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Organizational Culture and Psychological engagement driving towards human side of management: Implications from Human Resources Management and employee empowerment research

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Abstract

During turbulent days, organizations are increasingly seen to innovate ways to manage business. One of these innovations is in the area of developing and managing human resources. Experience has shown that developing human resources often results in achieving a sustained organizational growth. Various strategies are being adopted by business organizations in this regard. One also sees a paradigm shift from an approach understood as 'welfare approach' to that of an approach commonly known as the 'empowerment approach'. This approach of employee empowerment has seen interesting outcomes and hence has been accepted almost all across the world. This paper is an empirical study of Indian industry. It highlights some unique strategies adopted for managing human resources in this industry. The efforts have paid large dividends to the company. The workforce is committed as well as efficient. The business organization has succeeded and has been able to achieve global standards. This paper makes an attempt to advocate the cause of employee empowerment and calls upon practitioners to shift their practices from that of welfare orientation to empowerment. The paper also makes an attempt to demystify the concept of employee empowerment.

Key Words: Empowerment, Ownership culture, Leadership, Global Organization.

Introduction

We are presently living in times of complex and seemingly insurmountable challenges in all the spheres of our collective lives. A whole gamut of leadership crises is evident in our organizations and business. From all areas of our society and from the world at large, we do hear about crisis of ineffective structures and relationships. The workplace has become more challenging. The workforce of today is experiencing more uncertainty and this call for business organizations to adopt different strategies to deal with newer and more challenging issues. It is needless to say that Human Resources forms major component of organizational survival. In face of all this, we are called upon to rethink and renew our relationships in our organizations and our way of developing and managing human resources. We must find ways to create together a new and positive vision of the future. We must be empowered to pursue our higher common purposes. Our future quality of life depends on our sincere efforts in attaining the set goals. Similarly, most organizations have a number of employees who believe that they are dependent on others and that their own efforts will have little impact on overall performance. In fact, almost every society has within it some minority groups who feel incapable of controlling their own destiny.

Empowerment and empowering employees changes all the equations towards better

organization growth and development. It changes the key structures of all relationships that exist...power relationship, work relationship, trust and faith relationship, delegated and shared responsibility relationship, employee-employer relationships and the very premises towards human resources development and management. The empowering policy and leadership role is to show trust, provide vision, remove performance-blocking barriers, offer freedom and encourage activities to perform without any boundaries. Indeed, the empowered organization as a whole is something, which focuses high at 'Human' and looks human resources as a prime asset of the organization.

Empowerment is a practice most organizations are looking for due to various positive benefits and advantages (Block, 1987; Caudron, 1995; Jeffery, 1995; Ann, 1996; and Argyris, 1998). Some view empowerment from the organization development point, where in the empowered employee takes the full responsibility of running and managing the organization (Kanter, 1989, 1995; Lawler, 1994). Some say that empowerment is like the emperor's new clothes.... We talk loudly about it in public, but none can actually see it when it comes to actual sharing of power, no manager likes to delegate the power (Argyris, 1998). Sometimes the issue is how to make a beginning in instituting and practicing empowerment in the organization. Empowerment itself is not an independent entity by itself. The success of the empowerment depends on various other systems. Infact, sharing power could be the main agenda in such an exercise. But other factors are equally important for empowerment to succeed.

It is clear that employee empowerment has a significant role to play in enhancing employee productivity to meet the challenges of the liberalized competitive environment. India has been facing a serious challenge in the context of liberalization, globalization and privatization. Companies cannot survive unless they cut their costs drastically to compete with other countries.

Higher levels of service and qualities need to be attained. It has also been noted that developing human resources often results in a sustained organization growth (Eichen, 1989; Argyris, 1998; and Goold, and Campbell, 2002). What needs to be assessed is how this can be undertaken, and the impact of empowerment on the individual, the organization and the nation as a whole. Thus, an enquiry is required into human resource development and management through study of various strategies and practices. Infact, empowering employees would be crucial in evolving appropriate standards, as human resource is the single most valuable resource, which when applied imaginatively can make a quantum difference.

Empowerment Defined

At this juncture, before going deeper into the concept of empowerment, it is essential to have an understanding of the concept of power. What is power? May (1972) defines power as "the ability to affect, to influence and to change other persons". Hughes (1983) defines power as the "capacity to influence the forces which affect one's life space for one's own benefit". French and Bell (1999) see the power in organizations as "the capacity to effect or affect organizational outcomes and the ability to get one's way in a social situation".

Kanter (1977), Professor at Harvard Business School, and a pioneer in the area of organizational empowerment and related work, define the concept of empowerment as "giving power to people who operate at an advantage in the organization success". She conceives of a continuum from powerless to empower and encourages organizations to help people move towards the empowered end. She was the first woman to propagate the concept of empowerment from a sociological perceptive and later in the industrial context. The origin of empowerment work can be traced to Kanter's work.

Bowen and Lawler (1992), the former an Associate Professor of Management, Arizona State University and the latter Director, the Centre for Effective Organization, University of Southern California, have done extensive work in the area of empowerment. From 1970 to 2000, they have studied this concept in US Fortune Organizations. They define empowerment in terms of four organizational ingredients: Information about the organizational performance; Rewards based on organizational performance; Knowledge that enables employees to understand and contribute to organizational performance, and Power to make decisions that influence organizational direction and performance.

Essentially, empowerment is a process wherein decision-making authority and responsibility percolates from managers to the employees at the lowest rung. It involves more complex issues than just the traditional concepts of delegation, decentralization, and participation management. In all these three, it is just the work that is redistributed in different ways. In empowerment, people are trusted and given total freedom to do their job as they deem best—rather than getting them do the boss's bidding. It also means that individuals have freedom at different levels to decide not just their own course of action, but also that of organization, which help them to gain mastery over the organizational resources, benefiting both self and the organization. Empowerment enables people make independent decisions and operates towards organizational success. Empowerment results in individual employees having the autonomy for which they are totally accountable. Ultimately, empowerment is about altering, removing or attenuating the conditions that make one feel powerless. In light of these definitions, empowerment can be conceptualized as a liberating force. It gives one freedom in all practices at workplace and enables every employee to give his innovative best for the Corporate advantage.

The Power of Empowerment

It seems serendipitous that empowerment has come to the core of organizational life at this point in time. The philosophical swing of the 1950's, the self-expression phase of the 1960's, the technical focus of 1970's, the group and quality models of the 1980's and the participative workforce of 1990's, have steadily led to the emergence of a new paradigm of empowerment. Indeed, in all these stages, the basic concern derives from the individual's drive for self-empowerment. The new paradigm tries to define what people must do or experience to develop this power in relation to organizational enhancement and growth.

It is needless to say that empowerment makes people work those extra hours (Betof, and Harwood, 1992; Lawler, and Bowen, 1995; Argyris, 1998; Yoon, 2001; and Kanter, 2003). When it comes to it, nobody does anything because it helps the organization; they do it because there is something in it for them. At least empowerment is one of those initiatives that reap benefits for the individual first whilst enhancing the organization, as employees are prepared to give that bit extra to achieve both for them and the organization. It also makes one understand one's responsibility towards corporate success. But, one thing is quite clear that empowerment has positive implications in organizational success and growth as endorsed by studies undertaken by Marjorie Reynolds, 1991; Bowen, and Lawler, 1992; Rothwell, 1993; Howard, and Welkins, 1994; Lowe, 1994; Nelson, 1994; Owen, 1994; Gates, 1995; Lorsch, 1995; Mayer, *et al* 1995; Wall, and Jackson, 1995; Kahn, 1998; and Kanter, 2003.

Characteristics of an empowered workforce culture

There is a sharp difference between organizations that have put in practice of empowerment concepts. One of the main characteristics is an empowered workforce, and evidences show that those employees differ in

traits from people working in a non-empowered organization (Caudron, 1995; Lawler, and Bowen, 1995; Chiristina, 1997; and Kanter, 2003). This is reflected in their behavior and approach towards work and workplace issues, perception and attitudes towards organization endeavour and the way they think and act. In fact, there is a significant difference in the culture and ethos followed by an empowered person.

The other visible characteristics of an empowered employee include active involvement for better organizational growth, seeks new challenges, grows-develops-learns continuously, has the feeling of self-worth, high morale and motivation, feels sense of shared responsibility, imparts trust, wants new things to be done, doesn't follow a particular mind set, desires to excel all the time, takes pleasure in others success, ethical approach, and value based behaviour.

An empowered person thrives on excitement and risk taking, generating lots of ideas, imagination, seeking freedom to do assignments and also giving freedom to others. Such a person is less egoistic and seeks information from all sides, adopts a benchmark approach, drives for perfection, works on own initiative, seeks challenges, sets exacting targets, is outward looking, likes responsibility, and above all, appreciates and express happiness on the work done by fellow employees. He is an open communicator and does not believe in double standards, and never says anything that he does not believe. He is open to criticism and works positively on it. What makes a person empowered is the continuous learning processes in all activities and at all the stages, as is endorsed by studies undertaken by Betof, and Harwood, 1992; Taylor, and Ramsey, 1993; Lawler, and Bowen, 1995; Argyris, 1998; and Yoon, 2001.

At this juncture in history, a clear understanding of the challenges in managing organizations, workforce and development of human resources is crucial for India to progress on the industrial

front. We need to develop deeper comprehensive practices in managing and enhancing human force to the standards on par with global company. The importance of developing and managing human resources therefore becomes vital as we seek to respond to these complex and acute challenges. Ultimately when the issue boils down to the very survival of the organization, the only option is to go for a total overhaul and renewal of the way of functioning. Corporate Renaissance is thus mandatory for organizational success and would be an additional driving changes force coming from within the organization.

Research Design

The focus of the study is to understand why and what makes top performing companies different. What are the innovative and unique strategies they adopted in creating an organization of global standards? It was decided to use an explorative and descriptive design, which fits into the pattern of investigation. The study explored the technical and commercial context within which the chosen firm operated in terms of environmental certainty-uncertainty, stability and resource munificence. The study also looked at the timeline set for the change process that the firm went through (if that is what occurred), and explored whether the firm was set-up to be empowered from the beginning. The mandate was also to understand what things changed early, what things changed later and how well they meshed together. The current practices of developing and managing human resources were explored and descriptions of all these practices were analyzed through appropriate questionnaires and schedules, including verbatim recording of the responses.

Research Objectives

The investigation is an empirical research work undertaken to understand how a model company can be created with innovative workplace programs and policies. It was also intended to understand the impact of such innovative practices on employee empowerment

and how such processes could change the very face of an organization and help it remain at the top of the business. An effort was made to understand all factors that contributed to empowerment—the systems, practices, policy and leadership. The study also tried to differentiate between the various human resource strategies adopted in empowering employees and how these strategies differed from other management practices. An effort was also made to see how these management practices impacted upon employee behavior.

With these core objectives, the study also attempted to understand issues like: Do we really need empowered people? Is empowerment something that can be done to someone, or is it something a person must choose? What role does the person in the top have to play in this exercise? With all these objectives, the genesis of empowerment is probed at a macro level.

Research Hypothesis [Ha]

Ha1: A good Organizational culture would shape behavior and develop positive attitudes towards organizational growth and development leading to employee empowerment;

Ha2 : Access to information about the mission, value, goals, and vision of an organization is positively related to empowerment.

Methodology

The objective of the study was to understand how the best practice companies differed in their approaches in managing and developing organization and HR, and learn more broadly about trends and challenges in the field. The Polyhydron Private Limited-PPL has adopted various innovative HR systems, which caught the attention of many researchers, scholars, and academicians. PPL was established way back in 1981 with the sole purpose of creating an organization on par with global standards, with a clean business and ethical approach. Before PPL was established, SBH (Late Suresh B Hundre, CEO and MD, not with us and expired

this May 2013) with a few of his colleagues started a group under the Hyloc banner, manufacturing a wide range of hydraulic related equipments. PPL was one of the units under the banner. Changed ideologies and bigger dreams led to an amicable parting of ways. SBH took up the responsibility of independently running Polyhydron, a small unit then. Polyhydron manufactures hydraulic valves, radial pistons, pumps, etc. The wide range of products at PPL spans an average of 1000 models. The customers are from varied places and the turnover on an average is between Rs.25-30 crores.

The techniques and methods practiced in Polyhydron have attracted the attention of several corporate CEO's, who have expressed their appreciation at different forums. In the words of **Adi Godrej**, Managing Director, Godrej, India "*It has opened my eyes in many ways to see the excellent work done by you. I am sure your company has a tremendous future ahead of it*".

Sampling Population

Table No. 1: Manpower Responses at PPL

Sl. No.	Level	Total Employees	Responded
1.	CEO	1	1
2.	Managers	7	6
3.	Engineers	6	6
4.	Software Expert	2	2
5.	Administration	9	6
6.	Supportive	4	2
7.	Highly Skilled	5	5
8.	Skilled	18	16
9.	Semi skilled	19	16
10.	Unskilled	2	0
11.	Trainee	1	1
Total		73(1)	60(1)

A total of 74 employees including top management form the total workforce in the organization, with different categories like highly skilled (HSK), skilled (SK), semiskilled (SSK) and unskilled (USK) employees, apart from the Engineers, Administrative and Managerial staff. The categorization is done on the basis of the nature of skill involved at the workplace. In fact, the CEO, who is also the MD, seven of the management cadre, six engineers with two-software experts and thirteen administrative staff, including four support staff at office level, forms one section. There are as many as forty-five grass-root employees, of whom five are highly skilled, eighteen are skilled, nineteen are semiskilled, two unskilled, and a trainee. All were included in the study, and as many as 62 employees expressed their willingness to take part in the final study, while the rest did not participate. Out of the total respondents, two could not complete the questionnaire and schedules at the final stage. Infact, they could only complete 40% of the enquiry, and thus, were not included in the study. The study results analyzed the data gathered from sixty respondents from different categories of employees. In addition to these, the CEO / MD of the organization by himself formed an important respondent.

Data Collection of Employees

An exhaustive questionnaire on empowerment in different languages was put forth. It was distributed to all employees who participated and a formal discussion with CEO / MD was done keeping in view the intended enquiry areas. Several angles of empowerment were probed and areas were identified, which were apt, valid, relevant, and put to test on a five point scale, viz: (1) Strongly agree; (2) Agree; (3) can't say; (4) Disagree; and (5) Strongly disagree.

In order to gain an understanding of the empowerment process in PPL, special attention was focused on certain areas, such as: the system of accountability within the organization, attitude development processes, mode adopted

for career planning, the open communication process adopted, decision making process, delegation and shared responsibility, ethical standards adopted, feed-back system, methods for information sharing, leadership development in all spheres, organizational transparency, management and organizational ethos, power distribution, climate of politics, degree of trust and loyalty, team working and employee participation.

The enquiry is a scientific investigation into the practical workings of the empowerment system at PPL and hence is undertaken at multiple stages. The study used three distinct methodologies and procedure, viz: a) Pre-pilot observation; b) Pilot study; and c) Final observation.

a) Pre-pilot observation

The study began with pre-pilot observation carried out through a survey over a period of 8-10 months. Observation and identification of the management practices that were thought to influence business were made, such as: communication, leadership, transparency, values, decision-making, participation, management style and ethos, organizational politic, knowledge sharing, ownership culture and the like. Initial micro level discussion with employees was held from time to time.

b) Pilot study

A pilot study on specific practices was undertaken, wherein a few enquiry areas were identified and put to test. The study pursued an in-depth research of the management practices that were pre-observed, which play a major role in enhancing or weakening a company's performance. This pilot study allowed for verifying and extending the larger survey findings. The pilot study also paved the way for further exploration of new areas and it also concentrated on certain other areas in lines with the objectives and hypotheses of the study.

c) Final observation

At final stage, while collecting actual data, an exhaustive questionnaire / schedule was administered focusing all valid areas of empowerment and the extent of such organizational practices in the growth of the company and in creating an winning workforce, *per se*. Several areas were identified and put to test. The collection and examination of data were done in three stages after informing to all the participants about the purpose of the study, and the importance of their responses. The respondents were willing participants knowing the far- reaching positive effect that such a study would have on not just the individual, but on the organization and the nation as a whole. A sense of purpose and direction was injected into every case at all the three stages of data collection.

Stage 1: In the first stage, questionnaires and schedules were drawn up after identifying the relevant empowerment angles, which were put to test on a five-point scale. This was the first stage, where individual opinions were sought on five-point scale, viz: Strongly agree (1); Agree (2); Can't Say (3); Disagree (4); and strongly disagree (5).

Stage 2: In the second stage, formal and informal observation and discussions at workplace based on the responses regarding the practices in vogue were undertaken. In fact, at this stage, each participating respondent was met individually, and questioned about his opinions and feelings regarding the empowerment system and why such a feeling had been expressed. At this stage, more emphasis was on questions like - Why such a system / practice was followed? Was it apt? What are the benefits of such practices? It was more of a fact-finding mission to know and analyze the feelings, views and opinions based on responses to the questionnaire. A series of formal and informal visits, from time to time, to each respondent was undertaken, injecting a case-by-case and opinion-by-opinion.

Stage 3: All possible ways through which information could be collected were adopted. At each stage of data collection, frequent discussions with the CEO / MD were undertaken. Based on these methods, the final discussion was held, focusing particularly on the responses elicited using the questionnaire method, and on the observations made and discussions held. Views from all the sides were pooled into a collective opinion and put through final examination. This was the last stage and extreme care was taken to ensure that all opinions, observations and details of practices collected were discussed at length and then pooled for the final test.

Analysis of the Results

The focus in present study was on the qualitative analysis of the responses and results based on case-by-case observations. Since, quality and not quantifying the results was the focus, statistical analysis has been done only where relevant. Also, statistical equations probably cannot give the true picture of empowerment practices in such case study enquiry. However, to test the hypothesis, ANOVA has been applied for obtaining the F-ratio values and significance level. As also, to understand the degree of responses in relation to organizational practices, the mean and SD value have been put-forth. The hypothesis put to test includes: A good Organizational climate would shape behavior and develop positive attitudes towards organizational growth and development leading to employee empowerment; and access to information about the mission, value, goals, and vision of an organization is positively related to empowerment.

In a theoretical mode of empowerment in the workplace, organization empowerment can have a powerful influence on individual achievements. The positive systems in an organization will make a person move to great heights. This research extends the work by specifying the content and the nature of a sense of belonging and the nature of individual achievements. One-way to view industrial and organizational

achievements is in terms of the constraints and opportunities it poses for an individual. For example, excessive bureaucratic constraints and red-tapsim inadvertently lead to passive mindsets and behavior of employees, where the sense of belonging is low (Argyris, 1998). On the other hand, a systematic cultured workplace will force the person to take great strides and motivates him to work those extra hours. There are reasons why people remain at the workplace after the scheduled time. One such factor is the sense of belonging and the positive relations that exist. A basic proposition of the hypothesis developed by this study is: Employee Empowerment results from of various coherent organizational practices conducive to creating such an environment. This hypothesis was to put to test.

The responses were on five-point scale, viz: Strongly agree-1; agree-2; can't say-3; disagree-4 and strongly disagree-5.

Table No. 02: Showing the Results of organizational culture, Workplace empowerment practices and psychological Feeling of Employees

ENQUIRY AREA	1	2	3	4	5
Human Value	68.3	30.0	0	0	1.7
Accountability	53.3	45.0	0	0	1.7
Honesty & truthfulness	81.7	16.7	0	0	1.7
Feelings of insecurity	0	3.3	10.0	61.7	25
Each is boss in himself	26.7	63.3	3.3	5.0	1.7
Most people are conservative	0	15.0	28.3	53.3	3.3
Everything is not negotiable here	5.0	33.3	13.3	46.7	1.7
I am paid just to work	3.3	50.0	1.7	35.0	10.0
There is bureaucracy	0	3.3	5.0	48.3	43.3
Common rooms are shared	11.7	56.7	6.7	23.3	1.7
I am trusted in the Organization	58.3	40.0	1.7	0	0
Some have hidden agendas	6.7	5.0	15.0	56.7	16.7
I blame others for over all failure	0	0	6.7	71.7	21.7
Top person doesn't believe me easily	1.7	6.7	10.0	73.3	8.5

Ends are more imp. than means	38.3	35.0	5.0	20.0	1.7
Management is subjective here	8.3	16.7	13.3	55.0	6.7
Management dont recognize hard work	1.7	10.0	10.0	65.0	13.3
We don't try new things because of Mgt	0	3.3	3.3	66.7	26.7
Mgt open to idea's information sharing	51.7	46.7	0	0	1.7
Management creates fear some times	0	1.7	8.3	51.7	38.3
Mgt does not share confidential matters	3.3	15.0	20.0	51.7	10.0
Management is not transparent	10.0	11.7	3.3	53.3	21.7
They have their own people	8.3	25.0	18.3	30.0	18.3
We can learn/develop continuously	6.7	1.7	1.7	53.3	36.7
Confidence/faith in team members	16.7	70.0	6.7	6.7	0
Management encourages teams	16.7	53.3	23.3	5.0	1.7
Mgt feedback is always subjective	3.3	13.3	21.7	56.7	5.0
Management has close door discussion	0	6.7	15.0	53.3	25.0
Polices shown not practiced	0	3.3	11.7	55.0	30.0
The boss is always right	3.3	21.7	8.3	58.3	8.3
People are hardly trusted	1.7	6.7	0	58.3	33.3
Some are favored over others	1.7	3.3	18.3	63.3	13.3
Decisions are objective	10.0	20.0	16.7	46.7	6.7
Some are favored while taking decision	0	3.3	20.0	63.3	13.3
I am involved in decision making	5.0	36.7	38.3	18.3	1.7
Managers spy on me	1.7	1.7	10.0	61.7	25.0
Own objectives, mission, goals	18.3	61.7	10.0	8.3	1.7
Every recognition is made public	11.7	61.7	16.7	10.0	0
I usually work to get recognition	3.3	16.7	23.3	51.7	5.0

Analysis

There were several areas identified and put to test to find the reasons for high sense of belonging of employees through empowered workplace systems. The significance of the hypothesis was put to test on different age groups, department-wise, education wise and experience wise, and how these different categories of employees view the system. As many as 40 odd different variables were put to test. When the value and respect employees received from the management in the organization was put to test, as many as 98% employees expressed that people were valued highly, 68% agreed to a great extent, followed by 30% agreeing to a moderate extent. The results also say that only one percent strongly disagreed that the value for humans is not high in the organization. This is a noteworthy observation because all the remaining practices depend on how the human resources are taken care of. Another enquiry examined the level of accountability that each one shouldered in the organization. The responses were quite noteworthy, and only one percent strongly disagreed with the system saying that each is not held accountable and is blamed for not doing work properly, whereas, as many as 53% and 45% of employees strongly and moderately agreed that the system made each one accountable for his/her own action and did not blame others for the outcome.

A look at the other practices put to test included management's trust level on each individual, which revealed that 98% were happy that they were trusted in the organization and none disagreed with this practice. The actions of employees were not cross-examined. The hidden agenda of employees and management also spoils the workplace atmosphere, which was put to test. More than 75% disagreed and felt that none had hidden agenda in the organization and every activity was transparent and open. A minimum of 15% employees could not respond to the enquiry. As many as 11% of the

employees agreed that there are individuals who have a hidden agenda.

The nature of people and their behavior at workplace was put to test to know whether people possessed conservative characteristics and whether they were honest. Nearing 56% disagreed that people were conservative and as many as 28% were not in a position to respond. 15% of respondents felt that people were conservative and said that it reflected in their actions. A sense of belonging can also be created with the philosophy of equality. As employees of all levels in the organization shared common rooms, more than 65% confirmed that there was a culture of sharing, whereas 25% disagreed. About 6% were unable to judge and didn't respond to the enquiry.

To the query whether management is considered subjective in its approach, 60% of the employees disagreed saying that the management is not subjective in its approach towards workplace issue, whereas 20% agreed and felt that management is subjective sometimes. Management also recognizes hard work of employees, as expressed by more than 75% of employees working in the organization, and as many as 65% of employees said, management is interested in ends and the means used by all in reaching organizational goals. A workforce with high productivity and motivation looks for a management with fair behavior. More than 75% of employees felt that management behavior towards each in the organization was transparent, open and visible. A small group of 21% felt that management was not transparent, whereas, three percent of employees could not respond to the enquiry. The rest responded, and the enquiry areas are presented in No 5.6 with the corresponding results.

Mean and SD results for Ha1 and Ha2

Table No 3 shows the Mean, SD and total values in relation to all the four independent variables and the enquiry areas. Each category was further sub-divided as shown in the table.

Table No. 3: Mean and SD Results

Category	N=60	Mean	SD	Age
	< 30	25	343.76	34.68
	30-39	25	330.24	49.34
	>40	10	335.00	40.94
TOTAL		60	336.60	42.11
Experience	<10	33	343.15	31.90
	>10	27	328.59	51.49
TOTAL		60	336.60	42.11
Education				
	Upto SSLC	24	340.29	40.80
	PU/BA/BSc	20	342.35	25.92
	PG/Engg/Dip	16	323.44	56.71
TOTAL		60	336.60	42.11
Department				
	Managerial	22	334.82	34.99
	Other	38	337.63	46.15
TOTAL		60	336.60	42.11

Table No 3 shows the results of Mean and SD percentage with respect to the Ha1 and Ha2 formulated. This is a very significant finding and demonstrates the strong link between assumption in the mainstream study and the values of Mean and SD results. The results with the corresponding percentage values clearly show the link between the practices and the outcomes. The mean and SD values with respective to four independent variables, viz: age, work experience, education level and employees working at various departments suggests that there is high correlation between the perception of employees, the workplace practices and employee empowerment, *per se*. The responses are likely to influence the outcomes with employee characteristics like age, work experience, education and employees working at various departments.

ANOVA results for Ha1 and Ha2:

The hypothesis was tested in relation to four independent variables in finding the level of significance and relevance of the practices. The four independent variables were examined into two categories and the results were tested in two ways, i.e. the significance level between the groups and the significance level amongst the group members, and whether group members between or within differed in perceiving the practices and the reasons for homogeneity in responses, if at all.

Table No. 04 : Showing the ANOVA Results

Category	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F-ratio	Significance level
Age					
	BG	2	1130.920	.630	.536
	WG	57	1796.045		
	Total		104636		
Experience					
	BG	1	3147.639	1.799	.185
	WG	58	1749.806		
	Total		104636		
Education					
	BG	2	1907.04	1.078	.347
	WG	57	1768.813		
	Total		104636		
Department					
	BG	1	110.285	.061	.805
	WG	58	1802.174		
	Total		104636		

Note : B/W : Between the group W/B : Within the Group

The results of the study prove that generally the groups did not differ in perceiving the practices, and there were no significant differences in the group members' thinking, as also amongst the group thinking as far as empowerment practice was concerned. Across all the respondents, the responses tended to be similar, either in agreeing or disagreeing with the organizational practices. Amongst the age level, work experience, educational standards and employees working in different departments also, the group did not differ much in perceiving the practices of employee empowerment by the management. The obtained F-ratio value for these variables, viz: .630; 1.799; 1.078; and .061 respectively proved insignificant differences in responses of the employees and organizational practices. The significant percentage values of .536; .185; .347; and .805 respectively also proved insignificant differences in the responses of different groups.

The responses give a true picture of the various practices that are instituted at PPL. What is noteworthy is the similarity of responses across different categories of workforce, while agreeing or disagreeing with the enquiry, and are homogeneous in all the categories of respondents. This observation also holds well in results between different groups that exist. It is a fact that the practices of empowering employees are clearly visible at PPL, and every employee has felt the positive implications accordingly.

Conclusion

Creating High Performance Workforce through Employee Empowerment: A Case of Practicing Organization

Managements and Corporate in present era continuously look for ways to become more efficient in the new market place. Indeed, innovative workplace practices like open lines of communication, shared and delegated responsibility, leadership at all levels, open appraisal systems, high level of trust and faith in all, shared decision making, transparent

management ethos, individual and group accountability, and strong employee participation are the strategies adopted to develop HR in the organization .

The researchers in the field of Human Resources Management and Human Resources Development like Perry (1992); Rosen (1993); Gates (1995); Kanter (1995); Lawler and Bowen (1995); Smilor (1996); Argyris (1998); Mellinger (1998); Beyster (1999); and Reynolds (1999) are increasingly facing a dilemma in suggesting the best strategy to handle the newer requirements of the workforce. Research on strategies adopted in managing human resources has shown that much change has taken place over the years. One has seen new concepts evolving during the late 1980's and early 1990's. Some notable ones among them are the employee involvement and participation; self managed teams; delegated and shared decision-making; co-determination; quality circles; and the like. Many of the old theories on human resources have been rewritten and new models are developed to cope with the rapid changes brought in as a result of liberalization. But, how one approaches human resources is often a prickly question for the management, because businesses and organizations in the Third World economies are experiencing the winds of change.

The present buzzword in developing and managing human resources is employee empowerment. This is the most powerful driving force towards the growth for sustainable increase in the profits. In the words of Argyris (1998) "*empowerment involves a creative act that frees a person, a group, an organization and even a total system to behave in new ways*". Employee Empowerment is a tool, which frees the inner driving force towards sustainable growth. It is also the path of success leading towards organization survival and towards developing a winning strategy in managing the human resources and development of the organization.

The Performance Indicators: HR way

The performance of such practice is seen in different ways. The sales turnover, which was barely in thousands, has crossed crores now. There is tremendous growth of profit. The costs have also been reduced with employees taking full responsibility of overhead wastes. No scales can measure the satisfaction of the employees. Infact, the satisfaction that employee feel in being with PPL can't be measured by any financial scales. The success in the organization also depends on employee traits and characteristics, which are necessary, and found in the employees of PPL, such as: assertive behavior, self motivated, transparent approach, tenacity character, growth oriented attitude, no egoism, extravert nature, open communicator, working in team, dedicated and committed, willing to take risk, open to new ideas, result oriented, participative approach, seeks challenges, drive for perfection, ethical approach, desire for quality and excellence, honest in all the business dealings and above all, enjoys the work done by oneself and that of others. All these traits are reflected in organization's development at a macro level.

The feelings of employees towards management are also positive. The management is viewed as a responsible management and not merely as a boss-employee relation. The feeling amongst all towards management is that the management looks for results; is uncritical; objective in approach; empathetic towards employees; respects all irrespective of ones contribution; encourages each; loyal and truthful; transparent; visionary and above all, accepts healthy criticism. These feelings have helped the organization to grow in turbulent times. Infact, on the macro scale, employees feel a part of organization and hence the inner satisfaction of identifying with the organization, which is remarkable.

Recommendations for Empowerment strategies to be instituted

Based on findings and observations in the study, some tentative areas have been identified for creating High Performance Work Systems - HPWS and High Performance Work Practices - HPWP. These practices, however, directly and indirectly reflect on the practices of empowerment on larger scale and are essential for employee empowerment. These recommendations, however, are not based on the shortcomings of the practices at PPL. These are directives for Executives who are looking at empowerment on a macro level.

Platform for Empowerment

Be prepared to thoroughly experiment the distribution of power and delegated responsibility. A proper grounding is required and do not hurry. One may start the practice and may not get the desired results immediately. Study and understand what has to be looked into: the system, the practices, the people or the ethos. Each stage requires careful study and each step should be followed by the next appropriate step. Also, look to what degree each employee has to be empowered. Further, there are certain essentials to be seen and worked out, viz:

- Is organization policy apt to practice empowerment?
- Is leadership at all levels visible?
- Is employee behavior transparent; and
- Do employees accept challenges, and the like.

Psychological Empowerment

Empowerment is not just passing the power to each and everyone in the organization. It should be felt and realized by person that he can really act and has the power to act. He should feel the sense of "power" - a psychological state one feels while working. It is this feeling which makes one to act with maturity. Instead, just telling a person that power is transferred could do little

good than given. It is the psychological feeling, which creates a good workplace and this feeling amongst all the employees will reflect positively in the development and growth of the organization. The power should rather be felt. So create such an ethos and governance.

Workplace Culture

Certain significant areas and scope of empowerment are to be addressed. The need to develop a refined shared culture is always the best way to start. Varied components of culture constitute workplace and it is the empowered culture, which reflects the success of an empowerment system. The culture like: flat organizational structure and hierarchy, no designated positions, high respect to human, transparent ethos, open lines of communication, employee participation, working in team, high level of trust, each one is a decision maker, creating an entrepreneurial workplace, and transparent open feedback are the first success step towards empowerment to succeed. An entire paradigm shift in workplace culture should be developed and created. In addition, a learning culture is what makes that significant difference in the success of the organization.

Accountability

Each employee in the organization should be made accountable for his or her actions. Responsibility and accountability are the sole properties of persons, who have power, either it is the individual or the group. Since, empowerment is to invest power in all; no one should ever be allowed to blame other individual. Accountability in all the activities undertaken will develop mature thinking and responsible behavior. This is crucial for empowerment to succeed at macro level. One should not be held accountable, instead, one should by himself realize his accountability and responsibility for the actions and the desired behavior.

Define the Purpose

Each employee needs to know what is that the organization wants from him and what are the

purpose and objectives of the organization. Define the organization purpose and the purpose of the individual. Make them also realize how purpose is built and how it can be realized and fulfilled by each. Define the purpose of the organization, the purpose of empowerment exercise and the purpose why power is given to them and the impact they can make. People should be told the reasons of 'Why' for all the activities undertaken in the organization, while being empowered. When an empowering exercise has been practiced and employees are liberated through the sharing the power, there could be some employees who may not understand the spirit behind it. Make them realize why such a particular act or action has been initiated and the advantages of power distribution.

Open Door Policy and Transparency

The management should follow the principles of transparency in all the activities and functioning. Be open and clean in approach and follow-up work. Never should the management create a feeling of dissatisfaction among the employees due to the conservative approach of management. Never should employees feel insecure owing to management behavior and policy. Their (management) behavior, attitudes, style of functioning, empathic behavior towards employee contribution and positive thinking makes all that difference in the success of an organization. Dual policy of saying one and practicing another should be avoided. The creation of a friendly atmosphere by the management through apt actions signifies how the organization would develop in the days to come.

Ownership Culture

The ownership concept should follow the rule that each one is an owner and each one is worth equally in the exercise of running the organization. Make each feel like an owner. This could be done through sharing equal responsibility and authority among all. While

doing so, make your employees feel like owners and make them understand and realize the worth of ownership. Ownership is a psychological feeling, which creates a personal world in itself. The concept that 'I' have just come to work should be removed and the feeling of 'My Organization' should suffice. They always need to feel part of the organization and not mere employees who are paid to perform the work. With shared responsibility and authority, one can create the shared ownership.

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