


**Department – Testing  
Division – Metering  
Job Title – Sr. Engineer and Engineer**

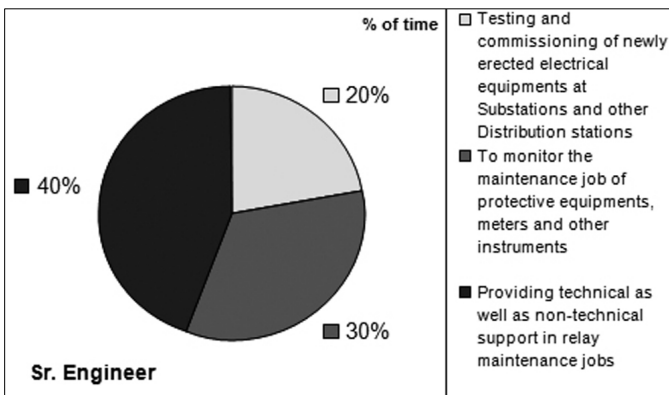
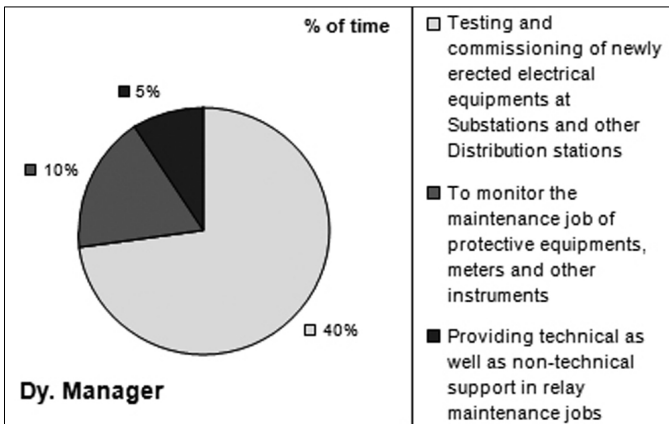
Job Duties:



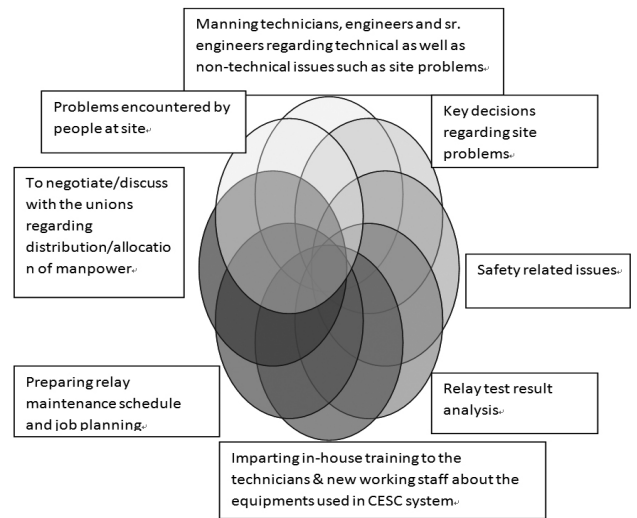
Job Responsibility:



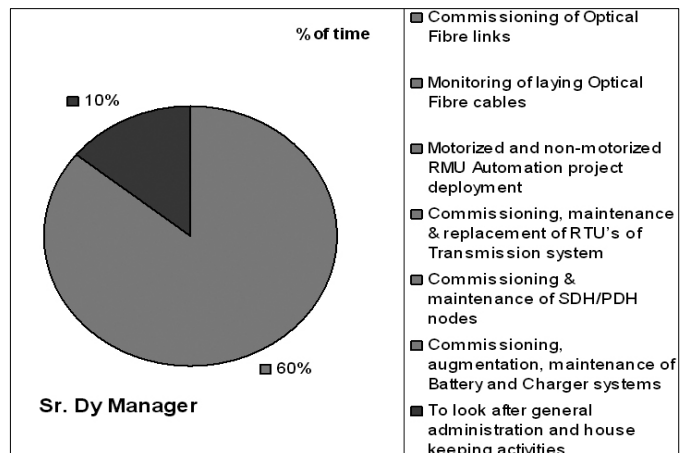
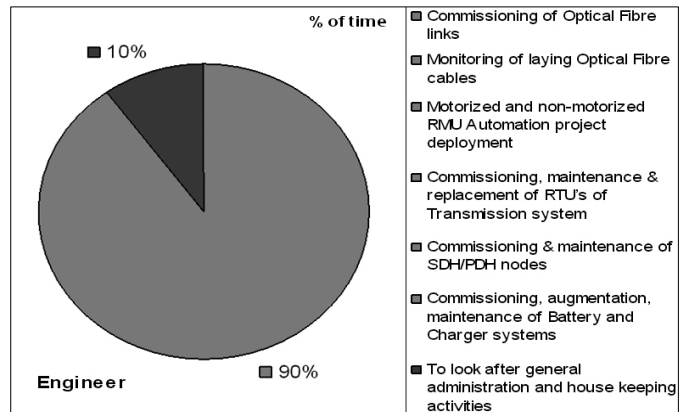
Job Duties:



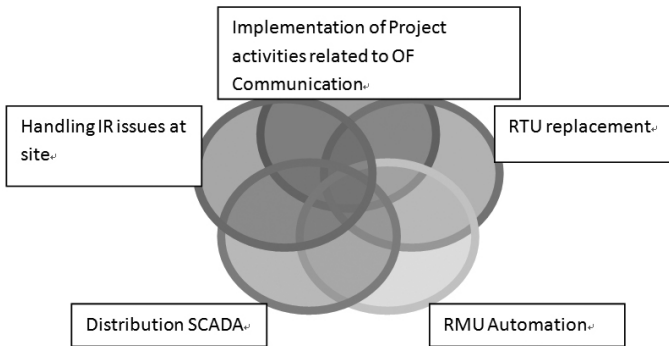
Job Responsibility:



Job Duties:



Job Responsibility:



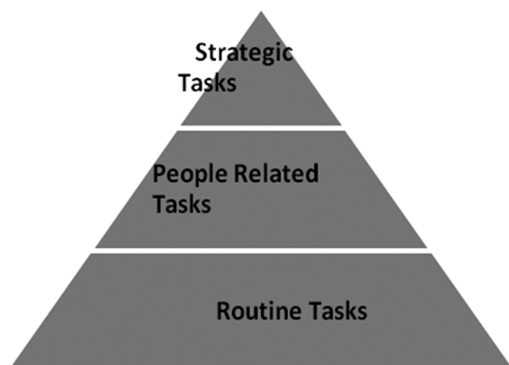
From the above graphical representations, it is evident that there is overlapping of job duties and job responsibilities. It can be seen as a classic case of de-layering. Since the hierarchy is tall, it causes overlapping of job duties and job responsibilities. This overlapping is quite alarming for the organization and may even become a hurdle in the path ahead.

Therefore, adequate measures should be taken towards de-layering the hierarchy and hence prevent such overlapping of job duties and job responsibilities.

## 6. Findings & Discussions

CESC Limited being an old and established company has a well laid management system. In order to maintain its effectiveness throughout the organization, Human Resource is given prime importance. Here is where Position Descriptions could step in and play a vital role.

Following are the key findings which have come out through the study: In the **Testing Department**, good communication, interpersonal and negotiation skills are absolutely necessary for dealing with the union, solving IR related issues, development of subordinate, job setting, distribution and allocation, etc.



The pyramid shows **three** major categories of tasks which are performed by the employees in Testing Department. Following is

the list of these tasks:

### Testing Department:

#### 1. Strategic Tasks:

- Initiating and implementing process changes for system improvements (Metering Division)
- To prepare budget requests catering to whole current meters (Metering Division)
- Planning for RMU automation, RTU replacement project and distribution SCADA pilot project (Distribution Automation)

#### 2. People Related Tasks:

- To provide in-house training and coaching to the subordinates
- Liaison with the unions regarding IR and administrative issues
- Ensuring customer satisfaction with respect to meter inspection

#### 3. Routine Tasks:

- Daily job planning and distribution associated with the despatch section and also monitoring of those jobs
- Arranging to attend breakdown jobs like tripping of feeders, transformers, etc (T & C)
- Adhering to the schedule of different programmed testing jobs like transformer test, switchgear test, etc (T & C)
- Checking day-to-day job reports submitted by the inspectors (Metering Division)
- Liaison with the unions regarding IR and administrative issues
- Housekeeping of communication rooms (DA)
- To make liaison with the different departments of CESC Ltd, such as Loss Control Cell, System Control, Commercial and IT for billing reasons, assisting in energy audit, etc (Metering Division)
- Meter stock monitoring (Metering Division)

Such categorization of the job duties, namely, strategic tasks, people related tasks and routine tasks would help in the alignment of employee direction and setting clear expectations for what you expect from the employees.

## 7. Conclusion & Recommendations

Developing Position Descriptions throughout the organization at its various departments will definitely benefit the organization in many ways. A position description clearly defines what you expect as an employer. As an employee, a well-written position description can help you be prepared and informed of what is expected of you. It can be a useful tool to aid in the communication between management and employees. It also helps the management in fixing compensation, identification of training needs, and establishing performance expectations.

Following points are suggested to capitalize on the utility factor of the Position Descriptions and bring about continuous improvements:

**De-layering the hierarchy** – Through my data interpretations I have been able to justify the overlapping of job duties and job responsibilities at different positions in the organization. Since the job duties and responsibilities are overlapping at many positions, it is alarming for the organization and this is a classic case of de-layering. Therefore, I would suggest de-layering the hierarchical system.

**KRA Setting** – Position Description can be regarded as a mother document while setting the KRA's for the employees. Through my pilot project, it can be observed that some of the KRA's of the employees are not quantifiable or measurable. Therefore, KRA's should be set in such a manner which could be easily measurable and help in performance appraisals.

**Forming a review committee** – Once the position descriptions have been written for all the positions across the various departments in the organization, then a review committee could be formed. This committee could consist of a representative from each department in the organization. Such a committee could meet every six months and discuss upon the major changes that could have taken place in a particular position. This would help the management to update the job duties if they change over time.

**Hybrid Positions** – Jobs, like everything else, constantly evolve. Multi-tasking is one of the ways in which a job could evolve. New hybrid positions could well crop up in the future with further specializations and multi-tasking. Thus if new positions crop up, existing position descriptions could be used as a referral document in that case.

**Mandatory meetings with HR** – After my interaction with the employees of CESC, I have noticed a gap between the HRD and other departments. Thus, these meetings could help the employees discuss their performance, training needs and succession planning, thereby bridging the widened gap.

**Cons:** People generally *hate* meetings and moreover the employees might just dump their problems to the HR people and expect that they solve them instead of actively working together as 'ONE' to solve the issues.

**Alternative:** Email is a good option if face-to-face meeting is not possible and efficient follow-up.

**Painting competition** – After visiting Testing Department, I have observed that dealing with the union on a day-to-day ba-

sis and solving other IR related issues is a primary job for most of the engineers, sr. engineers, and managers. Thus, a cordial relationship has to be maintained with the union for smooth running of the business. A painting competition could be conducted involving the children of the employees and then select the best ones out of them to put it on display boards or even company calendar.

**Pros:** This would create a family like atmosphere.

**Employee satisfaction survey** – Since bringing about process changes with respect to job setting/distribution/allocation and other areas of work may be accepted by the employees or cause dissatisfaction among them, therefore, a yearly employee satisfaction survey could be conducted to understand the problems and make continuous improvements in the process.

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