

Is Employee Empowerment A Penacia For Ills Of Industries? A Study

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Abstract- The idea Empowerment of employees is not new but it has been practiced for a long time in Socialist countries of Europe. The present paper deals with employee empowerment models and application of employee participation in some aspects of production and distribution in some labor intensive industries in India. The paper examines the practical aspects of employee empowerment in different areas of industry and its pros and cons in India contemporary industrial scenario where majority of employees is untrained and socially deprived.

I. INTRODUCTION

Employee empowerment is defined as the power giving employees autonomy and responsibility according to their main institutional skills where they have unique talents and issues. Employee empowerment is not a new concept, as it is practiced in a number of countries in Asia and Europe such as China, India, Russia, Hungary etc., but there is a dilemma over the applicability of the idea. Right from the beginning, it has been felt that the assumption of employee empowerment has doubtful credentials, especially in the area of labour intensive industries. Another pertinent doubt on employee empowerment is whether Indian labour force, especially, untrained labourers, is ready to be empowered?

2. LITERARY REVIEW

Notwithstanding the misconceptions that surround “Employee Empowerment”, majority of industries are in favor of the concept. When employees are given the power to their say at work, it is associated with stronger performance, job satisfaction and belongingness to the organization of their work (Allan Lee, Sara Willis & Amy Wei Tian, 2018). The main discussion of empowerment is always centered round the concept of delegation of duties to various departments at the higher helms of organizational hierarchy. The delegation has always been easier with certain set of well trained and well informed persons at the top of the organization. According to Thomas and Velthouse (1990) that employee’s empowerment is to be seen as a socialist concept that involves social, economic and political dimensions.

They further maintained that an enhanced task motivation that manifested in a set of conditions such as skill, initiative, impact and reference, etc. (Spreitzer, G M, 1995). Number of studies (Thomas, Tymon 1994; Ugboro, Obeng 2000) revealed significant connection between empowerment and employee satisfaction. Klagge (1998) argues that more the empowerment, more the benefits both for the employees and the organization.

Some researchers (Ugboro, Obeng 2000; Bailey 2009: 1; GanjiNia et al. 2013) strongly advocate that empowerment is an efficacious tool that determines job satisfaction and motivation of the employees in a standard organisational structure. Thomas and Tymon (1994) are of the opinion that empowerment results in greater degree of job satisfaction. Yasothai et al. (2015) maintains that empowerment constitutes as a vital factor that determines employee satisfaction. Since empowerment improves employees' initiative to work, work satisfaction and devotion to their work and organization, that will inturn result in restricting the tendency of absenteeism, labour turnover and low productivity among the workers (Wagner, Herter 2006)

3. THE ASSUMPTIONS

The basic assumptions involve the concept of empowerment are;

1. The empowerment results in greater autonomy among the employees.
2. The industries at the initial stages can make the employee to work for the overall development of the individual firms.
3. The employees find it more convenient to work in an empowered and fully charged environment which will in turn result in satisfaction of being a partner in the progress of the work unit.
4. When the autonomy is given to the employees, they are prone to develop a great internal value system with which their moral strength increases to a great level.
5. The employees are at home with the work structure and they are able to understand the difficulties of the management that results in low levels of absenteeism and labour turnover.
6. Initially, the employees are particular about wage structure and terms and conditions of the work. With the active implementation of empowerment, the focus on wage structure shifts to improvement of work quality and work output.

These basic assumptions are verifiable and have universal application. The main question arises whether the idea of empowerment is applicable in the area of untrained workers, who are particularly motivated by market wage structure and minimum working conditions. The untrained labour force has no long term goals and general sense of belonging towards the organization. Then the impact of hierarchy or organizational goals is not felt deeply. Further, even if this untrained workforce is given autonomy, it is doubtful whether they are able to be empowered.

4. AN EXAMPLE OF EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

The fitting example of empowerment is foundation of Lijjat Papad industry which was established by unlettered women of remote Gujarat who know nothing except rolling of papads at home.

The saga of Lijjat Papads began and it continues to be an inspiration to the labour intensive industries in India. Shri Mahila Grih Udyog Lijjat Papad was established as a small scale industry in 1959, when a group of seven women having no background either in work or in business plunged in the field of rolling papads at a upper part of a small building in Girgaum, situated in South Bombay.

By dint of self advertising in a local newspaper contributed to the rapid growth of the group, and its membership increased from 7 to 300 during the first three years. Chhaganbapa, the guiding force behind Shri Mahila Grih Udyog, counselled these women to maintain high standards of production at any cost, the practice which later

proved to be their main strength. The branches of Lijjat, developed in a leaps and bounds and today it has branches in 17 Indian states. In the case of trained employee empowerment, the Hungarian Model of workers' participation in the production process and decision making is to be followed.

In this system, the management rents the machinery to the employees after working hours and the production during these hours completely belongs to the workers. The profits that are generated by this segment of production will reach the workers. Thus, the employees are empowered in this way and the average and total productivity will increase in a drastic way.

5. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the idea of empowerment is tenable beyond any doubt. The basic things that are needed are initiative on the part of both employees and management to empower the employees. By following these models, Industries are not only empowering the employees but also the industries themselves. The ills of the industries such as labour absenteeism, turn over, lockouts, low productivity will automatically be cured by employee empowerment.

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