

## Human Resource Management Practices in Indian IT Industry – An Overview

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### Abstract

*Boom in the technology sector in 2000, Indian IT Industry began to change. Human resource became one of crucial driver for development and change. role and contribution of human resource as a talent pool also become so vital that most of the organizations started to focus their vision and mission statements on the people who work for them. The primary intention of the research offered in this paper was to examine five human resource management (HRM) practices. The paper first exhibits the height of variation in the field with respect to HRM Models. Then it goes on to observe significant human resource tendencies that have congealed over the past year. These tendencies will carry on presenting both challenges and opportunities for the Human Resource professional over the next decade. It further elaborates on the principal challenges faced by the HR professionals in IT Industry. It concludes with a discussion on the authority of Human Resource models.*

**Key Words:** Choice model, Guest model, Harvard model, HRM, IT Industry, Michigan model, Warwick model.

### Introduction

In 1980s the term 'human resource management' (HRM) introduced to the UK from America. The meaning of the term has led to many debates and academic discussions, as can be seen below. To some, it was seen as way of minimizing the trades unions' influence, and the name change from 'personnel' symbolised this. Others saw HRM as a more strategic role in the achievement of organisational objectives, with an HR director at board level. In 1950 two professional bodies related to personnel function was emerged that is, the Indian Institute of Personnel Management (IIPM) and the National Institute of Labor Management (NILM). In the 1960s, the personnel function set in motion to expand beyond the welfare aspect, with the three areas of labour welfare, industrial relations, and personnel administration developing as the basic elements for the emerging profession. In the 1970s, the thrust of personnel function shifted toward greater organizational “efficiency”, and by the 1980s, HRM and HRD terms became common in the local vernacular and at the same time two professional bodies, IIPM and NILM, got merged to form the National Institute of Personnel

Management (NIPM). The idea of human resource management has engrossed strong consideration over the last 20 years from scholars and practitioners equally. While fraction of the discussion has focused on its application and hypothetical fundamentals (Pennington and Edwards, 2000; Armstrong, 1999; Beardwell and Holden, 1997 and Storey, 1992), the other has been on its assertive worth for the endurance of organizations in a chaotic and an unpredictable business situations (Anthony et al 1996; Brewster et al, 2000), There are a lot of dissimilar views on how HRM first came about, some observers state that it was a innate evolution from motivational studies, some state that it was from the works of Drucker in the 1950's others state that it was just superior personnel management.

HRM has assumed classified implications and associations. While it has been used as a Synonym for personnel management by some writers (Storey, 1992; Storey & Sisson, 1993), There is a broad agreement that the espousal of HRM indicates a more business oriented and business incorporated approach to the management of people (Beer et al, 1984; Fombrum et al, 1985; Storey, 1987). However, more cynicism has been articulated about its theoretical foundations and intellectual identification (Storey, 1995; Legge, 1995a). While some writers have questioned if HRM is a map, a model or a theory (Legge, 1995a) others have projected typologies (Storey, 1987, Hendry, 1995) and some have advanced to make pragmatic annotations to validate the occurrence of these typologies in organizaitons (Truss, 1997, 1999; Heery, 1997; Gooderham et al 1999; Kane & Crawford, 1999 and Morris, 2002).

### **Methodology**

This part explain the methodology used in this study. The methodology includes data and sources of through internet. The study is based on secondary data only.Primary data have not been collected from the respondents. The researcher also used observed opinion from the IT industry. The secondary data have been collected from various books, magazine, journals, news papers and websites.

### **Objectives of Studies**

- To understand about HRM models.
- To understand about HRM practices in IT Industry.
- To study the challenges faced by HR professionals in IT industry.

### **Development of the soft and Hard HRM models**

Within the HRM view, two approaches have been identified. Storey (1989) labeled these two approaches hard HRM and Soft HRM. The ‘hard’ approach, rooted in manpower planning is concerned with aligning human resource strategy with business strategy, while the ‘soft’ approach is rooted in the human relations school, has concern for workers’ outcomes and encourages commitment to the organization by focusing on workers’ concerns.

| HARD HRM   | SOFT HRM   |
|--|--|
| Views people as a resource used as a means of achieving organizational goals | Encourages employers to develop strategies to gain employee commitment |

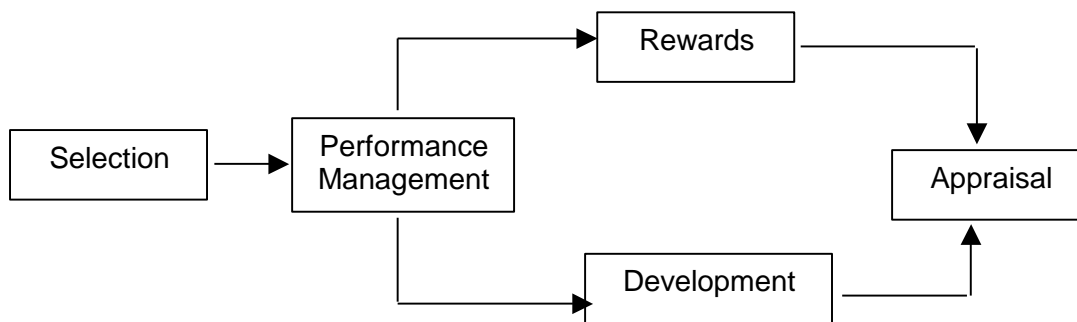
In this paper, the goal is to expand an abstract understanding of different HRM models presented by different authors.

- i. Michigan model of HRM
- ii. Harvard model of HRM
- iii. Warwick model of HRM
- iv. Guest model of HRM
- v. Choice model of HRM

### The Michigan Model Of HRM

The michigan or Matching Model was one of the first explicit statements of the HRM concept and was developed by Fombrun *et al* (1984) of the Michigan School in 1984. According to Loosemore *et al* (2003), it approaches the function in a 'rather dispassionate manner, treating people like any other resource that should be managed in such a way as to maximize utility whilst minimizing cost'. Fombrun *et al* (1984) proposed that HR systems and organizational structures should be managed in a way congruent to organizational strategy. They described four generic processes performed by all organizations which Armstrong (2003) detailed as:

- selection- matching available HR to jobs.
- appraisal – performance management.
- rewards – reward short as well as long term achievements.
- development – developing high quality employees.



The Michigan Model (fombrun *et al.*, 1984)

### Advantages

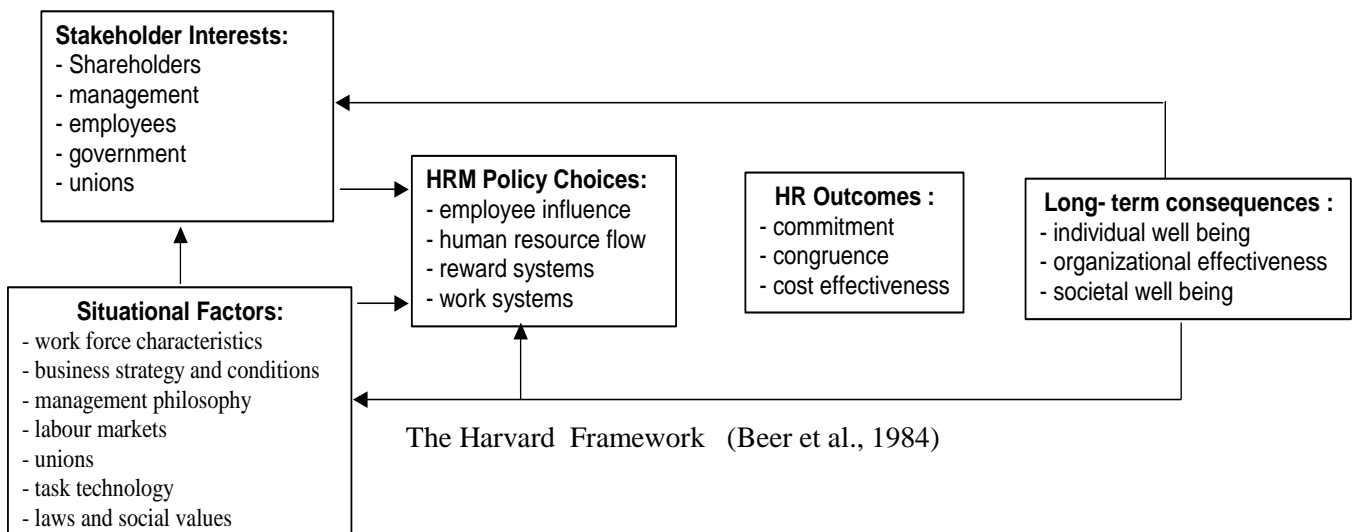
- It is a quite plain model that uses five categories of variable: selection, performance, appraisal, rewards and human resource development.
- It also enlightens that an organization's structure and the human resource practices of selection, appraisal, rewards and development should be cohesive so as to accomplish the strategic goals of the organization.

## Disadvantages

- There is no indication to a social environment or a business strategy, nor is any awareness to the characteristics of responsibilities and functions.
- Hard HRM has been used to strengthen management prerogative and legitimize the worst employee-relations excesses of the enterprise culture (Legge, 1995a)
- The model recommends an outline for strategic HRM that believes that organizational requirements come first. Their view is that organizations exist to achieve a mission or realize objectives.

## The Harvard Model of HRM

The 'founding fathers' of the HRM concept were Beer et al (1984) who's model Boxall (1992) dubbed the 'Harvard Framework'. Beer et al (1984) believed that, many pressures are demanding a broader, more comprehensive and more strategic perspective with regard to the organization's human resources' which have created a need for 'longer- term' perspective in managing people and consideration of people as potential assets rather than merely a variable cost. Huczynski and Buchanan (2001) and Loosemore et al (2003) added that, the Harvard Model provided the needed link between "SHRM decisions, the business environment and an organization's performance". It provided a more open system model of how SHRM policy influences other organizational functions and is constrained by stakeholders and situational factors.



- It widens the context of HRM to include 'employee influence', the organization of work and the associated question of supervisory style.
- Selection criteria were based on competence, it also embraced the element of suitability and flexibility. Using the best employees fit for certain jobs led to effectiveness. Reward system aimed to attract and motivate held performance appraisal not evaluation as its tool.

### **Disadvantages**

- Harvard model is attractive from an analytical point of view. However, it focuses on high commitment as an ideal state of the work force and is somewhat Non-figurative.
- It does not distinguish between the HR-consequences of altered strategies, types of organization, situational factors and the like.

### **III. Guest Model of HRM**

Guest (1987) developed a more perspective theoretical framework according to Bratton and Gold (2003), reflecting the view that, a core set of integrated HRM practices can achieve superior individual and organizational performance. This model clearly maps out the field of HRM and classifies the inputs and outputs. It advocates a significant difference of HRM from PM. It holds that HRM strategies like differentiation, innovation, the focus on Quality and cost reduction will lead to practices like better training, appraisal, selection, rewards, job designs, involvement, and security leading to more quality outcomes; commitment and flexibility.

### **Advantages**

- The advantages of Guest Comparative model are that it tallies with Beardwell et al, 2004, pp 45, that long term innovation is an incidence of close employee interaction, coordination as groups and merging skill development with strategic goal of the organisation.

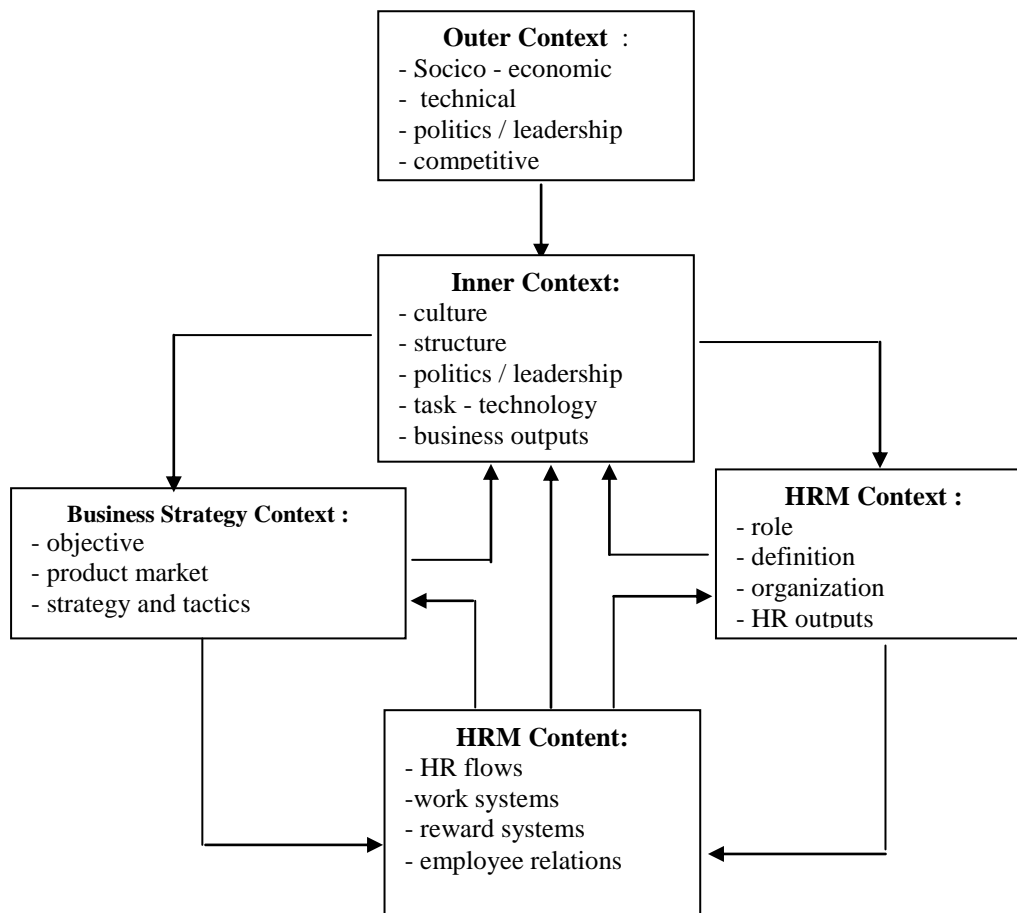
### **Disadvantages**

- Boxall (1992) suggests Guest's approach may fall into the trap of criticising practitioners  
for not conforming to an image academics have chosen for them.

### **IV. The Warwick Model of HRM**

The Warwick Model which emanated from the Centre for Corporate Studies and Change at the University of Warwick by Hendry and Pettigrew (1990) differs from the Michigan and Harvard models by reflecting European traditions and management styles. The model basically comprise five interrelated elements which allows an analysis of how external

factors impact upon the internal operations of the organization reflecting the open system theory of organizational thinking. It is based on the Harvard model, but concentrates more on policy. For example, the Harvard model has HRM policy options which consists of employee influence, human resource flow, reward systems, work system and the warwick model has HRM context which consist of human resource flows, work systems, reward system and employee relations. Harvard model has task-technology in the situational factors part. The Warwick model has task-technology in inner context.



The Warwick Model (Hendry and Pettigrew, 1990)

### Advantages

This model is most oriented to processes of change. The authors take the position that the 'outer context of HRM - i.e. socio-economic, technical, political, legal and competitive influences - affects the 'inner context': culture, structure, politics and leadership, task technology and business outputs. High performance levels of organizations are explained by the degree to which organizations manage **to adapt their inner contexts to the outer ones (Storey, 1995).**

- **Warwick model accentuates the relation between the HRM - content and the business strategy content.**

### **Disadvantages**

- The model fails to make clear how and in what ways HR-instruments like recruitment, selection; appraisal and rewarding as part of the HR-content contributes to strategy formulation and performance (Truss, 1997).

### **V. Choice Model of HRM**

The choice model (Analoui, 2002, 2007), is an integrated or holistic model for HRM. It holds those drivers for formulating HRM policies and frameworks are three sources namely; the organisation, personal and external. The organisational source includes mission statement and strategy, policies and procedures, management culture and task technology of organisation. The personal source constitutes individual frames of reference, perception, awareness, and ideology. The external sources are environmental, hence socioeconomic, political, and cultural and include a wide range of stakeholders, associations, unions and other organisations.

#### **Advantages:**

- It is holistic and integrated model that involves understanding of personal, organisational and environmental factors in the formulation of HRM policies. It supports the Stand point of MacDuffie (1995) who advocates a combination of best integrated and complementary HRM bundles to achieve better performance. This position differs with the narrow recommendations of storey (1992) that HRM bundles should be treated in isolation.

#### **Disadvantages:**

- However, the model is a process approach that can well be criticised by classical entrepreneurs for not treating employees as one of the 'aggregate commodities' of the organisation hence costly (Beardwell et al., 2004).

### **Challenges Faced by HRM Professionals**

The greatest competitive challenge faced by organizations today is speed. The very survival of entire industries and seemingly solid companies becomes challenged, sometimes overnight, by the introduction of a new technology or a virulent new competitor.

Rapid industrialization modernization and active participation of knowledge industries in business have thrown up new challenges for the HR. Some of them are:

- In the era of information technology, motivation and retention of knowledge workers for gaining a winning edge in the market is one of the most important challenges for the human resource professionals.
- Another major development, which will affect the human resource professionals, is the phenomenon of globalization. The physical movement of the people across borders is one aspect of globalization. Another aspect of globalization is the management of enterprises in different countries where the cliché "think global act

local" has to be practiced. Sensitivity to the individual culture and ethos of different countries will be a special challenge for the managers of human resources.

- Another important challenge is increasing competition. In a highly competitive environment, what ultimately provides the cutting - edge is people with innate talent, imagination, a sense of loyalty and can do spirit. Attraction and retention of talent, therefore, are going to be permanent challenges for the managers of the human resources in the years to come.
- Corporate restructuring has inflicted fear and stress in the minds of the employees - fear of the loss of job, transfer to new job locations, job changes, including roles and assignments, changes in the remuneration pattern or in the overall growth plan. The role of HR department in managing such vulnerability is quite important as it is primarily responsible for integrating individuals and the organization.
- Newer organizational designs have equally thrown up several challenges before the HR professionals. Organizations of today are not based on the classical approach of division of labour, departmentation, authority responsibility parity and hierarchical levels. These have moved from bureaucratic to adaptive structure, from mechanistic to organic structure, from tall to flat structure. The companies are adopting the concept of virtual organization.
- Changing job profiles will put greater pressure on HR department for HRP, job descriptions and specifications for dynamic jobs and matching job requirements with the characteristics of the job holders through recruitment and selection. In fact, many experts suggest that recruitment responsibility should be assigned to personnel search agencies.

### **Challenges Faced by HRM Professionals in IT Industry**

The Indian IT industry poses a baffling challenge to HR professionals from recruitment to retainment, compensation to career planning and from technological obsolescence to labour turnover. This problem can be tackled with the use of HR planning which in itself is a challenging task in IT industry. Determining the strength required for the near future is a very complex problem in an IT companies. Building on its growth over the last few years, the Indian IT sector has emerged among the leading employment providers of the country with nearly 2.3 million people being directly employed in the IT-BPO industry. Growth has given rise to predictable challenges of managing people, who owing to the nature of the sector, form one of the most critical assets of the IT delivery chain.

### **Training and Development**

Gevrey thinks that the recruit's level of competencies and their job expectations can only be fully understood once they have entered the initial training programme.

Employee Training and Development is necessary to the constant success of every organization. Employee training and development enables employees to develop skills and competencies necessary to enhance bottom-line results for their organization.



Though quality manpower is the resultant symbol of hard work being done by the HR manager, but challenge for HR managers to put systems in place to make the people a perfect fit for the job prevails. Skill redundancy is fast in the Indian industry, with the changing time and even fast changing technologies Indian companies have started realizing the importance of corporate training and to overcome this omen organisations give the extreme priority to training and skill enhancement programs on continuous basis. Today, training is considered as a tool for employee retention. The cost incurred on training an individual in a company is recovered if the employee improves his skills after the training is imparted and the productivity is raised. Indian companies accomplish their requisite of skilled workforce by providing on-the-job trainings and other internal educational programs which are designed to quickly improve the expertise of new recruits especially in the high-tech industry. According to NASSCOM there is a tremendous rise in the IT corporate training market which was expected to reach Rs. 600 crore in 2010 from Rs. 210 crore in 2006.

### **Talent Management Practices**

The major challenges impacting industries are globalisation, technology, outsourcing and the talent crunch. The biggest challenge amongst these is the shortage of skilled manpower. India may possess the distinction of producing large number of technically qualified graduates from its various colleges and technical institutes year after year. However, there exists a significant gap in between the numbers and the skill sets required in jobs. This phenomenon is reflected in the hiring trends of IT industries which hire any engineer and not Computer Engineers only depending on the background of these recruits. Since the business model of IT companies is dependent on a high-quality workforce with specialized product/process knowledge, a shortage of experienced workers in the labor market is likely challenge their ability to deliver value to customers. Talent management should aim at making employees help top managers in steering project process as per each individual's capability level. It should also provide a framework to optimize employee competencies for greater measurable value. This may lead to accomplishment of individual as well as organizational goals leading to a win-win situation.

### **Some of the best practices:**

**Aim to create a shared vision:** Successful IT organizations aim to create a shared vision among employees, aligning them to the direction of a company. There is a need to develop a culture of trust and collective accountability which can enable a sense of belongingness among employees and lead them enhanced to corporate citizenship. To do this, the participation of higher management is extremely important in building a culture of open communication and transparency in processes. Attributes such as providing healthy work conditions, encouraging healthy work-life balance, providing flexibility of schedule can also help in developing cordial and trust-based relations with employees.

**Dual-career path:** Companies should encourage a dual career path approach to provide opportunities in both Technical and Managerial roles. In most organizations, employees continue to grow in Management roles but are not motivated to augment their Technical capabilities. Running a parallel technical career path can help organizations become more dynamic and have a culture conducive to innovation and IP creation.

**Sound Performance Management System:** A Performance management system which assesses employee performance objectively and is also seen as being fair by the employees goes a long way in assuring employees that their career needs are being addressed by the organization. At the same time, a robust PMS helps the organization identify its top talent across levels and the former can formulate development and retention strategies for this group of employees.

**Training & Development expenses are seen as Investment:** Identification of competencies required at various levels is the first step towards ensuring the all round development of the workforce. As per the gaps identified between competencies required and skills possessed by an individual, it is necessary to develop your workforce through trainings, both classroom and E Learning, conducting internal certification courses and Individual Development Plans. As employees start recognizing the benefits they accrue by way of gain in competencies, not only do they start feeling empowered, any gain in existing skill levels benefit the organization by way of increased productivity.

**Succession Planning frameworks are a norm in IT organizations which have helped India emerge as an IT powerhouse:** Not only does succession planning signals to employees that their performance and tenure in the organization are going to be rewarded by career growth, but it also ensures the promotion of best suited incumbents for key roles. A comprehensive succession planning framework involves identification of key competencies for the leadership of tomorrow's organization, assessment of available (internal and external) talent pool for the leadership roles, coaching, mentoring and requisite seasoning of identified successors, facilitated on-boarding and initial handholding followed by handing over of independent charge to the new leader.

**Developing High Potential:** While talent management may ideally aim at developing potential of each or most of the employee pool, in an IT organization, which typically employs a very large number of people, it may not be feasible for having a development strategy for each individual in organization. Likewise, even with growth, senior level positions in organizations are limited by design. Hence, the organization needs to identify employees who are top performers, constantly perform tasks which are beyond their defined scope of work and have the potential to be leaders of tomorrow.

### **Unlocking the HR potential**

With increasing challenges, it will be the Indian IT industry's ability to harness opportunities will depend on its strategic business planning, hiring of the 'right' talent', paying the 'right' compensation and developing and retaining its employees the 'right' way. Companies have also realized that it is important to have diverse and gender inclusive workforce to be an open and innovative organization. To include diversity, there is a need for reorientation of leadership and management styles to accommodate different set of needs and the growing aspirations of personnel. With increasing complexity of tasks, companies may leverage professional expertise of consultants who can help companies develop comprehensive competency assessment models and frameworks such as models based on People Capability Maturity Model (PCMM), a five-level capability architecture which aims at continuously improving individual competencies and institutionalizing new capabilities for developing the organization's workforce. Using approaches and practices like these can help firms unlock their investments on intellectual capital, which forms a substantial portion of budgets in IT/ITES industry.

### Attrition / Retention of Talent Pool

Training and performance together helps in retention of the employees, but at the times one of the toughest challenges for the HR managers in the industry is to deal with the prevalent high attrition rate. Though there is an adequate supply of qualified staff at entry level, there are huge gaps in the middle and senior level management in the industry. Attrition is expected to intensify the demand for experienced resources. Interestingly, research has indicated that compensation may not necessarily be the prime motivator for people to shift jobs in this industry. More than compensation, there can be several other factors such as need for career growth (for example, high attrition rate among fresh-graduate employees post two-three years when they move out for higher studies) or to maintain a healthier personal life (one of the primary reasons for attrition of female employees). Due to diverse reasons as these, Organization face a number of challenges in retaining employees, some of these include:

**Deciding the appropriate compensation:** Competitive compensation is widely recognized as a foundation for retention. With a large number of options available to IT professionals, relatively low compensation levels may not necessarily be made up by an excellent corporate culture or working atmosphere. At the same time, much of the Indian competitive edge, had historically been built on availability of relatively cheap manpower, which is diminishing on account of the rise in salary levels in India, and more importantly, emergence of cheaper manpower sources in form of countries like the Philippines for example. Hence, organizations, even when willing, may not be in a position to offer the highest of salaries to their employees.

**Productivity of workforce:** With the increasing expectations of customers and growing attrition in the industry, companies find it difficult to maintain consistency in quality and derive the same level of productivity from employees. It is also significantly important to address productivity issues as the reductions in productivity are likely to, directly impact the revenues and margins of the company

Following are the retention strategies being followed by top IT COMPANIES

| Employers | Key Drives to Attract and Retain Talent   |
|-----------|---|
| Wipro     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Company’s brand as an Employer.</li> <li>➤ Early Opportunities for growth.</li> <li>➤ High degree of autonomy.</li> </ul>  |
| Infosys   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Fostering a sense of belongingness, creative artistic and social activities for the employees and their families.</li> <li>➤ Initiating one of the best ‘corporate universities’ in the world .</li> </ul> |

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| TCS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ The group brand equity.</li><li>➤ Strong corporate governance and citizenship.</li><li>➤ Commitment to learning and development.</li><li>➤ A choice of working in over 170 offices across 40 countries in a variety of areas.</li><li>➤ Challenging assignments.</li><li>➤ Paternity leave for adoption of a girl child.</li></ul> |
|-----|--|

### **Outsourcing of HR Functions: - The virtual HR organization**

The trends towards outsourcing have been caused by several strategic and operational motives. HR departments are divesting themselves from mundane activities to focus more on strategic role. Outsourcing has also been used to help reduce bureaucracy and to encourage a more responsive culture by introducing external market forces into the firm through the bidding process. It is a big challenge before the HR manager to prove that his/her department is as important as any other functions in the organization. The relevance of HR is at stack.

### **The Diverse workforce**

Handling a diverse workforce has become one of the toughest challenges for the HR department in the era of globalization due to scattered employee strength, representing different regions of the world. It will persist as a trend for certain years to come in the future as well. Diversity is not just about managing employment equity but is one of the most crucial strategic tools used by the HR department for facilitating a healthy competitive spirit amongst the employees and attaining and retaining the best of the talent pool available in the market. Understanding and predicting the psychographics and professional needs of the diverse workforce is one of the most crucial responsibilities of our present day HR managers. In the current scenario, the HR professionals must make attempts for providing state of the art cross-cultural training and developing virtual organizations, which would offer flexibility and empowerment to the employees. HR Plays a crucial role in managing diversity by communicating the clear - cut performance standards. Diversity issues can be successfully managed by holding periodic training programs along with the mentoring sessions and proper reward strategy.

### **Work - Life Balance**

Balancing work & life assumes relevance when both husband and wife are employed. Travails of a working housewife are more than a working husband, thus balancing it is becoming a major challenge for HR manager. So a programme aiming balancing work-life is required and are supposed to include: Childcare at or near the workplace, Job Sharing, Care for sick children and employees, On-site summer camp, Training supervisors to respond to work and family needs of employees, Flexible work scheduling, Sick leave policies, Variety of errands from dry cleaning, dropping children at schools, making dinner reservations etc and many more like the same or other.

## Conclusion:

Human resource Management will be the key area of focus in 21st century as in companies and government organization put in place strategies to cope up with the economical crisis and recovery. The so called “war for talent” is on the backburner as the focus shifts to hiring freezes, benefits and compensation cost management, and workforce reduction in the hardest- hit segment and as the era of skill-based workers has arrived but if India wants to truly move to the global arena, it has to spruce up its workforce. Small may be beautiful, but not in the IT industry. In the knowledge era and a skill-based economy, it has become imperative that human resources become one of the most essential ingredients of success. The growth of IT companies worldwide depends on its people and the intellectual capital it possesses. ‘Knowledge workers’ has become a buzzword in today’s IT scenario. And if we look at the top software exporters, they have been growing phenomenally in workforce strength. To make it big in the global software market, India needs to increase its mass of knowledge workers.

The study leads to the conclusion that though the concept in the field of Human Resource Management is in implementation to one extent in Indian IT Industry, still it has to cover a extensive path to make its arrival at door of every Indian organization. Hence we can say that Initiation of the usage of the concepts is something required but continuous usage and then reaching the heights is something which is essential and this is the point where Indian corporate lacks, which supports the fact that Indian HR is like a ship that has left the sea shore but still is on middle path and has long journey to cover.

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