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FACULTY ENGAGEMENT - THE NEED OF THE HOUR

Dr. G. John¹ and N. Remya²

¹Associate Professor, Department of Commerce, St. Joseph's College, Trichy.

²PhD Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, St. Joseph's College, Trichy.

ABSTRACT

All organizations strive to get the right people for the right roles at the right time and endeavor to retain, nurture and innovate to create highly efficient employees. The important factor that paves the way to attain preeminence is employee engagement. Employee engagement has emerged as a critical drive of every organization in today's globalized world. When an organization moves forward into edge less environment the ability to attract, engage, develop and retain talents becomes increasingly important in achieving sustainability. In a nutshell, Employee Engagement has become an inevitable factor for the survival of any organization including Indian Higher Education Sector (HES) in this scenario. In this paper an attempt has been made to understand the concept, need for faculty engagement and its current scenario in HES, which helps the institutions to direct faculty to be more provoked, dedicated, and loyal for societal development and student's development.



KEYWORDS: Employee Engagement, Faculty Engagement, Higher Education Sector.

INTRODUCTION :

In today's war for superiority, organizations are not just retaining talents, but finding a way to engaging them, capturing their minds and hearts at each stage of their work lives. A successful organization is built with its employees' contribution. Contribution of engaged employees is vital for an organization to attain its supremacy in an era of cut throat competition. Employee engagement is more than satisfaction and beyond commitment. It is about how an organization creates the circumstances in which employees proffer more of their abilities and potentials to preserve a healthy relationship within it and assist to accomplish its superiority in the rivalry.

'Employee engagement is based on trust, integrity, two way commitment and communication between an organization and its members.'¹ Employee engagement is an essence essential for all the organizations including higher education institutions in this competitive epoch. Hence, understanding employee engagement is the most

esteemed and critical factor of every organizations.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Defining employee engagement has been beyond the limits of our thinking and it is an emotional attachment that an employee has toward his/her organization. For all these past decades, there has been no standardized definition for employee engagement. Organizations generate their own definitions based on their workforce. The most common definition for employee engagement is “the degree of emotional commitment that an employee has for their job and organization as a whole.”²

But historically Khan, W.A. provided the first formal definition of personal engagement as “the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances.”³

The cognitive aspect of employee engagement concerns employees' beliefs about the organization, its leaders and working conditions. The emotional aspect concerns how employees feel about each of those three factors, and whether they have positive or negative attitudes toward the organization and its leaders. The physical aspect of employee engagement concerns the physical energies exerted by individuals to accomplish their roles. Thus, according to Kahn, engagement means to be psychologically as well as physically present when occupying and performing an organizational role.⁴

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT- THE NEED OF THE HOUR

Organizations make loud voice about satisfaction, commitment, motivation, career development, well-being and so on to attain the superiority of the organization. But regrettably they fail to find the root cause to attain it. Many organizations converse more about Employee Engagement, but slipped to implement it in a noteworthy manner. Why do the organizations need it? The simple answer is, Employee Engagement serves as a core competency of the organizations to attain its sustainable competitive advantage.

Hewitt associates found that, engagement is a human science which drives the organization towards double digit growth that deliver greater productivity, innovative solutions and provide superior quality and services. When an organization uses Employee Engagement as a ‘key performance metric to measure the resilience and sustainability of the organization, engagement works as the emotional and intellectual involvement that inspire employees to do their best work and contribute to the organization's success’⁵. Paul Bernthal of Development Dimensions International Inc viewed that, organizations which score high on employee engagement have more satisfied employees who were less likely to quit, and more productive⁶. In today's war for talent having highly engaged employees will help the organization to face complex challenges optimistically and lead the organization straightforward to healthy outcome and assist to uphold amicable relationship between employer and employee. Thus, it's crystal clear that employee engagement has become an inevitable factor for the survival of any organization.

CONTEMPORARY SCENARIO OF HES IN INDIA

In today's technology driven globe, the destiny of a nation depends upon research and knowledge and thus on higher education. An emerging shift in higher education plays a pivotal role for economic wealth, cross-cultural encounters, information-technology development, continuous global flow of people, cross border relationships and so on. Higher education is one of the crucial pillars for the success of any nation. It is a powerful tool which makes the society as a knowledge pedestal civilization. At present higher education in India is at the phase of evolution and this is the stage where higher education in India should search for a new path. Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (2014) revealed that Indian higher education institutions are facing powerful competition from foreign institutions. The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM 2012) exposed that almost eight lakh Indian students spend more than INR 100 billion on studies abroad in the year 2012-2013. Furthermore, 3, 50,000 estimated shortfall of faculty were there in Indian Universities in 2015.

However, after the eleventh five year plan the Indian HES has seen an incredible enlargement in terms of the number of higher education institutions and enrollment; still, it's facing plentiful challenges on disparate counts such as ‘inequitable and low access to higher education, dearth of competent faculty, deficient infrastructure, and most importantly inadequate research’⁷. Albeit many changes have been taking place, there is still an urgent call for

some transformation and enhancement in the quality of higher education. Thus it's evident that demand for skilled personnel persists to sharpen the need for effective engagement in higher education. As a result, the call for talent sharpens engagement in higher education arena globally.

FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

The National Policy on Education (1986) has precisely mentioned that the status of a teacher echoes the socio-cultural viewpoint of a civilization. Faculty continues to play a distinctive role in the revitalization of the society. Consequently, faculties are one of the prime input factors for improving the standards in higher education. High excellence teaching faculties are a mainspring of triumphant system. Attracting and retaining high quality teacher is thus the underlying stipulation of an educational institution.

In this current scenario, higher education sectors are facing inimitable challenges in retaining and engaging faculty. Faculty Engagement in higher education is considerably diverse from the corporate sector. But the needs for implementing it blow like a rumble in HES. Most of the higher education institutions fail to track its faculty engagement, which stresses the need for institutions to reconsider priorities of faculty engagement and to implement changes. Hence, the indispensable element which paves the way for thriving and impactful higher education is Faculty Engagement.

A flexible institution with highly engaged faculty would rapidly adapt new challenges and opportunities for sustainability. Inventive, potential and keen academicians in higher education would materialize towards students' development and communal development. When a faculty is engaged, he/she will build the innovations and perk up the overall sustainability of an institution. They would assist the students turn-out to be more creative, stronger and more coherent; thereby engaged faculty helps to strengthen the values and culture of an institution. Furthermore, they build the competency-based prospectus from A to Z, and provide sound development thoughts for students' learning. Engaged faculty are highly provoked, dedicated, and loyal and are typically superior performers, fabricating better results for both the students and the institution. Therefore, by bringing in engaged faculty, they would prove to be the beau ideal leaders of higher educational institutions, leading to the transformation of higher education.

CONCLUSION

Faculty engagement is a continuous process and can't be a one-size-fits-all approach. Engaged faculty are like a bag of trick, who help in attaining the competitive superiority of an organization. An engaged faculty would feel a sense of purpose towards their role and would willingly devote more time, effort, and initiatives to contribute to the institutions' prosperity. Thus, it is really important to source feedback and suggestions from faculty to build an effective engagement strategy that would benefit the institution as well as the students. When higher education identifies its faculty more than any other variables and enhance them for quality, it would naturally pave way for unbeatable sustainability and thereby leading to incredible advancement in the Higher education sector.

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