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MANAGING HOSPITALITY WORKFORCE – VICIOUSLY WORRISOME FOR HUMAN CAPITAL SPECIALISTS IN VARIOUS RESORTS OF UTTARAKHAND

SHIKHA CHANDNA
RESEARCH SCHOLAR
JAIPUR NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
JAIPUR

DR. J. K. TANDON
PROFESSOR
JAIPUR NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
JAIPUR

ABSTRACT

Human Capital Specialists play a pivotal role in organisational performance by contributing significantly in the form hiring right, accurate and effective training, regular development, harmonious industrial relations and fair-cum-justified compensation design along with maintaining proliferative culture in an organisation. However, restrained resources and obliviousness of management tends to create ruckus in the organisation. Management seeks to acquire profits and is more task-oriented rather than people-oriented. This trend is vicious and leads to reduced commitment and efficiency of employees which in turn is detrimental for the concerned organisation. People, in general, look forward to joining hotels merely for job and fail to analyse the obtainability of long-term career in the industry. In other words, both management and employees/potential human capital are unable to conjoin and end-up working with a short-term approach with the objective of self-interests only. It is the need of the HR professionals to adopt a collaborative approach to establish a permanent relationship between the management and employees, which can certainly result higher outputs with organizational citizenship in employees.

KEYWORDS

human capital, industrial relations, proliferative culture, organizational citizenship.

INTRODUCTION

Indian Hospitality Industry has witnessed an exponential growth in recent years particularly for the Common Wealth Games held in 2010. The credit for the exemplary success goes not merely to the entrepreneurs, but the employees (workforce) as well. However, after 2010, it is challenging for the hotels and resorts to survive the competition. The very first idea that clicks with the top management is cost-cutting which has a direct influence on the existing employees and also, the employability of classified hotels in our country. As per Mr. Walia (President-FHRAI), there is a need for around 1,80,000 rooms in India to cater to the guests with respect to its tourism infrastructure.

In India, as per 2014 records, the apex National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (Min. of Tourism, Govt. of India) alone has 21 central institutes, 16 state institutes and 14 private institutes affiliated with it with a capacity of 7,482 students in all for fresh-entrants. In fact, there are many more such institutions being run across the country with the approval of All India Council of Technical Education (Min. of HRD, Govt. of India), affiliated to their respective State Technical Universities. All of these institutes/colleges in totality, create a pool of thousands of fresh graduates / diploma-holders. Under such circumstances, the problem pops-up with the Human Resources Management teams designated specifically to cater to the needs of the industry in terms of providing qualified and skilled manpower. Moreover, the remuneration and other statutory provisions cannot be compromised on in lieu of the monetary control being kept by the top management of hotels and resorts. This becomes truly challenging for the concerned HR functionaries. Such challenges cannot be over-looked and need to be dealt with competently.

This paper highlights the general problems and their feasible solutions for creating and maintaining growth-oriented harmonious organizational climate in Hospitality establishments in India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Joyce Gioia, CEO, Employer of Choice, Inc. states that there are five major challenges in hospitality industry which are: Hiring Right, Bonding during the On-boarding Process, Engaging your long-tenured employees, Retention of valued employees and Succession planning and future proofing which must be done appropriately for improved performance and better outcomes.

R. Aishwarya and Ganesh, M. P. (2013), through their research emphasized on the importance of recognition of Indian hoteliers for their job at their workplace. Also, personal accomplishments give a thrust in employees towards further job involvement and minimizes the possibilities of quitting from their respective jobs. **Bharwani, Sonia and Butt, Neetu** (2012), change management and intervention, effective training and development techniques, suitable engagement and motivational initiatives can bring out the best from the employees.

Mandal, Pulak and Gaurav, Vishal (2012), through their research on Attrition and Dissatisfaction among employees in Indian Hotels, they iterated on its main reasons being long working hours and low Career progression.

According to **Yang, Hui-O and Cherry, Nita** (2008), there are three major challenges in the hospitality industry across the globe: Service Quality, Training and Development, and Recruitment and Selection. Top-level managers do accept these as challenges but are still focussed towards operational rather than strategic solutions. Although, HR has a key role to play in sustainable development, but management prioritizes operational areas of the industry more as compared to employee development.

Nagar, Natwar (2009) emphasizes on the impact of Compensation and easy loans, Leadership and Role-models, New Talent building, effective general management to maintain balance in the hopes and the despairs of employees (hoteliers).

Macey and Schnieder (2008) developed a framework for understanding the elements of employee framework. They bifurcated the framework into trait engagement (proactive personality, trait positive affect and conscientiousness), state engagement (satisfaction, involvement, commitment and empowerment), and behavioural engagement (organisational citizenship, personal initiative, role expansion and adaptation) of employees.

Lawrence Nurse and Dwayne Devonish (2007), found through their research that the organisational procedures and their implementation led to positive perception towards workplace justice by employees.

Mark A. Huselid (1995), found that efficient HR practices have an economically and statistically significant HR impact on both intermediate employee outcomes (turnover and productivity) and short- and long-term measures of corporate financial performance.

Uco J. Wiersma (1992), found that intrinsic and extrinsic rewards are additive towards employee motivation at workplace.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To highlight the problems which Human Capital Specialists are facing in Resort properties of Uttarakhand (The problems which are very prominent in resorts of Uttarakhand state of India since its inception)
2. To focus on the measures for overcoming the aforesaid problems (In this competitive environment, overcoming the problems to avoid brain drain and ensure harmonious performance-driven approach of employees)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a research which encapsulates recently occurring problems in Indian Hotels in context of Manpower Management.

1. Research Type: Exploratory Research
2. Sample Unit: Managerial staff in Resort Properties
3. Sample Area: Uttarakhand (India)
4. Sample Size: 18
5. Sampling Technique: Convenience-cum-Judgement Sampling
6. Data Collection Method: Questionnaire
7. Data Collection: Primary through Questionnaire and Secondary through Online sources and textual material (books and journals)
8. Data Analysis and Interpretation: Through graphical representations and past reviews

DATA COLLECTION

A total of 18 resort properties were contacted. One employee each (of managerial cadre) from the HR/Admin. department of concerned properties responded to the questionnaire and their details are as per following:

Gender	Male	13
	Female	5

Education-level	Graduate	6
	Post-graduate	12

Age-group (in years)	25-30	1
	30-35	4
	35-40	7
	40-45	6

Income-group (in Thousand Rupees)	30-40	8
	40-50	6
	50-60	4

FINDINGS AND ANALYSES

TABLE 1

Factors / Rating	Very Poor (1)	Poor (2)	Average (3)	Good (4)	Very Good (5)
Necessary Quantity of Recruitments	0	0	1	12	5
Essential Qualifications	0	2	11	4	1
Desired Experience of Recruits	0	4	6	6	2
Response from other departments about employees	0	0	5	8	5
Discipline among Employees	0	0	4	9	5
Sound relations among different departments	0	0	6	9	3
Employee Participation in Training	0	4	3	7	4
Response to policy/norms changed	0	0	4	10	4
Attendance of employees at times at workplace	0	3	5	6	4
Authenticity of Superior during performance appraisal of subordinates	0	0	4	9	5
Attrition rate annually	0	3	9	5	1

However, the respondents also mentioned additional information in the open-ended question asked in the questionnaire. Therefore, on account of the above data and individual statements asserted by respondents in the open-ended questions, following information was revealed:

1. **Unawareness about the Industry:** The students opting Hospitality programmes are unaware about the actual scenario prevalent in Indian Hotels/Resorts. This leads to creation of fantasies about the discipline and without analysing the repercussions, individuals select the Hotel Management courses.
2. **Unprepared Mind-set and Over-expectations:** Students need to have a bent of mind towards Service rendering and further, they should NOT have misconceptions about sudden growth in hospitality industry, since the industry is purely based on performance and guest satisfaction.
3. **Instability in Employment:** The fickle-minded approach of employees in greed of more salary and position in less number of years causes instability in their career. Consequently, they are unable to reap long-term benefits of being a hotelier and tend to switch-over jobs very frequently.
4. **Superior-subordinate Conflicts:** Service-industry is a 24-hour realm. Hospitality being typically customer/guest-oriented experiences a lot of work-load leading to unfathomable friction between senior employees and junior staff/novices. For HR professionals, it becomes very challenging keeping in mind the never-ending need of front-line employees and the egos of managerial staff.
5. **Attrition Issue:** The biggest challenge, viciously worrisome, retention of employees, since every year increments may not be admirable, internal problems and rising competition makes attrition rate go high, which becomes very difficult with the HR to reduce.

SUGGESTIONS

1. **POSITIVE OUTLOOK AND GAP ABRIDGEMENT:** According to **Chuang et al. (2007) Hospitality graduates who have clear and more realistic expectations are more likely to join and have a longer tenure in the industry.** At the start, student's take-up hotel management courses without any prior guidance and are unaware of the existing scenario. Soon after the industrial training, their dreams are apparently shattered and they start venturing for alternatives to stay away from hotels/resorts. It is important for institutional management and faculty-members to provide adequate guidance and clear picture about the reality. In addition, co-relating academics with industry along with iteration on the techniques and practices which are followed as per the industry standards to avoid disastrous mix-ups are inevitably important. This can be taken forward positively via Industry-Academia interface, where industry professionals interact with students and keep them abreast with the latest in the industry. Students do feel motivated by the exchange of words.

2. **CLEARLY DEFINED RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION:** As per Kevin Johnson (Demand Media), *employing right person for a business reduces turnover if conducted effectively. These processes match the right person with the right job.* Industry demands NOT sedentary but a laborious work at the initial (front-line) level. Simply acquiring good scores in hospitality degree/diploma programmes cannot serve the motive. It becomes important for HR to identify the needs, conduct job analysis and design specifications in commensuration with the description pertaining to various profiles. Since skills cannot be measured with the academic scores, HR has to ensure right kind of persons for right kind of profiles in order to avoid mal-adjustments. Once the selection has been made, challenges increase manifold.
3. **WELL-DESIGNED CAREER PATH AND SUCCESSION PLANNING:** As per Walsh and Taylor (2007), *after having acquired adequate education, individuals cannot be retained unless they are provided developmental opportunities.* With the objective of retaining employees for a long-term association, employees should be kept in confidence and updated with regard to their upward movement on the career-ladder. It holds significant for all cadres of employees including the managerial personnel for justified promotions and transfers.
4. **BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES AND GRIEVANCES REDRESSING:** As per an article published online, it has been iterated that *employees should feel positive about their identity and there should be strong and healthy relations among employees. Indiscipline must be corrected via appropriate means of reinforcement.* In Indian Hotels, not all trained people apply the concepts of Organisational Behaviour. When the house-count and service-burden is high, the prevailing mechanistic culture becomes agonising. It is often seen that subordinates are pressurized and mal-handled by the superiors which in turn generates an unhealthy environment and the subordinates are flabbergasted and begin to think on escaping or leaving the workplace. Repercussions are resignations and absconding cases. At times, if not controlled, these may end-up into major infractions and even serious disputes. Hence, the HR has to create a balance and manage all levels prudently and appropriately to prevent such frictions.
5. **EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT:** As per Maxwell (2010), *Generation Y needs a challenging job to be engaged for their further achievements and healthy utilization of their energies via proper channelling.* Another challenge which cannot be compensated by any other means is the Organisational Politics which takes a ferocious form when the players are free to exercise their will due to the lack of HR intervention. Competition takes a negative turn under the influence of undesirable elements in the organisation when they are not being checked. This results in forming of Lobby, inter-group and inter-departmental conflicts, favouritism, linguistic chauvinism, stone-walling, glass ceiling, glass cliff etc. Therefore, to maintain ethical standards and the sanctity of workplace, employees must be kept engaged in other tasks like social campaigning, cultural contest, sport tournaments etc. for which the top management must agree with irrespective of some extra investments, if needed for the good of all.
6. **PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND REWARD SYSTEM:** As per Amanda (2009), *there must be a formal appraisal system being adopted for all cadres of employees with quantifiable parameters; good enough make employees aware of their performance and also to maintain transparency and avoid discrepancies.* Transparency and justified system for evaluation of employees' performance builds a mutual trust between the employees and the management. The integrity can be sustained if the employees find the system unbiased, transparent and free from unnecessary interferences. The methods and tools of performance appraisal must be common for employees of same/different levels, be it associate, supervisory, executive and/or managerial. Accordingly, the rewards (intrinsic and extrinsic) should be administered as an encouragement to the deserving employees.
7. **FURTHER GROWTH, DEVELOPMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES AND RETENTION:** According to Kim et al. (2010), *entrants should be given specialized training specific areas of hospitality like Club Management, Event Management, Casino Management etc. which would allow them to develop expertise in their choice of work.* HR can contribute by arranging guest lectures, tie-ups with educational institutions for up gradation of qualifications, accreditations and professional certification programmes in different areas of expertise. This would further lead to incorporation of job satisfaction, whole-hearted involvement and organisational citizenship among the employees so that they can look forward for a long-term career in the concerned organisation.

CONCLUSION

These are the few observed challenges which are vicious in nature and must be accomplished not as a target, but from sustainable development point-of-view. When employees are satisfied, following are the outcomes which prove to be a boon for both organisational management and employees:

8. Improved Efficiency and Effectiveness of employees.
9. Reduced Absenteeism and Attrition rate in the concerned hotels.
10. Integrity, Cooperation and Focussed approach of employees and management on each other.
11. Stabilized workforce with initiative and innovation to achieve delightful repercussions.
12. Ethical Behaviour and Improved Quality of Life of employees.
13. Total Quality Management (continuous improvement) and Customer Satisfaction; and
14. Organisational Citizenship – employees' feelings about organisation as one family.

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