

UNIQUE HRM PRACTICES OF INNOVATIVE FIRMS IN INDIA

Pooja Sharma*

Abstract:- In this competitive world, global job mobility, skill shortage and high attrition rate makes it extremely difficult to recruit and retain the best talent in the organization. Now a day, it is not possible for companies to show good financial results and index ignoring their human resources. The recent quality management standards ISO 9001 and ISO 9004 of 2000 also focus more on people centric organizations. Thus, it becomes imperative for companies to take care of their internal customers and provide them a good and supportive environment to work. The present paper depicts some innovative and unique HR practices adopted by top companies in the country. These unique HR practices helps in building a bond between employee and the organization and making employees feel an important organ of the firm. It helps in building a relation which is much above their legal contract. These practices help in increasing employee satisfaction, employee motivation and build a positive attitude towards the organization. Sometimes these innovative practices are criticized because of no immediate impact, but in long term these innovative and unique HR practices definitely bring positivity among the employees and helps in achieving the goals of the organization.

Key words: HR Practices, Employee Motivation, Positive attitudes, Employee satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Being valuable and scarce capabilities, human resources are considered as a source of sustainable competitive advantage. The success of an organization depends upon several factors but the most vital factor that affects the organization performance is its employee. Human resources play an integral role in achieving an innovative and high-quality product or service. If the employees of an organization are satisfied with their jobs and smoothens the success path of the organization. In any organization HRM practices focuses on optimal utilization and management of their human resource effectively in order to achieve maximum output. Managing people is concerned with deciding approaches and strategies to find alternatives of how to achieve organizational goals. In energetic business atmosphere, there is a need of an approach to achieve better performance, to originate and implement HRM practices. In considerable and insubstantial extent the organizations need to invest in such practices to get a competitive advantage and win the race. The present paper is an attempt to study the HR practices followed by innovative firms in India. For this, top five innovative firms are selected for this.

Human Resources Management Practices:

Human resources management practices play a very crucial role in achieving the organization's goals and maintain the competitive advantage. HRM practices refer to organizational activities directed at managing the pool of human resource and ensuring that the resources are employed towards the fulfillment of organizational goals. Human resource management practices is the management of people within the internal environment of organizations, comprises the activities, policies, and practices involved in planning,

obtaining, developing, utilizing, evaluating, maintaining, and retaining the appropriate numbers and skill mix of employees to achieve the organization's objectives. Today the organizations are competing through implementing the unique HRM practices and due to the globalization organizations adopt the most up-to-date HRM practices in order to accomplish the organizational goals. Best HRM practices are advantageous for both employee as well as employer. It plays an important role in constructive growth and development of the organization. HRM practices try to develop and allocate human capital in the best possible ways in order to achieve long-term goals; they provide them with many benefits and good environments that would boost employee's motivation, job satisfaction, and increase their performance.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section of the study deals with the review of existing studies on this topic. **Sharma and Purang (2000)** in their study Value Institutionalization and HRD Climate: A Case Study of a Navratna public sector organisation, found a positive relationship between value institutionalization and HRD climate in a large public sector organisation, meaning thereby that a better and more ethical environment of the organization shall lead to a better HRD climate for the organisation. **T.V. Rao** in his book on "The HRD Machinery" explained HRD instruments, processes and outcomes, HRD Departments and their tasks, structuring the HRD function, qualities, and competence requirement of HRD managers, developing HRD managers, traps and temptations of HRD managers and HRD instruments". **Balader R. Sharma** in his study on "Human Resource

Management in Banking Industry” studied managerial beliefs, work technology and organizational climate. P. Amsa in his paper „Organization culture base for effective HRM in Banks” studied HRD related areas in brief in addition to various issues related to human resource management. **Ramana Murthy** has discussed in this article on “Human Factor in Banks,” the significance of human factor and trade unions in the banks. S.R. Varde in his paper on “Manpower Planning” at the level of an Indian commercial bank dealt with the aspects like basic structure of manpower planning, linkage of manpower plan to other plans, interrelationship of various manpower functions, objectives of manpower planning in Indian commercial banks, anatomy of manpower plans and techniques of manpower planning. N.R. Seth discussed growth, functioning and progress of trade unions in Indian banks. P. Subba Rao, have discussed the role of counselling, performance counselling and action planning in his paper on “Bank Branch Manager as a Counsellor.” **Katou (2008)** conducted a study to measure the impact of HRM practices on organizational performance in manufacturing sector of Greece. The results indicated that the relationship between HRM practices (resourcing and development, compensation and incentives, involvement and job design) and organizational performance is partially mediated through HRM outcomes (skills, attitudes, behavior), and it is influenced by business strategies (cost, quality, innovation). The study concluded that HRM practices are associated with business strategies will affect organizational performance through HRM outcomes. **Majumder (2012)** to gain an insight into the current HRM practices (recruitment and selection systems, compensation package, job security, career growth, training and development, management style, job design and responsibilities, reward and motivation and working environment) and its impact on employee’s satisfaction on the private banking sector in Bangladesh. The study revealed that most of the employees are dissatisfied with compensation package followed by reward and motivation, career growth, training and development, management style, and job design and responsibilities. **Hussain and Rehman (2013)** examined the relationship between the HRM practices implemented by the organization on employee’s intention to stay and work effectively for the organization. The result of the study explored that HRM practices viz-a-viz: person-organization fit, employment security, communication and training and development are contributing strongly in developing the employees’ intentions to stay with organization. Further, strong positive inter-relationships were found between HRM practices and employees’ retention and such practices enhances employees’ retain ability of organizations. Thus the review of the existing studies

reveals that there is dearth of literature on HR practices especially in Indian MNCs and with this need present study has been undertaken here. Mathi and Malathi (2013) in their paper on „HR practices in IT sector- An overview” studied the latest trends in human resource management of IT firms. Top trends or practices reported by the study were- cash bonus, ESOPs, project completion lunch, joining bonus, tax saving incentives, corporate discounts, reward & recognition, sponsored holidays, insurance schemes, leadership development, flexi timing, employee wellbeing and health, inclusion and diversity.

Research Methodology:

The present paper aims to study the HR practices followed by innovative companies in India. For this top five innovative companies (as rated by Forbes’ most innovative companies, 2013) has been selected and their HR practices have been studied. Sun Pharma Ltd. has been left out from the final sample as per the non availability of the required information. Study is empirical in nature and based on secondary information collected from websites of companies, newspapers article, reports, journals and other reliable sources.

Table: 1 Top Innovative Multi National Companies (MNCs) of India in 2013

Rank	Company	12-Month Sales Growth (%)	5-Year Annualized Total Return (%)	Innovation Premium*
14	Hindustan Unilever	8.2	21.4	54.7
57	Tata Consultancy Services	30	27.7	39.6
58	Larsen & Toubro	13.3	9.4	39.4
65	Sun Pharma Industries	42.4	37.8	38.3
96	Bajaj Auto	-	22.7	31.7

(Source: Most Innovative Companies Ranking Forbes”, 2013)

UNIQUE HRM PRACTICES

The HRM practices of selected firms are mentioned in the following section:-

A. *Hindustan Unilever Limited :*

Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) is India's largest Fast Moving Consumer Goods Company with a heritage of over 80 years in India and touches the lives of two out of three Indians. HUL works to create a better future every day and helps people feel good, look good and get more out of life with brands and services that are good for them and good for others. The Company has over 16,000 employees and has an annual turnover of INR 30,170 crores (financial year 2014 – 15). HUL is a subsidiary of Unilever, one of the world’s leading suppliers of fast moving consumer goods with strong, local roots in more than 100

countries across the globe with annual sales of €48.4 billion in 2014. Unilever has 67.25% shareholding in HUL. HUL follows the principle of “*Great brands and great people are our biggest assets*”. Sustainable, profitable growth can only be achieved in an organisation which focuses on performance culture and where employees are engaged and empowered to be the best they can be. Future success depends on being lean, agile and competitive in a resource-challenged world. In three years, we have transformed our structure to enable us to move faster, innovate better and leverage our global scale

Employer of Choice– Attracting the Right Talent

HUL was recognised as the „No. 1 Employer of Choice“ for the third consecutive year (Nielsen survey). In addition, the company also retained the „Dream Employer“ status for the fifth consecutive year and continued to be the top company considered for application by B-School students.

Gender balanced workforce: The company aims to become a gender balanced organisation. „*Career by Choice*“, is a re-hire programme that provides a platform for women looking for real opportunities to work flexibly and part-time on live business projects. With these enablers, the Company has seen a significant shift in the Gender Balance Ratio over the last three years.

Developing leaders for the future

HUL is well-known for nurturing talent and building leaders, driven by the „leaders build leaders“ philosophy. Such a mindset ensures that leadership gets ingrained in all people across the Company, rather than placing it as the responsibility of a function or a few individuals. This is exemplified through our Management Trainee programme, commonly known as the Unilever Future Leaders Programme that has been the training ground for many inspiring leaders across HUL and Unilever. .

70:20:10 (Learning Culture):

The company follows a holistic 70:20:10 capability building approach across functions. It believes that 70 pc of all capability is built on the job, 20 pc through coaching and short term projects and 10 pc through classroom learning. There are multiple forums for learning including quarterly webcasts, regular guest sessions from industry stalwarts and portals to ensure a constant flow of best practices.

Creating an Agile and Flexible Organisation:

HUL has an established culture of agile working and flexibility through a well-defined agile policy which includes work from home, flexi-timing and hot-desking.

Ensuring safety at the workplace:

To protect and enhance the well-being of our employees, visitors and partners, safe working is non-negotiable. It has a clear focus on safety practices

ensuring all possible safety hazards are eliminated; not just from the work place but during travel and at employee homes.

Sparkle and Stepping Into One:

The company have undertaken a host of programmes in the space of capability building on the shopfloor. The Shopfloor Skill Upgradation Programme (Sparkle), is an intranet-based tool that assesses training needs, skill and performance. Stepping Into One (SIO) helps develop technical and leadership skills among shopfloor employees and provides them career advancement opportunities into supervisory roles. The company actively promotes safety beyond the workplace through extensive „Safe Travel“ and „Beyond Work Safety“ initiatives, involving the employees“ families across all sites. Further, by 2020, Unilever aims to advance human rights across all operations and extended supply chain. The targets set under this mission are as follows:

- Source 100 pc of procurement spends in line with our responsible sourcing policy.
- create framework for fair compensation.
- improve employee health, nutrition and well-being.
- reduce workplace injuries and accidents.

The Company“s Human Resource agenda was focused on strengthening four key areas: building a robust and diverse talent pipeline, enhancing individual and organisational capabilities for future readiness, driving greater employee engagement and strengthening employee relations further through progressive people practices at the shop floor.

Diversity and Inclusion:

It is an important aspect of sustainable business growth and is referred to as Winning Balance. Over the last three years, there has been considerable momentum on this aspect through better appreciation of the business case and greater leadership involvement and engagement. Tools and capabilities like day care, technology that supports agile working, flexible work arrangements through part time working and career by choice programme and inclusiveness workshops have been embedded to enable and drive the Winning Balance. During the year, a ***Winning Balance Council:***

The council was established in the Company, which comprises male and female leaders across functions, who champion and lead the plans. HUL recognises men and women role models, who create a simple, respectful and flexible work environment for their teams, which inspires others to emulate them. With these enablers and focused plans, your Company has witnessed a 10 pc shift in the gender balance ratio over the last three years.

Learn Where You Are:

The company undertook intensive training programmes through a combination of face-to-face

and virtual learning approaches. Over 28,000 man-days invested in classroom training and about 38,000 e-learning registrations, indicate that the spirit of „learn where you are“ is imbibed in employees of the Company. The company is also investing in building capabilities in digital and social media to find new platforms for brands to engage more effectively with Indian consumers. Further, the company launches different schemes to groom and develop the talent like- Unilever Future Leaders Program, Incite and Food“s College, etc.

The company not only takes care of its present employees but also caters the needs of its employees after retirement. It includes post retirement benefits, insurance, welfare funds, superannuation funds, employees pension schemes, etc.. In addition to it voluntary retirement benefits or termination benefits arising from restructuring are also recognized in the annual statements of the company.

B. TCS (Tata Consultancy Services):

Tata Consultancy Services Limited (TCS) is an Indian multinational information technology(IT) service, consulting and business solutions company headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra. TCS operates in 46 countries. It is a subsidiary of the Tata Group and is listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange and the National Stock Exchange of India. TCS is one of the largest Indian companies by market capitalization (\$80 billion) and is the largest India-based IT services company by 2013 revenues. TCS is now placed among the „Big 4“ most valuable IT services brands worldwide. It is the world's 10th largest IT services provider, measured by the revenues. Tata Consultancy Services Ltd was founded in 1968 by a division of Tata Sons Limited.

In 1975, TCS conducted its first campus interviews, held at IISc, Bangalore. The recruits comprised 12 Indian Institutes of Technology graduates and three IISc graduates, who became the first TCS employees to enter a formal graduate trainee programme.

The Company is required to make contribution to Provident Fund, Pension Fund, Foreign contribution Fund, Gratuity, post retirement medical benefits, post retirement vacation and superannuation Fund contributions for eligible employees.

Businesses should promote the wellbeing of all employees, total number of employees including subsidiaries as on March 31, 2014 was 3,00,464. The company also promotes balanced and diversified workforce having 98122 of permanent women employees. Further, the 5075 employees with disabilities work on self declaration basis.

Safety of Employees:

All employees have been covered through the Company“s training modules. Training on health and

safety is imparted to associates as a part of the induction training combined with an annual refresher web based Health, Safety & Environment training. Effective modes of training have been informal floor-walks and town-hall meetings, regular fire drills, several awareness campaigns including road safety, fire safety, ergonomics, behaviour based safety, etc. are conducted to reach out to the associates. Innovative modes of training including video based learning modules and interactive web based training have been very effective and in FY14, over 3,60,000 man-hours of training on health, safety and environment has been imparted through the various training channels. The Company has a number of policies and programmes focussed on employee wellbeing. These include holiday homes, pharmacy benefits, vacation for employees who are retiring, periodic health screening, safety for women associates and health insurance coverage including parents/in-laws.

The policy change management framework takes into consideration, feedback from all relevant stakeholders. The policies and programmes are implemented through various internal teams, with HR taking the ownership. There are several platforms within TCS which seek to empower employees. *Employee Concerns* is an online tool where a grievance may be raised by an employee which is then addressed by stakeholders within predefined SLAs. Initiatives such as *iConnect* and *mPower* provide the opportunity to resolve issues of key importance and facilitate individual mentoring and coaching with senior managers.

The company also offers an *Employee Assistance Program (EAP)* for India based associates, which includes professional counselling services in important life matters such as personal, relationship, work and parenting concerns that an employee voluntarily seeks. Associates can communicate with the counsellors through a toll-free number, online correspondence as well as face to face meetings. There is also a 24x7 emergency number for immediate concerns. Digitised platform *Career Hub* enables employees to record their aspirations, helps the Company in identifying high potentials, mentors and tracks career movement of employees. The tool *TCS Gems* is used for global reward and recognition. Fit4Life, health awareness sessions, periodic medical check-ups, gymnasiums in offices, and 24 x 7 „Employee Assistance Programme“ are some of the important initiatives for employee health and safety. TCS provides its employees huge opportunities for learning. Substantial investments in infrastructure and tools have been made to keep its workforce motivated and ready for the evolving technology.

The **HR compliance team** continues to monitor the changes in legislation pertaining to employment, labour, and immigration laws across the globe to ensure compliance, which is checked through regular audits. The HR compliance team pro-actively prepares alerts to identify key areas where TCS needs to introduce new policies or modify the existing policies to remain compliant.

A number of non-work related employee engagement initiatives such as fun events, sports, cultural activities and volunteering for social causes are organised across the globe under our employee engagement platform known as **TCS-Maitree**. The culture of volunteering helps employee bonding within the organisation and reduces stress at work. Employees are also encouraged to involve their families in these activities.

C. **Larsen and Turbo:**

Larsen & Toubro Limited also known as L&T is an Indian multinational conglomerate headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. It was founded by Danish engineers taking refuge in India, as well as an Indian financing partner. The company has business interests in engineering, construction, manufacturing goods, information technology, and financial services, and also has an office in the Middle East and other parts of Asia.

L&T is India's largest engineering and construction company. Considered to be the "bellwether of India's engineering & construction sector", L&T was recognized as the Company of the Year in Economic Times 2010 awards.

Employee engagement, feedback and ideation workshops are conducted with the objective of creating an innovative, involved and committed workforce. Belbin Team building workshops across various businesses were organized to build a culture of camaraderie and strengthen employee bonding. The business continued to engage key business development personnel and international business heads in select geographies. The business strives for continuous improvement for the protection and development of health, safety and environmental assets of its employees and stakeholders. During the year, the thrust continued on the transformation of the safety culture through various initiatives.

D. **Bajaj Auto Limited:**

Bajaj Auto Limited (BAL) is an Indian two-wheeler and three-wheeler manufacturing company. It manufactures and sells motorcycles, scooters and auto rickshaws. Bajaj Auto is a part of the Bajaj Group. It was founded by Jammalal Bajaj in Rajasthan in the 1930s. It is the world's sixth-largest manufacturer of motorcycles and the fourth-largest in India. It is the

world's largest three-wheeler manufacturer. On 31 March 2013, its market capitalisation was INR 520 billion (US\$9.57 billion), making it India's 23rd largest publicly traded company by market value. The Forbes Global 2000 list for the year 2012 ranked Bajaj Auto at 1,416. Bajaj Auto came into existence on 29 November 1945 as M/s Bachraj Trading Corporation Private Limited. It started off by selling imported two- and three-wheelers in India. In 1959, it obtained a licence from the Government of India to manufacture two-wheelers and three-wheelers and it became a public limited company in 1960. In 1970, it rolled out its 100,000th vehicle. In 1977, it sold 100,000 vehicles in a financial year. In 1985, it started producing at Waluj near Aurangabad. In 1986, it sold 500,000 vehicles in a financial year. In 1995, it rolled out its ten millionth vehicle and produced and sold one million vehicles in a year. With the launch of motorcycles in 1986, the company has changed its image from a scooter manufacturer to a two-wheeler manufacturer. Bajaj has operations in 50 countries by creating a line of bikes targeted to the preferences of entry-level buyers.

It is one of the principal of BAL that "**Businesses should promote the well-being of all**". The company strongly believes that the well-being and motivation of its workforce is an essential ingredient for a successful business and continuously focuses on employee engagement by implementing various policies and programs. Last year, the permanent workforce at BAL grew by 2.3% and reached a figure of 8,219 out of which women workforce accounts for 66 (which rise by 30 pc over last year figures). To protect and ensure women security at workplace the organization has adopted the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Policy.

Further, the company has launched the **Corporate Hospitalisation Benefit Scheme** in collaboration with Bajaj Allianz Insurance, covering all its staff and their families for cashless treatment at a large number of networked hospitals, as well as reimbursement of expenses for treatment at other hospitals. All the four plants of BAL are registered under trade unions and all unionised workers are covered under this scheme for critical illness. The scheme provides them with financial support in case of any critical illness which requires significant funding for treatment. The company has also started "**Annual Health Check-up Scheme**" for all employees who have attained age of 40 years. Based on the annual health check-up results, appropriate medical consultation from the renowned doctors is being arranged for the employees for necessary guidance and medication. Besides the health aspect, work-life balance is also taken into consideration and necessary inputs are shared with

employees time to time. This also encouraged the employees to adopt the healthy life style.

Triple Spark- Around 70% of the permanent workforce received training through 262 programmes conducted internally and externally in classrooms and outbound format. Trainings for skill and knowledge improvement are imparted to all employees as part of a structured and well-defined development roadmap. Safe working condition is a key focus across all manufacturing activities; hence safety trainings form an important component of BAL's employee training program.

Sustainable development and societal welfare is one of vital area of interest of today's organization as CSR has also become mandatory and BAL also encourages its employees to contribute towards the welfare of the society. In this regard, various programs are initiated at regular intervals. **Blood donation camps** (were organised during the year at the plants in which 891 employees donated blood for the hospitals). **Vastra Bhet** (Donation of used clothes): The company initiated a drive during "Joy of Giving Week" and organised a "Clothes Donation Drive" and collected 640 kgs of used clothes which were donated to needy people. The employees of BAL volunteered very enthusiastically to collect and dispatched the clothes to "Goonj", an NGO working in underdeveloped areas.

Whistle blower policy- The Company has a whistle blower policy to enable its employees to report to the Management their concerns about unethical behavior, actual or suspected fraud or violation of Company's code of conduct or ethics policy. This mechanism provides safeguards against victimisation of employees, who avail of the mechanism. This also provides for direct access to the Chairman of the Audit Committee in exceptional cases. The policy has been appropriately communicated to the employees within the organisation.

Further, the company believes that its success is interlinked with the well-being of all sections of the society and equal opportunity for all sections. The Company ensures that no discrimination of any type to socially disadvantaged sections in the work place. During the year the Company recruited 2,026 new employees, of which 198 numbers 9.8 pc (under review) belong to weaker sections of the society, in line with the affirmative action and at the end of the year, this percentage was 6.99%. It clearly reflects the positive approach towards the work force diversified culture of the company.

Investment of Companies on Employees:

Table 2 gives a complied picture of expenses made by companies on its employees. The given table explains that where TCS spends 49 pc of total expenses towards their employees (including welfare funds,

salaries and compensation, etc.) and this expenditure rises with 25.67 pc growth rate other companies are far behind in this race. This might be due to the fact TCS is a service providing firm and whole business is dependent upon the human resources while other use HR as a complementary resources in addition to other resources.

Table: 2 Expenditure of MNCs on employees for the year 2013-14

Company Name	2012-13			2013-14			Growth Rate
	Employee Cost	Total Exp.	Employee Cost as a percent of total Exp.	Employee Cost	Total Exp.	Employee Cost as a percent of total Exp.	
TCS	17,081.72	34,953.35	48.87	21,466.56	44,243.17	48.52	25.67
HUL	1,318.34	22,067.63	5.97	1,435.95	23,840.45	6.02	8.92
L&T	38,609.00	478,203.00	8.07	46,624.00	518,004.00	9.00	20.76
Bajaj Auto	639.48	16,526.51	3.87	726.58	16,223.87	4.48	13.62

(Source: compiled from annual statements of MNCs)

Discussion:

Employees are the key to success. They are the most valuable asset of any organization which helps in achieving the organizational goals. Today, competition has made it extremely difficult to recruit and retain the best talent in the organization. It is impossible for a company to achieve success ignoring their human resources. The recent quality management standards ISO 9001 and ISO 9004 of 2000 also focus more on people centric organizations. Thus, it becomes imperative for companies to take care of the needs of their employees and provide them a supportive and safe environment at work place. The present paper depicts some innovative and unique HRM practices adopted by innovative firms in the country. The study finds that these unique HRM practices helps in building a bond between employee and the organization and making employees feel an important organ of the firm. These practices help in increasing employee satisfaction, employee motivation and build a positive attitude towards the organization. These unique practices positively impact the organization in both short term and long term.

At last, it is recommended that, as it is quite clear that unique HRM practices doesn't produce any immediate result. So HR management is advised to have patience while implementing any new scheme for its employees and equal support and patience is required from the top management. Secondly, these practices differs from company to company, area wise and other factors also impact these practices. So before implementing or introducing any new scheme HR manger is required to study the nature and need of its employees for better results of any practice. Thirdly,

while taking care of its employees we can't ignore the company's resources. So cost and time factor also requires considerable attention before implementing any new scheme.

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