

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN INDIA: THE CASE OF IT PROFESSIONALS

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IT industry has been one of the most significant growth contributors to the Indian economy and played a key role in putting India on the global map. Employee engagement is one of the key asset in any industry in general and for IT in particular as all other asset like capital, machine, and technology etc. of the industry will be utilized only by those employees who are firmly engaged. Keeping in mind the importance of employee engagement in IT, the present study is an attempt to understand and explore the possible factors of employee engagement among IT professionals in India. It will also highlight the current scenario of employee engagement and different issues and challenges faced by IT industries and suggest few measures to improve future prospect of employee engagement in India.

Keywords: Employee engagement, IT, India, Professional, Perspective, Scenario

INTRODUCTION

IT industry in India has played a significant role in transforming India's image from a slow moving bureaucratic economy to a land of innovative entrepreneurs and a global player in providing world class technology solutions and business services. Employee Engagement is often the most significant differentiator between competing IT organizations, particularly for service based IT companies as revenues are directly proportional to number of engaged workforce in the organization. Various literatures have suggested that investment in employee engagement activities significantly improves the overall performance of the business unit, whereas some other researches on employee engagement from survey houses and consultancies have established the relationship between employee engagement, financial business performance and profitability. Interestingly, there are very few academic literatures on engagement, which have highlighted the role of different sector of services in India. However, there has been no research established to find out the scenario of employee engagement among IT professionals in India. Therefore, the present study is an attempt to understand and explore the possible factors of employee engagement among IT professionals in India.

In this connection the present paper mainly contributes to the theory of employee engagement which is based on Indian IT industry and analyzes the conceptual framework of the concept, explored the possible components of employee engagement and highlights the importance of the term in IT sector. The study also reviewed available research findings to identify the factors which affect

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employee engagement and discussed the current scenario of employee engagement in India especially among IT professionals and highlighted different issues and challenges faced by IT industries. Finally, on the basis of theoretical observation, few measures have been suggested to improve future prospect of employee engagement.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

The concept of employee engagement is relatively new for human resource professionals. Most references relate this concept to survey houses and consultancies but it is less taken as academic construct. The term employee engagement appeared in the literature only for nearly two decades, and started gaining popularity especially among human resource managers (Rafferty, Maben, West and Robinson, 2005; Ellis & Sorensen, 2007).

Employee engagement is a broad and complex construct that includes many sound researched ideas such as profitability, commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour, satisfaction, employee retention, loyalty and in and extra role behavior outcomes. Kahn (1990) defined engagement and also proposed the model of personal engagement by the Social Exchange Theory (SET), and explained the reasons of question that “why employees choose to become more or less engaged in their work and organization?” and also provided a theoretical base to explain employee’s engagement.

Defining employee engagement remains problematic as this concept has been viewed differently by the researchers. On the basis of past literature Wollard & Shuck (2011) identified four main sub-concepts within the term:

- “Needs satisfying” approach, in which engagement is the expression of one’s preferred self in task behaviours.
- “Burnout antithesis” approach, in which energy, involvement, efficacy are presented as the opposites of established “burnout” constructs: exhaustion, cynicism and lack of accomplishment.
- Satisfaction-engagement approach, in which engagement is a more technical version of job satisfaction, evidenced by Gallup’s own Q12 engagement survey which gives an $r=.91$ correlation with one (job satisfaction) measure.
- The multidimensional approach, in which a clear distinction is maintained between job and organizational engagement, usually with the primary focus on antecedents and consequents to role performance rather than organizational identification.

Definitions of engagement vary in the weight they give to the individual vs the organization in creating engagement. Most often employee engagement has been defined as emotional and intellectual commitment to the organization

(Baumruk, 2004; Richman, 2006; Shaw, 2005) or the amount of discretionary effort exhibited by employees in their job (Frank et al. 2004). Development Dimensions International (DDI, 2005) defined engagement as the extent to which people value, enjoy, and believe in what they do. It also states that its measure is similar to employee satisfaction and loyalty.

An engaged employee extends themselves to meet the organization's needs, takes initiative, reinforces and supports the organization's culture and values, stays focused and vigilant, and believes he/she can make a difference (Macey, 2006). For Seijts & Crim (2006), employee engagement means a person who is fully involved in and enthusiastic about his or her work. Engaged employees care about the future of the company and are willing to invest the discretionary effort to see that the organization succeeds. Brown (2006) viewed engagement as a progressive combination of satisfaction, motivation, commitment and advocacy resulting from employees' movement up the engagement pyramid.

Cognitive engagement refers to employees' beliefs about the company, its leaders and the workplace culture. The emotional aspect is how employees feel about the company, the leaders and their colleagues. The behavioral factor is the value added component reflected in the amount of effort employees put into their work (Lockwood, 2007). Mone & London (2010) defined employee engagement as "a condition of employee who feels involved, committed, passionate, and empowered and demonstrates those feelings in work behavior". It is thus the level of commitment and involvement an employee has towards their organization and its values. The organization must work to develop and nurture engagement, which requires a two-way relationship between employer and employee.

It is a desirable condition, where an organizational connotes involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, focused effort, and energy among employees. So it has both attitudinal and behavioral components (Erickson, 2005). Engagement is the measure of an employee's emotional and intellectual commitment to their organization and its success. It is an outcome of employees' organizational experiences that are characterized by behaviors that are grouped in to three categories: say, stay and strive (Hewitt, 2005).

Saks (2006) proposed a multidimensional approach that explored various aspects of employee engagement construct holistically. However, researchers (Freeney & Fellenz, 2013; Kühnel, Sonnentag, & Bledow, 2012; Menguc et al., 2013; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010; Wang et al., 2013; Wollard & Shuck, 2011) find engagement a highly contextual construct, were based on job demand - resource (JD-R) model which states that for every type of job, there is a different set of resources which captures what the job requires (job demands) and what kind of support (job resources) is available to the employee. Thus, exploring the antecedents of engagement in different contexts is important.

Considerable research has been done on differentiating employee engagement from the other related constructs and making it measurable. For example, an employee is engaged if he can freely express himself physically, cognitively and emotionally in his official role (Kahn, 1990; Purcell, 2006; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010). More importantly, a review of the literature on the engagement-performance relationship by Shuck (2013) concludes that an engaged employee is a better performer, which is why the construct deserves more attention (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011).

The success of any organization depends on the engagement and involvement of its employees at work. The engaged, responsive employees are identified by the degree to which they fully occupy themselves as well as on the strength of their commitment to the employee and role (Balaji, 2014).

The conceptual framework of employee engagement clearly revealed that it is a multidimensional construct which an important contributing factors of all types of organizations. An engaged employee is the need of the management to utilize their full potential to contribute to their organizational performance.

IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AMONG IT PROFESSIONALS

IT industry has been one of the most significant growth contributors to the Indian economy and played a key role in putting India on the global map. The data suggest India's total IT industry's (including hardware) share in the global market stands at 7% and are expected to grow by 12-14% in the near future whose revenue is expected to cross US\$ 225 billion mark by 2020 (Indhira&Shani, 2014, P. 1100). According to NASSCOM, in fiscal year 2014, India's information technology and business process management (IT-BPM) industry will add \$12-15 billion incremental revenue, to existing industry revenues of \$118 billion. Moreover, India plans to spend around US\$ 3.9 billion on cloud services during 2013-2017, of which US\$ 1.7 billion will be spent on Software-as-a-Service (SaaS).

With online shopping, social media and cloud computing flourishing more than ever before, there is great demand for IT professionals in e-commerce and business to consumer firms which can generate massive employment opportunities in the existing sector. The recent initiative taken by the prime minister of India on "Digital India" project can further boost to the IT sector inside and outside India. While looking at the growth prospect in the IT industry in the near future employee engagement can play a vital role for IT professionals.

However, employee engagement has rarely been studied in the academic literature and relatively little is known about its antecedents and consequences. Dornesek (2008) showed that improvement in employee engagement is important as engaged employees are found to have;

- 51% lower turnover
- 27% less absenteeism
- 18% more productivity
- 12% higher profitability

Most organizations today realize that a 'satisfied' employee is not necessarily the 'best' employee in terms of loyalty and productivity. It is only an 'engaged employee' who is intellectually and emotionally bound with the organization, feels passionately about its goals and is committed towards its values who can be termed thus. He goes the extra mile beyond the basic job responsibility and is associated with the actions that drive the business. Moreover, in times of diminishing loyalty, employee engagement is a powerful retention strategy. The fact that it has a strong impact on the bottom line adds to its significance (Das, Narendra& Mishra, 2013, P-1982).

This study discusses how best to encourage employee engagement from before a career even begins, right until it ends, including how to combine the latest techniques and technology with fundamental HR processes to keep employees engaged and motivated. The key thing to remember is that even if an employee in whom a business has invested chooses to move on to another company, they might still remain important in their next role as a partner or customer. Employee engagement must truly, therefore, be an end-to-end practice for IT industry.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bhatnagar& Sharma (2005) have studied on the empirical analysis of strategic HR roles and organizational learning capability. Line and HR firm performance is further analyzed. The sample size was consisted of 640 managers in India. Standardized questionnaires were used as tools for the managers' perception of the two variables and their link to data collection. Statistical results have indicated that correlation coefficients were most significant and positive for the variables and sub-variables of strategic HR roles and organizational learning capability. Discriminant functional analysis reflected that line and HR managers differed significantly in their perception of both variables. Stepwise regression analysis indicated that both the variables of strategic HR roles and organizational learning capability predict firm performance.

Jyotsna (2007) found that good level of engagement may lead to high retention but only to a certain extent and duration among employees of ITES sector. Punia& Sharma (2008) pointed out that employee retention in IT sector is the biggest challenge that human resource management is facing today. The uncertainties of changing economy, increasing competitions and diversity in the workplace have compelled the organization to hold on to their top performers at any cost.

Allan (2010) study in U.S. based employees showed the impact of feedback styles on employee's engagement level and they found positive feedback style was strongly related to higher level of engagement in employees. Positive feedback behave as an important predictor of employee engagement, this finding was highlighted in several researches conducted in year 2011.

Krishanan & Manjari (2010) studied outcome of intention to quit among Indian IT professionals. They revealed that employee intention to quit the job lead to less performance orientation, higher organizational deviance and less organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). They further found that performance orientation mediates the relationship between intention to quit and OCB and organizational deviance as well.

Thiagarajan & Renugadevi (2011) investigated employee engagement practice in Indian BPO industries and tried to find out the factors responsible for employee engagement. Career development, performance appraisal and motivation factors are found to be connected with employee engagement.

Shuck *et al.* (2011) has examined an employee's unique experience of being engaged in their work. Post analysis, three themes emerged: relationship development and attachment to co-workers, workplace climate and opportunities for learning. The findings highlighted the development of relationships in the workplace, the importance of an employee's direct manager and their role in shaping organizational culture and the critical role of learning in an engaged employee's interpretation of their work.

Bevan (2010) stated that "the employees who feel demotivated with or disengaged from their work, or who find their work stressful are more likely to resign from their posts". The findings of Hewitt (2012) was that "28% of employees experienced a high level of job related stress in 'high engagement' companies (65% engagement and over) versus 39% of employees in low engagement companies i.e. employees in high engagement companies reported significantly less workplace stress". Larson *et al.* (2013) also confirmed the positive relationship between leader's psychological capital and follower's engagement level of working adults in U.S.

Sihag & Sarikwal (2014) studied impact of psychological capital on employee engagement among IT professionals in India. Results revealed positive impact of psychological capital on employee engagement. Moreover a fitmodel was also identified between psychological capital and employee engagement with both construct's factors. Results of current study demonstrated that employee with higher level of psychological capital (in terms of hope, confidence level, bounce back capability and optimistic view) show higher level of work engagement at workplace in IT industries.

Gupta, Ganguli & Ponnampalani (2015) explore factors that affect employee engagement in financial offshore organization in India. Thematic analysis identified

three main factors (1) implicit benefits, (2) organizational culture and (3) organizational policies. The findings of this study are important due to their practical implications. First, the factors will encourage employers to make more employee friendly policies, and second, by resolving the employee issues raised by them, it is anticipated that the employers will be able to enhance the overall efficiency of their workforce and improve the employer-employee relationship.

The above mentioned review of past research highlight different components of employee engagement on the basis of their empirical findings limited to particular sector or organizations. However, it lacks certain important components like individual, job, organization, opportunities and facilities as a factor of employee engagement in India especially for IT professionals. Therefore, the present study will focus on the above factors of employee engagement in India among IT professionals.

APPROACH OF THE STUDY

The present study is solely based on the theoretical observation of available literature in the field of employee engagement especially among IT professionals. Hence, secondary data has been used to identify different factors of employee engagement. The sample of the present study is IT employee of Indian IT industry. The analysis is based on previous studies conducted in the IT sectors and the common factors found among studies are highlighted in a figure-1. The factors revealed for employee engagement studies are found to have certain effects on IT professionals in India.

FACTORS AFFECTING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

There are some critical factors which leads to employee engagement are common to all organizations including IT industry. These factors create a feeling of valued and involved among the employees but the components of feeling valued and involved, and the relative strength of each factor are likely to vary depending on the organization. In this connection, the factors which influence employee engagement are broadly categorized under five different categories (see Fig. 1) which are as follows;

Individual Factors

Individual factor of employee engagement deals with a number of components such as competence, confidence, attachment, friendliness, well-being and leadership skills of employees which are discussed in the following manner;

Competence: Competence is about the ability to of an individual to grow. Employees who know that their current jobs are helping them become competent for future jobs will stay engaged. They would like to stretch, learn and improve as long as they feel they are growing marketable skills.

Confidence/ Belief in Oneself: Confidence is the second most important individual contributing factor of employee engagement. A DecisionWise study of

more than 180,000 employees confirms this crisis of confidence in employee engagement, indicating increased employee skepticism about the outcomes of an engagement survey. Good leaders help create confidence in a company by being exemplars of high ethical and performance standards.

Connect/ Attachment: Employee engagement is a direct reflection of how employees feel about their relationship with the boss. If employees' relationship with their managers is fractured, then no amount of perks will persuade employees to perform at top levels. Employees look at whether organizations and their leader walk the talk when they proclaim that, "Our employees are our most valuable asset."

Family Friendliness: A person's family life influences his work life. When an employee realizes that the organization is considering his family's benefits also, he will have an emotional attachment with the organization which leads to engagement.

Well-being: Wellbeing and Employee Engagement are issues that are now hitting the headlines. They matter for individuals whose dissatisfactions at work spill over into their private lives. They matter for organizations that take the obligation to look after the welfare of their employees seriously. And most compellingly, they matter to the bottom line due to their correlation with high performance.

Leadership Skills: Employees need to feel that the core values for which their companies stand are unambiguous and clear. Successful organizations show respect for each employee's qualities and contribution regardless of their job level. A company's ethical standards also lead to engagement of an individual.

Job Factors

The nature of job and job aspects are important contributing factors of employee engagement. The components like job relevant behavior, control over flow and pace of job, performance management and empowerment are some of the important contributing factors for determining employee engagement which are given below in detail;

Contribute/ Job Relevant Behavior: Employees want to know that their input matters and that they are contributing to the organization's success in a meaningful way. This might be easy to articulate in settings such as hospitals and educational institutions. But what about, say, the IT industry? IT industry can also apply different measures such as Performance indicators to evaluate the contribution of each employee. In sum, good managers help employee see and feel how they are contributing to the organization's success and future.

Control/ Being in on Things: Employees value control over the flow and pace of their jobs and leaders can create opportunities for employees to exercise this control. A feeling of "being in on things," and of being given opportunities to

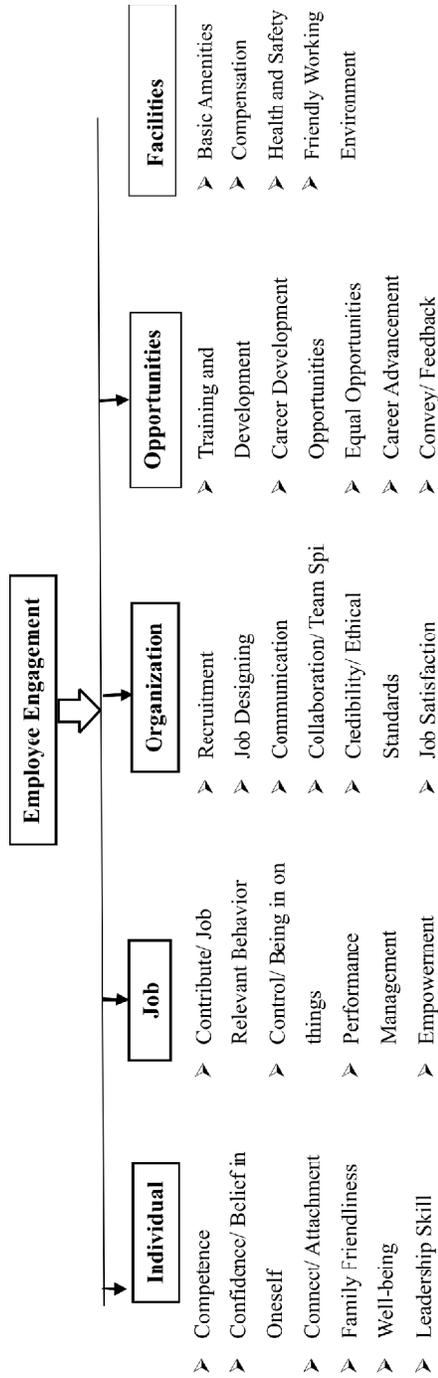


Figure 1: Factors Affecting Employee Engagement

participate in decision making often reduces stress; it also creates trust and a culture where people want to take ownership of problems and their solutions. There are numerous examples of organizations whose implementation of an open-book management style and creating room for employees to contribute to making decisions had a positive effect on engagement and organizational performance. The success of Microsoft, for example, stems in part from Bill Gates' belief that smart people anywhere in the company should have the power to drive an initiative.

Performance Management: Performance management processes provide conditions for employee engagement. Performance management encourages managers to have a focus on roles and responsibilities of employees and to include them in the goal-setting process. It promotes acceptance of challenging objectives, and also recognizes and encourages contributions that exceed expectations. It creates of a feeling of being valuable to the organization which in turn helps in engaging the employee.

Empowerment: Employees want to be involved in decisions that affect their work. The leaders of high engagement workplaces create a trustful and challenging environment, in which employees are encouraged to give input and innovative ideas to move the organization forward.

Organizational Factors

Organizations play the most important contributing factor for the employee engagement. Recruitment process, job designing, communication, team spirit, ethical standard and job satisfaction are dominating components of organization for employee engagement.

Recruitment: The recruitment and selection process involves identifying potential employees, making offers of employment to them and trying to persuade them to accept those offers. The messages organization conveys while seeking to attract job applicants also can influence future employees' engagement and commitment. While recruiting employees for desirable jobs, organizations enhance their engagement (by maximizing the person-job fit) and commitment (by providing growth and advancement opportunities to employees in return for their loyalty). To enhance engagement organizations identify those candidates who are best-suited to the job and to organization's culture.

Job Designing: Job characteristics encompassing challenge, variety and autonomy are more likely to provide psychological meaningfulness, and a condition for employee engagement. Job becomes meaningful and attractive to employee as it provides him variety and challenge, thereby affecting his level of engagement.

Communication: The organization should follow the open door policy. There should be both upward and downward communication with the use of appropriate communication channels in the organization. If the employee is given a say in the

decision making and has the right to be heard by his boss than the engagement levels are likely to be high.

Collaboration/ Team Spirit: Studies show that, when employees work in teams and have the trust and cooperation of their team members, they outperform individuals and teams which lack good relationships. Great leaders are team builders; they create an environment that fosters trust and collaboration. Surveys indicate that being cared about by colleagues is a strong predictor of employee engagement. Thus, a continuous challenge for leaders is to rally individuals to collaborate on organizational, departmental, and group goals, while excluding individuals pursuing their self-interest.

Credibility/ Ethical Standard: Leaders should strive to maintain company's reputation and demonstrate high ethical standards. People want to be proud of their jobs, their performance, and their organization.

Job Satisfaction: Only a satisfied employee can become an engaged employee. Therefore it is very essential for an organization to see to it that the job given to the employee matches his career goals which will make him enjoy his work and he would ultimately be satisfied with his job.

Opportunities Factors

Opportunities in the organization play vital role in employee engagement. Employees who got more opportunities to showcase their talents got more engaged. The following opportunities such as training and development, career development opportunities, equal opportunities, career advancement and feedback are the determining factors for employee engagement.

Training and Development: Redundancy of skills has been cited as one of the reasons for employee turnover, thereby indicating the necessity for training, re-training and multi-skill training. It is another important area which contributes to employee engagement. Learning new skills may trigger renewed interest in such aspects of the job which had not been meaningful earlier. Through training, you help new and current employees acquire the knowledge and skills they need to perform their jobs. And employees who enhance their skills through training are more likely to engage fully in their work, because they derive satisfaction from mastering new tasks. Training also enhances employees' value to your company as well as their own employability in the job market.

Career Development Opportunities: Organizations with high levels of engagement provide employees with opportunities to develop their abilities, learn new skills, acquire new knowledge and realize their potential. When companies plan for the career paths of their employees and invest in them in this way their people invest in them. Career development influences engagement for employees and retaining the most talented employees and providing opportunities for personal development.

Equal Opportunities and Fair Treatment: The employee engagement levels would be high if their superiors provide equal opportunities for growth and advancement to all the employees. Employees feel that they are not discriminated in any aspects within the organization.

Career Advancement: Leaders should provide challenging and meaningful work with opportunities for career advancement. Most people want to do new things in their job. For example, do organizations provide job rotation for their top talent? Are people assigned stretch goals? Do leaders hold people accountable for progress? Are jobs enriched in duties and responsibilities? Good leaders challenge employees; but at the same time, they must instill the confidence that the challenges can be met. Not giving people the knowledge and tools to be successful is unethical and de-motivating; it is also likely to lead to stress, frustration, and, ultimately, lack of engagement.

Convey/ Feedback: Leaders clarify their expectations about employees and provide feedback on their functioning in the organization. Good leaders establish processes and procedures that help people master important tasks and facilitate goal achievement.

Facilities Factors

Facilities like basic amenities, compensation, health and safety, and friendly working environment, etc provided by the organization to their employees are one of the important contributing factors for employee engagement. Facilities are discussed in the following manner;

Basic Amenities: Basic amenities like proper seating arrangements, pollution control, cleanliness, toilets, etc provides comfortable physical environments for the employees to work and to engage themselves in their responsibilities as a professional.

Compensation: Compensation is said to have a major influence on the employees' conceptions of their employment relationship. Compensation consists of financial elements (pay and benefits) but may also include nonfinancial elements or perks, such as on-site day care, employee assistance programs, subsidized cafeterias, travel discounts, company picnics and so on. The organization should have a proper compensation management system so that the employees are motivated to work in the organization.

Health and Safety: Research indicates that the engagement levels are low if the employee does not feel secure while working. Therefore every organization should adopt appropriate methods and systems for the health and safety of their employees.

Friendly Working Environment: Friendly working environment is an art that requires managers to be sensitive, empathetic and spontaneous. It can be even experienced by the small day-to-day gestures of managers and co-workers (not by

grand policies of the company) which intern create a sophisticated environment for the organization and improve employee engagement.

CURRENT SCENARIO OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN INDIA

India has employee engagement challenges which are affecting the productivity of its working professionals and the competitiveness of its companies. This is most likely due to the fragmented approach of planning and implementing employee engagement solutions. Typically, businesses are deploying a number of ad-hoc steps, missing out on actually assessing the need gaps, targeting problem areas or neglecting to follow-up post an intervention to assess efficacy and impact.

In today's world, employee engagement and loyalty are more vital than ever before to an organization's success and competitive advantage. In the earlier phase when a fresh graduate starting out in his or her career joined a company and stayed until retirement which in today's business environment there are no such job guarantees. With ever escalating recruiting costs, the ability to engage and retain valuable employees has a significant impact on an organization's bottom line.

White (2011) have reported that 37% of the employees in India are engaged during the year 2010 and he found engagement levels in India vary across organizations, organization size, gender, workplace structure and functions. The report also highlighted that employee engagement are more in number of older and married employees. Sectoral contribution to employee engagement suggested that in healthcare and chemicals had maximum engagement levels and least in banking and financial services. Among the drivers of engagement, Indian managers identified three factors of job satisfaction such as career development opportunities and training (28%), more opportunities to do what one does best (21%) and more challenging work (15%) as the most important contributors.

A recent Gallup study revealed that only 9% of employees in India are engaged with their employers which are less than half the number when compared to the developed economies. It is because with so many companies in India deploying only some (and in some cases none) of these techniques that the best practicing company adopted like sustained use of incentives, rewards and recognition programmes combined with professional communication, education and measurement of performance followed by low productivity, high absenteeism, and high staff attrition rates are widespread (Bandell, 2014). It also viewed that employees value the pay and benefits they receive at 90% of the true cost to their employers. This implies that employers in India are wasting one rupee in every ten. He further said "Our job is to reverse this statistic, to make the salary costs work more effectively for our employers".

A survey report published by Hewitt (2015) clearly revealed that global employee engagement continues to rise gradually, up 1 point to 62% as economy

continues to improve. However, employee engagement in the world's largest market was 61%, unchanged from 2013 to 2014 (P. 8).

In the current scenario, every organization is striving to increase its profits, improve the quality of goods and services, and improve customer satisfaction with optimum resources. Companies continue to struggle with providing growth opportunities for employees and other top engagement drivers. Career opportunities are the top engagement driver globally; however, positive perceptions surrounding this driver have fallen 3 points, to 44%, from 2013 to 2014. Perceptions of career opportunities are most positive in India, Canada, and high-growth Latin American markets (Hewitt, 2015, P. 8).

The IT management has realized that having a strong brand, new products, and new technology alone does not help them get the winning edge over competitors. Organizations need the committed participation of a good majority of people so that the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization could be enhanced. The collective loss to Indian IT organization due to regularly losing its employees is mind boggling. In the last couple of years, companies have realized that wages are important to employees, but compensation alone cannot motivate the highly skilled and experienced workforce.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AMONG IT PROFESSIONALS

Issues of employee engagement are at or near the top of most surveys that attracts the attention of human resource Managers. The challenge today is not just retaining talented people, but fully engaging them, capturing their minds and hearts at each stage of their work lives. Therefore, employee engagement has emerged as a critical driver of business success in today's competitive marketplace. Further, employee engagement can be a deciding factor in organizational success, not only does engagement have the potential to significantly affect employee retention, productivity and loyalty, it is also a key link to customer satisfaction, company reputation and overall stakeholder value. However, issues and challenges of employee engagement especially among IT professionals have been too little focused.

The present study identifies different issues and challenges of employee engagement among IT professionals. These are as follows;

- Managers and employees don't understand the emphatic importance of engagement. They usually fail to develop positive attitudes towards the job and organization. Hence, the level of commitment and involvement an employee has towards his or her organization and its core values and beliefs are generally reduced. Thus, it is a challenge for the human resource managers to make employees understand then resulted consequence of in low level of engagement and improve understanding.

- The goals, metrics and methods of engagement programs are often limited. The goals set to achieve maximum utilization of employee engagement are generally confined and the means to measure the output are found to be limited. Many organizations are using very short, simple, and easy-to-use measures that focus only on the fundamentals of a workplace. Instead of conducting broad culture or climate surveys with 100 or more questions, many organizations are opting for a focused approach that measures fundamental qualities of the workplace that likely will be important 10 years later (e.g., feedback, trust, cooperation). Thus, the challenge is to set broad goals and apply standards methods and approach to achieve the goals.
- Engagement is not productivity or an output of the industry but the key to making sustainable changes in an organization. It is an asset of the human resource which result in for high productivity or output of the organization. The challenge is to make them realize the importance of individual components so that engagement can be improved.
- External factors may influence employee engagement like job resource, role clarity, social support, feedback, etc are some of the factors which should be brought into notice. It is a challenge for the organization to provide all those required facilities to the existing employees so that they can make use of these components on time to improve their performance.
- Diverse and different generations of employees are engaged through different motives. The personality of every employee is complex in nature and it is quite difficult for one individual to understand other. Hence, understanding the exact motive of employee is a challenge for the human resource managers.
- Difficulty in understanding unstable mind of youngsters is an issue for the manager. Employee especially young age has different needs and aspirations. They used to be over emphasized towards their aspiration which is a challenge to be correctly focused.
- Underestimating the significance of employee engagement in the organizational success has become an issue for management as employee engagement is a complex, broad construct that subsumes many well researched ideas such as commitment, satisfaction, loyalty and extra role behavior. An engaged employee extends themselves to meet the organization's needs, takes initiative, reinforces and supports the organization's culture and values, stays focused and vigilant, and believes he/she can make a difference (Macey, 2006). Thus, it is a challenge to perceive employee engagement in a broader sense and provide timely support for its betterment.

- Lack of co-operation and co-ordination from management has been one of the prime grievances for employees and important contributing issue of employee engagement. To provide complete co-operation and co-ordination is a challenge for management as they are required to perform various task for the organizational improvement.

SUMMARY AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that employee engagement is the most important construct for overall organizational development which is a positive attitude held by the employees towards the organization and its core values. It is rapidly gaining popularity and importance in the workplace and impacts organizations in many ways. An organization should thus recognize and value employees more than any other components as powerful contributors to its competitive position. Engaged employees can help organization to achieve its mission, execute its strategy and generate important business results. Therefore, employee engagement should be a continuous process of learning, improvement, measurement and action. Some noteworthy implication for practitioners who focuses on various factors which influence employee engagement in general and IT in particular. It also highlighted the issues and challenges faced by IT industry to uphold and improve employee engagement and also observed that organizations with higher levels of employee engagement outperform their competitors in terms of profitability. Engaged employees give their companies crucial competitive advantages including higher productivity, customer satisfaction and lower employee turnover. The relationship between employee engagement and organizational outcomes would be stronger if better measures were used. Thus, organizations need to better understand how different employees are affected by different factors of engagement and focus on those in order to achieve the strategic outcomes as well as to improve overall organizational development.

The issues and challenges that organization, especially IT industry faces, can be sorted out in future if human resource manager focuses on the following future prospects to improve employee engagement.

- Manager should understand that employees are seeking to gain more than just money from their job and career. Employees are now more focused on job prospects, opportunities and facilities provided by the organization that just getting money.
- Manager should engage employees through direct communication by involving them in important decisions and keeping them informed of new developments or changes within the company so that feeling of attachment, commitment and loyalty towards the organization can be improved.

- Manager should get to know employees' needs as well as their goals and aspirations, so that together they can develop a clear path for advancement and opportunities for growth.
- Organization should provide employees with clear cut goals and opportunities to track the goals, opportunities to communicate their issues and challenges and encourage them for their better progress.
- Organization should provide opportunities to develop a strong employee-manager relationship. It is often true that when employees leave an organization, they are in fact leaving their manager.
- Organization should provide efficient and ongoing training for new and experienced employees as well as offering rewards and recognition for employees who excel and/or demonstrate a strong passion for their work.
- Management should offer positive feedback and employee recognition to improve performance of the employees. The appraisal system should be strictly regularized to provide employees opportunities to identify their worth and improve them.

Overall, the implication of the research is that it provides rich information to the concerned employer about what can engage employee in their work to obtain higher level of productivity from the same employee.

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