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An Empirical Study on Strategy and Philosophy of Employee Empowerment

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Abstract:

Employee empowerment is a strategy as well as philosophy that motivate employees to work and take decisions about their jobs. Employee Empowerment helps people to shoulder their responsibility and work with complete freedom and result in most efficient manner. It gives an authority to make decisions on the spot to resolve problems and. Empowerment occurs when employees are involved and participated with adequately trained, provided with all the relevant information and tools, and are fairly rewarded. Employee empowerment is effective if it's not taken as overburdened or distress or we can say that organizations should set a level of empowerment which will enhance the current efficiency of handling pressure. Empowerment includes supervisors and employees working together to establish apparent goals and opportunity within decided upon boundaries.

All these statement reflects the image of empowerment but actual meaning of empowerment is different. We realized that if empowerment is not implemented carefully then it becomes a failure. We have to study the all aspects and also the reasons of failure and we found that proper analysis will help to overcome this problem. Here we have done empirical study to find the strategies of empowerment, we compared the same with the philosophical meaning of empowerment and prepared some principles for implementation of empowerment. We can also call it as scientific methods of implementation of empowerment.

Keywords: *Employee Empowerment, Training, Information Tools, Handling Pressure, Strategies of Empowerment, Scientific Method.*

1. Introduction

An organization's manpower is its priceless asset. The human resources are the warehouse of knowledge, skills and abilities that can't be shared by the competitors. Technologies, products and processes are easily available to the competitors; but its man power is its strength and unique resource of the company. The statement given by Theodore Roosevelt reflects the same sense: "The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it."

Normally, employees are a firm's most underutilized source. And that is why administration tries to empower the employees. More recently this view is represented by the call for managers to behave as entrepreneurs to stimulate new decisions, and to create public value (Reich 1988; Moore 1995). Historically this perspective focused on the role of administrators as professionals, able to identify and protect the public interest from large business interests (Landis 1938; McCraw 1984). But, what is the actual meaning of employee empowerment? Employee empowerment is authority or power? According to me the answer is NO. Empowerment means extension of an employee's work accountability by giving him the right of judgment about his own job without consent of his instant manager.

Empowerment is the level set of accountability and authority given to an employee. By empowerment, the employees are supported and encouraged to utilize their skills, abilities and creativity by accepting accountability for their work. Empowerment is also a combination of employee involvement and employee participation.

Ken Blanchard and John Carlos (1950) state that "empowerment rest on three key elements : sharing information with everyone ; creating autonomy with boundaries ; and replacing the hierarchy with self directed teamempowerment is not giving people .People already have plenty of power in the wealth of their knowledge and motivation to do their jobs magnificently. We define empowerment as letting their power out."

Empowerment occurs when employees are involved and participated with adequately trained, provided with all the relevant information and tools, and are fairly rewarded. Employee empowerment is effective if it's not taken as overburdened or distress, or we can say that organizations should set a level of empowerment which will not reduce the current efficiency of handling pressure.

Empowerment includes supervisors and employees working together to establish apparent goals and opportunity within decided upon boundaries.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

Employee empowerment is a source by which persons are given the authority to analyze situations and take positive decisions. This creates a sense of ownership towards the organization in the employees. This attitude of the employees helps in forwarding the business. It is the situation of feeling self-empowered to take control. When thinking about empowerment in human aspect, try to avoid thinking of it as something that one individual does for another. This is one of the problems organizations have experienced with the concept of empowerment. People usually think that, top management, empower the people who report to him. Consequently, the reporting staff members wait for the empowerment, and the manager asks why people won't act in empowered ways. This led to a general unhappiness, mostly undeserved, with the concept of empowerment in many organizations. Newstrom and Davis (1998) define empowerment as any process that provides greater autonomy through the sharing of relevant information and the provision of control over factors affecting job performance. The organization has the responsibility to create a work environment which helps foster the ability and desire of employees to act in empowered ways. The work organization has the responsibility to remove barriers that limit the ability of staff to act in empowered ways. We also recognize managers as integral to democratic governance (Feldman and Khademian .2002)

2.2. Reason of Failure.

Empowerment is a solution for many organizations – when empowerment is implemented with proper scientific Process. Managers and employees, both look forward to see employee empowerment in the organization. It is also believed that employee empowerment is the most strategic method to motivate employees. Unhealthy industrial relations situation creates a bottle neck in designing and implementation of employee empowerment programme efficiently in an organization (Ghosh A.K. 2011)
No doubt employee empowerment is a dynamic tool, yet it is not successful in most of the organizations. Implementation of empowerment is always a challenge. We tried to find out the reason for the failure of empowerment. These reasons are listed below.

2.2.1. Managers don't understand the real power of empowerment they just speak this work as orator.

Generally it is seen that empowerment is heard in every organization, majorly at the time of motivational speeches, but the actual meaning of empowerment is hidden some ware. Managers don't want to implement empowerment or they are not able to implement empowerment in proper ways. No scientific study had done to understand the employee psychology, no process prepared to delegate empowerment, its is just used as a lip service. Half hearted or unbelievable employee empowerment efforts will fail.

2.2.2. Actual meaning of employee empowerment is not clear.

Managers use this term as a motivational tool, it is not only a motivational tool, and its main purpose is to retrieve 100 % of an employee. An employee can only share his 100% when he has power to take some decisions which has an impact on his work. Decisions taking power is the main feature of empowerment. Decision which should be taken with complete care and end responsibility of the decision should be on the empowered employee. This process is not at all adopted. Empowerment is given to share the ideas, but it is not implemented unless or until, it is stamped by senior management. And senior management had a different eye to look into the matter, some amendments took place and decision will change completely. Obviously the success ratio will be lesser.

2.2.3. Management doesn't define the level of empowerment.

Empowerment is a vast term; Level of Empowerment is different for different employees. Level of empowerment is depending upon individual employee. Organization cannot delegate all powers to all subordinates. (There must be a slab of empowerment or a level of empowerment up to certain extent.) This will be clearer with a help of an example. Two employees Mr. A and Mr. are working in Ms. XYZ Bank. Employee A and Employee B are working on the same grade with similar responsibilities and salary. The organization believes the power of empowerment so Top Management declares that employees will take care of their work and will take decisions for the betterment of work. These employees are in collection Department. Employee A used the method of cold calling for the method of collection of bank loan amount. Employee B threatened them and retrieved the whole amount in one go. Although the employees have power to decide their own ways, but Employee A proves to be a Failure and employee B retrieved the whole amount of bank from default customers. Work of employee A has been completed by employee B this example shows that empowerment right should be given with proper study and level of empower should be decided on individual basis,

2.2.4. Proper Training is not given to employees.

Staff need proper support of management, for taking good decisions they need proper training, coaching and relevant information. Employees learn from evidences and examples, But generally it is seen that communication is missing while delegating the authorities Staff needs some examples of empowerment for motivate .They also need a security that if any wrong thing occur. The management will sort it out. Only without fear a right decision can be taken. But all this is missing in our empowerment system.

2.2.5. Discourage employees on small errors.

It is seen that discouragement is the enemy of empowerment. It will reduce the confidence and with poor self confidence employee cannot make a correct judgment. It is expected that leaders should not discourage employees in spite of this he should explain that this error can be rectified and one should not repeat the same mistake. Teach employees to take better decision next time.

Think about employee empowerment, not as something a manager impart on employees, but rather as a philosophy and a strategy to help people develop talents, skills, and decision making competency. This growth helps employees feel competent, capable, and successful. Competent, capable, successful people best serve your organization. Avoid these employee empowerment traps. Make employee empowerment successful in your organization.

2.3. Principles of Successful Employee Empowerment.

These are some most important ways for the implementation of employee empowerment. It helps to manage manpower in such a manner which contributes a lot to organization. These management actions enable both the people who work with you and the people who report to you to soar.

- **Express That You worth People:** Employee expect regard, love and gratitude from their employer, kind behavior will enhance their efficiency and decision making skills. Employer should adopt this attitude in his actions, words, facial expression, and body language while dealing with employees. The goal here is to demonstrate your appreciation for each person's unique value. No matter how an employee is performing on his or her current task, your value for the employee as a human being should never falter and always be visible.
- **Leadership policies and practices:** Update employees with leadership policies and practices; try to invite them in some policy formulation activities. Also share the reason for change in organization. Realize them that they are a part of organization and their presence is equally important. Do this by making sure that they know and have access to the organization's overall mission, vision, and strategic plans.
- **Show Confidence in your People:** Believe in your team, make a trust relationship with your team members, trust the intentions of people to do the right thing, make the right decision, and make choices. Some times their decision is not up to their expectations but believe them that they have taken the best decision with their prospectus. When employees receive clear expectations from their manager, they relax and trust you. They focus their energy on accomplishing, not on wondering, worrying, and second-guessing.
- **Share Information:** It is required to share information with your people or made sure that they have access to, all of the information they need to make thoughtful decisions. Information is the vital source to successful employee empowerment.
- **Share feedback time to time:** Provide frequent feedback so that people know how they are doing. Sometimes, the purpose of feedback is reward and recognition as well as improvement coaching. People deserve your constructive feedback, too, so they can continue to develop their knowledge and skills.
- **Solve Problems: Don't Pinpoint Problem People:** When a problem occurs, ask what is wrong with the work system that caused the people to fail, not what is wrong with the people. If you blame people, this will be worst response to problems.
- **Listen employees and Provide Guidance:** To successfully implement employee empowerment, employer should give space to employees so that they can express themselves. Listen to employee's problems calmly is very important. Guide by asking questions, not by telling grown up people what to do. People generally know the right answers if they have the opportunity to produce them. When an employee brings you a problem to solve, ask, "What do you think you should do to solve this problem?" Or, ask, "What action steps do you recommend?" Employees can demonstrate what they know and grow in the process. Eventually, you will feel comfortable telling the employee that he or she need not ask you about similar situations. You trust their judgment.
- **Help Employees Feel rewarded and Recognized for Empowered Behavior:** When employees feel under-compensated, under-titled for the responsibilities they take on, under-noticed, under-praised, and under-appreciated, don't expect results from employee empowerment. The basic needs of employees is to realize them that they are very important, they should give their discretionary energy. Organization need them and appreciate their extra effort. The feeling of voluntarily invest in work.

2.4. Scientific Process of Implementation of Empowerment in an Organization.

We have summarized all the principals and prepared a process which helps us to implement empowerment in an organization. We call it scientific process of implementation of empowerment.

Steps of scientific process of implementation of Employee Empowerment are as follows:-

- **Identify Reason for Empowerment:-**The first and foremost step of employee empowerment is to check whether the empowerment is required or not and if required what are the reasons of empowerment. Analysis the reasons and decide the level of empowerment. Reason of empowerment are different from organization to organization.
- **Form a Trust Relationship:** - Analysis the relationship of employer and employee, a trust relationship is required before implementation of empowerment. It is both ways Employer should show a faith in his subordinates and at the same time employees actions are always for the benefit of organization. If employees don't reflect a machured behavior them empowerment is impossible.
- **Analysis the capabilities of employees with ears and eyes open...** While delegating empowerment employer should open his eyes whether he is empowering a correct person who is suitable for that work. He should be competitive enough to take the responsibility without extra burden.

- Prepare a list of responsibilities according to hierarchy in a line of order with two way communication. Communication should always be two ways so that employee won't hesitate for discussion, if he gets confused. He should also be aware of this hierarchy of TOP Management, so that he chooses write man for suggestions.
- Delegate authority one by one – This process need time to check the results. Don't Delegate all responsibility in one go. Check the efficiency of employee with little risk.
- Provide training with complete information. Empowerment can be successful if empower person knows all kinds of information with proper training . A trained person can take correct decisions if employee have lack of information and training then empowerment can be a failure.
- Feedback of employees. Take feedback of employees and feedback from employees. Check whether they have fully utilized the power in best possible manner. We are sure the result should not be discouraging. If any how the result is not satisfying then works on the feedback of employees. If find changes need to study the method again and do little negotiations with employee wavelength.

3. Research Methodology

The current study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data sources used are unstructured interviews, questionnaires, and observation, while secondary data sources are sales report of companies, report on revenue generation and annual turnover, status of business generation before and after the implementation of empowerment techniques, documents related to company policy, various journals and research papers, books of the renowned authors and internet. Information was also collected from the HR executives. Survey research and employees' interview were carried out in two companies in Delhi.

20 Questionnaires containing basic factors about empowerment were asked while 10 employees were Interviewed based on unstructured interview method. The total sample size was kept to be 30. This is a Descriptive research study based on Delhi and NCR which tries to open up the various aspects of the Empowerment philosophy in current scenario.

4. Data Analysis

As we have worked majorly on direct observations, we can say that employees need empowerment for better results but. It has also examined that empowerment is just a philosophy and its implication is not structured. Almost 70% of people claim that empowerment is just a lip service practically it is not implemented, we found through unstructured interviews that employers do not trust employees or they are scared of their positions. Intentionally or unintentionally organization don't follow empowerment whole heartedly. . 60% of the employees accepted that they actually need some more power in the organization to freely take the decisions regarding matters involving them. On the Contrary most of the employees say that management believes that they (employees) always misuse the power. It is also analysis that empowerment is just a theoretical phenomenon that cannot persist in real life .50% of the employees also believed that access to latest and timely information can help a lot in empowering them to take right decision at the right time.

5. Result

We realized that most of the organizations don't understand the actual meaning of empowerment. The philosophy of Empowerment is just a bookish word, no body bother for proper strategies for its implication. But we cannot deny the fact, it is also realized, employees are demanding for empowerment. After our direct interviews and survey we find that its implication is a problem. We tried to eradicate this problem. Moreover, employees are not sure that how to implement the empowerment in the organization and how to take best out of it. This concept is often confused with the idea that 'Power corrupts'. Here we checked the reasons for the failure of empowerment and we also suggest the ways to overcome our failure. We prepared a process which will definitely help in proper implication of empowerment in any organization. In this process, we quoted some suggestions for employers and employees. We believe that after following the same it will result in better performance.

6. Conclusions and Future Scope

We find out a lot about the actual meaning of employee empowerment, it can be undoubtedly stated that this term is not just a glorifying word; rather it carries a lot more than just the conjectural significance. The only need here is to recognize the true meaning of empowerment and implicating it in the organization in a systematic and strategic way. In this era of cut throat competition, only those organizations can survive, which can best utilize their human resources, by involving them, empowering them and providing them their due. The growth and future of any organization is dependent mostly on the manpower, and this manpower is required to be empowered to take the decisions and make the decision correctly in time. Employees are much more aware of their rights now as compared to they were before. They always want to make option for the employers who empower them to carry out their duties liberally. Therefore, employers need to understand the true meaning of the empowerment philosophy and apply the same in their organization. The ways and means recommended here can be very helpful for the managers as well as for the employees to reach to the true goal of Employee Empowerment.

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