

CHAPTER - VI

Conclusions, Recommendations & Suggestions

6.1: Introduction

Empowerment is widely being practiced in organizations. Employee empowerment is giving freedom to employees in varying proportions, to take work decisions at their functional levels. It has contributed to incremental fluctuations in staff morale, commitment, loyalty, employee innovativeness, and satisfaction. Empowerment of employees means enrichment of employees' task environment by facilitating an autonomous decision- making work climate whereby the individual employee charts out his organizational obligations without feeling the requirement for approval at every instance from his immediate supervisor. Business scenario today is dotted with innumerable competitors, absence of geographical borders with reference to market base and customer profile, and rapidly transforming customer specifications and expectancies. Therefore, business associations must be dynamic. Employees have to review the business scenario, critically think about the same, and take fast – paced decisions without waiting for consent and validation by top authorities at every instance. This will facilitate business houses to gain time and experience positive edge over adversaries. This is possible only when organizations have well placed and fully functional empowerment philosophy.

When employees are empowered, they achieve professional success for themselves as well for their organizations. Such personnel are adept at dispersing their role obligations, for better performance. This will reap huge personal and institutional benefits. That make them satisfied. So empowerment affects satisfaction. Banks are the economic pillars of any nation. Apart from lending and depositing money, they perform a host of highly essential activities , essential for the sustenance of the economy. So it becomes vital to possess a strong empowered workforce which should contribute to the satisfaction of the personnel.

6.2 : Concluding Observations

The research analyst has performed an exhaustive survey of banking professionals in West Bengal , India. We have covered both public and private banks , to describe various empowerment perspectives, viz psychological, socio – structural, multi- dimensional , organizational, and social. Elements which effectively modulate the empowerment of work force are determined as :

1. Competence,
2. Autonomy,
3. Information sharing, and
4. Authority and Responsibility.

These are highlighted below:

6.2.1 : Competence

This means that . to enhance empowerment all possible steps are undertaken by the management to increase competence. Greater emphasis should be accorded to programmes that enhance skill, that accelerates empowerment and expertise of the employees. This will hopefully have a manifold effect. On one hand, skill development makes better quality of goods produced and enhanced quality of services rendered, and decrease scrap and wastage. This provides better and competent employees which will again give rise to empowered employees.

6.2.2 : Autonomy

If the personnel experience autonomy, they show independence in decision making. They are not pressurized to take permission at each and every occasion during exercise of work

responsibilities. Again, this will exert multiple positive effects. For one, when employees exercise autonomy, the system of continuous validation from higher authority loses significance. This again results in quick product delivery and execution of services. Employees can gauge effectively the market changes and incorporate necessary advances to gain advantage from the situation. Quick services also bring in customer satisfaction.

6.2.3 : Information Sharing

From the research results, evidently, when the organizational environment has dissemination of necessary information and multidirectional, free and frank , flow of communication, then the employees are strategically able to conduct better choices and decide appropriately. Well informed staff are also the empowered ones, and they bring in more business, and consolidate the position of the organizations, by according them strategic benefits over their opponents. Such improved performance of job activity give heightened employee satisfaction.

6.2.4 : Authority and Responsibility

This research also evidently proved , that if the people are armed with sufficient authority and responsibility, they exercise such power for the expeditious dispersal of the duties, and perform as per, and sometimes exceeding managements' expectations. When bestowed with adequate power, and authorised for duties with full autonomy, the staff naturally feel empowered. Such empowered personnel are filled with positivity and exhibit enthusiastic behaviour to accomplish work goals promptly and most efficiently. They demonstrate exalted levels of precision in the quick delivery of superior quality goods and services. They are more adequately poised to take prompt decisions, and exhibit better command over their organizational duties. Such empowered

employees , naturally exude confidence and satisfaction at their job.

This work has also thrown up certain interesting facts about employee satisfaction. The analyst has discussed the various constructs of job satisfaction. It has found the four factors which affect employee satisfaction. They are:

1. Company Policies,
2. Nature of Job,
3. Work Environment, and
4. Self Esteem.

To usher in the empowerment culture, organizations need to implement fair and just company policies, make work enriching and challenging, improve upon the employment conditions, and also give attention to the employees' self-esteem requirements. They are elaborated as below:

6.2.5 : Company Policies

The organization should inculcate a policy whereby it promotes optimal utilisation of the staff's abilities and encourage mutual help and support. Personnel experience profound satisfaction if compensation is felt adequate, and in conformity with what they do in the establishments. Businesses also should certify that their staff know what the management exactly expects of them. They should also not have any doubts regarding the continuance of work status. An organization which follow high ethical considerations also promote satisfaction among its employees. They have ushered in employee satisfaction.

6.2.6 : Nature of Job

The study exposes certain interesting facts. It recognises that employees are satisfied, if they are

accorded due recognition in cases of successfully accomplished jobs. Also they value such jobs which provide opportunities to do different things and thus stimulate the personnel professionally. People also become satisfied when they find themselves busy with meaningful work and responsibilities. They cherish such jobs where they can execute work freely. Jobs which are characterized by presence of skilled supervisor and congenial and conducive boss – subordinate relationship also facilitate positive emotions of satisfaction.

6.2.7 : Working Environment

A physically healthy , clean and hygienic job scenario along with a mentally exhilarating one facilitates satisfaction. It should provide with ample freedom to the staff, whereby they can conveniently use their self assessments and experiment with their individual methods of doing any particular work. Such an environment or work milieu should also assure them of possibilities to ascend through the hierarchy ladder , if they show such possibilities.

6.2.8 : Self - Esteem

Our research proved beyond doubt that employees place great emphasis on how they view their job. A high regard for work activities and achievements are confirmed satisfactory issues for the people. Along with that , they place extreme importance on external validation, in the form of praises or acceptance of their performances. The study clearly shows that the relationship with colleagues, and how they consider peers personally and professionally also affect satisfaction. The research work clearly elaborates upon how the four factors of empowerment affects satisfaction of the personnel. Here, evidently empowerment exerts a profound and indelible impact on the satisfaction of the employees. From the study, the analyst has further pointed out

issues that act as keys facilitating the victory of the empowerment process. These are highlighted by employees themselves through open ended questions. Ten areas are ascertained that contribute towards the triumph of empowerment process. They are:

1. Autonomy
2. Open communication channel
3. Accountability
4. Training and skill development
5. Team work and leadership capabilities
6. Sound Industrial Relations
7. Proper placement
8. Top management committment
9. Adequate involvement, and
10. Sufficient MIS support.

These are described as below

6.2.9 : Autonomy

When the organization provides the employees with work autonomy, it is actually facilitating an empowered work environment. Such people are geared to be independent decision makers. They feel to possess firm hold over all aspects of their job. The result is more independent thought process at workplace, with more pronounced loyalty. The efforts that they exert go beyond their job expectations by the organization.

6.2.10 : Open Communication Channel

An unrestrictive movement of communication channel across management line keeps the staff of

all levels better informed and poised to take prompt decisions. This promotes an empowered work culture.

6.2.11 : Accountability

Sampled people think that mere framing of an organizational policy of empowerment would not suffice. The empowerment philosophy should be adequately backed by accountability, whereby the employees are made accountable for their actions, in a fair and just manner. Some employees voiced that empowerment programs are moulded into slow , gradual and graded procedures.

There should be timely check , evaluation and revision of performance of empowered employees. On satisfactory results , only , degree of empowerment may be increased. This will make empowerment more effective and also ensure that empowerment is not misused.

6.2.12 : Training and Skill Development

This study has shown that one area which plays a prominent role in making empowerment a resounding success is a culture that promotes and facilitates training and development. This should be regular and need – based. Also, an effective machinery should be established which evaluates the efficacy of training programs. Few sample respondents have also voiced that such programs should have reflections on appraisal system also, to motivate the employees towards full participation.

6.2.13: Team Work and Leadership Capabilities

Some employees view that the thrust of empowerment is on leadership and team building. It implies that empowerment is made into a team – work. Instead of giving powers to individuals,

authority and power must be given to teams where all are equally trained. Decision should be unanimously incorporated by team. Also they insist, that management should ascertain presence of leadership qualities from among the team members and encourage such attributes when present. Team leadership must never be constant. Instead, it should vary, based on individual capacities and successive skill enhancements.

6.2.14: Sound Industrial Relations

Presence of sound industrial relations is a prerequisite for successful empowerment programs. Management should have assurance that staff would not misuse the extra power accorded to them and employees must have the firm belief of not being burdened with extra load in the name of empowerment. Thus to make it effective, employees and management both must be reassured of the bonafide intentions of each other. A trustworthy grievance resolving mechanism must be operating within the establishment.

6.2. 15 : Proper Placement

Again the employees feel that to take full advantage of empowerment, employees must be placed in jobs according to their areas of interest. People can, and of course do exert their maximum efforts when they love, what they do. So, the issue of employee job – fit must be addressed. Also, there must be clarity and unambiguity of job. This means they should be aware of what is required from them, and how much freedom they can exercise.

6.2.16 : Top Management Commitment

Another area for successful implementation as voiced by the employees, have been continuous

and univocal , full fledged support, by senior management towards empowerment. It cannot and should not depend on personal preferences of some people. Rather, it is a functional philosophy, which is so ingrained in the institutional milieu that it becomes binding on all.

6.2.17 : Adequate Involvement

Some employees argued that successful empowerment should entail complete participation and full involvement of all concerned. It must be both a top – down and bottom – up approach where both management and personnel walk hand in hand towards the fulfilment of organizational objectives.

6.2.18 Adequate Management Information System (MIS)

Employees are also of the opinion that for successful empowerment policy, the business should boast of proper infrastructure and MIS support.

It has also ascertained the various areas that act as barriers to empowerment. Such information has been forthcoming from the second open – ended question that was kept for the respondents to ponder and answer. So , eight barrier areas has been enlisted; which are mentioned as follows:

1. Lack of information
2. Fear of retribution
3. Absence of proper infrastructure
4. Faulty capability judgement
5. Climate of suspicion and distrust
6. Lack of fairness in implementation

7. Dependent upon superior's ideology, and

8. Presence of knowledge gap.

The above mentioned points are described in details.

6.2.19 :Lack of Information

An acute absence of important and adequate whereabouts for necessary aspects of work activities, serve a highly negative role in the proper dispersal of empowerment philosophy. It is popularly believed that on many occasions, the communication about presence of resources are not accessible readily by staff. This may be simply for poor network of communication. A successful empowerment philosophy demonstrates the propensity of staff to take prompt correct decisions. This is impossible if employees complain of acute paucity of total information.

6.2.20 :Fear of Retribution

Another issue that provides barrier to empowerment, is the dread of punishment from powerful top management agencies, if staff encounter failure of business endeavours. People have voiced , that, pressure from top management, and also absence of an encouraging environment to employees to voice their opinions, have many a times caused them to stifle their concerns. They have also refrained from highlighting their innovative ideas regarding execution of work roles. They fear that either their suggestions will not be accepted at all ; or worse, even if accepted, will be highly scrutinised and they be personally blamed for any failures, if and when they occur. Such climate which promotes fear and insecurity is a serious barrier for empowerment philosophy to emerge victorious.

6.2.21 : Absence of Proper Infrastructure

Absence of proper infrastructure and inadequate MIS support, also hinders the empowerment process. The organization must boast of a proper MIS support if success of empowerment process is truly desired. Also, the procedure must be slow, gradual and graded . A proper machinery or system for timely check, evaluation and revision of activities of empowered employees must be there. Only on satisfactory results, higher empowerment levels may be assigned. However if empowerment process is incorporated very quickly, without giving due consideration to the preceding factors, then the implementation process is not fully successful. So this then becomes a hindrance.

6.2.22 : Faulty Capability Judgement

Empowerment program will be implemented smoothly and generate extraordinary outcomes , only when the personnel are made capable of handling such autonomy. The staff have themselves voiced, that it will be successful only when introduced among the competent personnel. In case of faulty capability judgement, unskilled or semi skilled and non – trained people be empowered to take major work decisions on matters for which they do have proper abilities and competencies. Such a scenario can prove to be suicidal , for both the staff and organizations. To avert such a catastrophe, proper judgements of potentialities should be made. Only after that, gates of empowerment can be opened. However , if severe loopholes are found on the ability and competence of employees, then first an adequate training program is to be instituted for capability enhancement. After that only, the culture of empowerment will flourish.

6.2.23 : Climate of Suspicion and Distrust

Many respondents have expressed serious doubts and insecurities on bonafide intentions of administration during the operations of empowerment policy. They have voiced their suspicions and distrust, whereby employees have felt being overburdened while being empowered. Such trust deficit in management goodwill provides barrier to management. It must be mentioned, that management also may not exhibit complete faith and confidence over the abilities of the people and also over their integrity. Such managers may have felt, that when empowered, the staff might misuse their power and authority, or use such power for personal gains. That will then result in negative outcomes for the establishment's targets of goal accomplishments. Overall, it is accepted that such mutual distrust and suspicion act as monumental barriers in empowerment programs.

6.2.24 : Lack of Fairness in Implementation

The study depicts that absence of transparency in total process of empowerment, sometimes, make the staff view management's intentions suspiciously. Employees have expressed that this philosophy must be offered equally among the staff. Instead, on certain occasions, some employees have been favoured, while others are seen to be debarred from such program. This scenario is dangerous, because the main intentions of empowerment would be jeopardized. If the overall management policies are unfair and unjust, then even the honest initiatives of empowerment might be seen negatively, which will harm empowerment process.

6.2.25 : Dependent on Superior's Ideology

Many sampled employees feel that in their organizations, empowerment, instead of being

engrained as an institutional policy, has become over indulgent on ideology of the respective bosses. As such in the same organization, various degrees of empowerment situations for the employees may exist, while working under different managerial heads. This sets in ambiguity and chaos, in the minds of the lower and middle management staff, and for top leaderships. The latter may become confused about the extent of freedom and authority delegation that would be congruent with the organization's policy. Thus, in this type of situations, empowerment as a philosophy is reliant on whims of the managerial heads, instead of being practised as an inherent feature of the corporate's cultural milieu. It then acts as potential barriers in such philosophy.

6.2.26 :Knowledge Gap

Quite a few of the sampled employees' have voiced that many times empowerment programs have failed solely due to inadequacies and acute shortage of the staff's competencies. They have blamed the employees' scarce knowledge and inadequacy of requisite skills, because of which they have failed to maximally utilise the situations of empowerment.

6.3 : Recommendations and Suggestions

The literature review, discussions with all the stakeholders involved – employees, management personnel and trade union leaders – and most importantly the findings of data analysis, all have helped the researcher to present with certain recommendations and suggestions which would hopefully exert positive inputs while altering empowerment status of the organizations. This would, in turn cause more contentment and satisfaction in the personnel. The various recommendations and suggestions are as below:

1. Empowerment programs, must be made into a continuous activity, and not used like a

one time affair. Instead, it must be ingrained as an organizational ideology and philosophy, to be nurtured, monitored and promoted throughout the lifespan of the business venture.

2. During the research process, many employees and sometimes even the management, may not bear clear idea about this concept of empowerment, its role in the accomplishment of individual, group and organizational goals. So to inculcate empowerment principles in organizational psyche, management first should develop an Empowerment Awareness Development Initiative (EADI) , to generate interest, desire and willingness of people to become empowered.
3. Top management involvement , full fledged support and patronage is necessary for success of this program. Some managers have certain unjustified insecurities about their diminishing role and importance once their staff are empowered. Their awareness about their roles in the empowerment process must be enhanced and they should also be told about the increase in opportunities for them in decisive organizational activities , once their subordinates get empowered.
4. Competent top authority assumes a significant job to introduce and implement employee empowerment programs. Good leadership can make empowerment process work effectively. Corporations should and must emphasize detection of young talented individuals, who can be groomed into effective leaders. For this, they should incorporate Talent Search and Develop Programs (TSDP), which would ensure that there are good leaders within the organizations.
5. The staff must have all possible and relevant information for proper disposal of duties and taking necessary decisions. When all important informations are present, only then

empowerment program may be successful.

6. The staff should be assured, that if , in spite of their best efforts, they face failures in the process of their innovativeness and creative endeavours, they will be helped by the superior management to ascertain the reason of such failure. They need reassurance against being victimized for inadvertent inadequacies. They also need certainty that their temporary unsuccessful attempts will not be used against, to vilify them. Instead, they should possess unflinching confidence in supreme administration's support to their honest initiatives, even when setbacks occur.
7. The top management should first have a proper, functional Management Information System (MIS), which would incorporate feedback on the implementation status, and also on outcomes of all programs and philosophies of empowerment. Only then can an empowering culture can be imbibed within the modern corporate milieu.
8. Before the official enactment of empowerment programs, top managements must make honest assumptions of the actual staff capabilities in such programs, where very high levels of managerial skills are expected from them. If something is found lacking, it becomes the responsibility of the person' concerned, and also the top administration to arrange for skill, expertise and competence development of the employees. So, to make empowerment programs successful, managers must first judge and analyse whether the employees are in a suitable frame of experience and expertise to handle additional responsibilities and increased independence in dereliction of their duties.
9. Basically the ideal scenario, which will boost the empowerment initiatives should be mutual faith, and mutual understanding in the genuine intentions of each other, i.e between management and employees, between the trainers and trainees, trainees, and

between the boss and subordinates.

10. The overall industrial relations scenario of empowered corporations should have fairness, equity, and justice as their underlying principles. All should be exposed to equal level of opportunities, based on an honest evaluation of their competencies. Nobody should be denied of chances to succeed , and all must be assured of truthfulness of administration's intentions. Only then can empowerment programs be successfully implemented.
11. To make empowerment programs successful, the corporate administration must certify the complete commitment to this purpose from all across the hierarchy. It is engrained as an institutional philosophy, which cannot be neglected and abhorred by the superior, if he or she does not like. The empowerment process is not dependent on superiors' whims and intentions for the proper implementation. Rather, people of top hierarchy willingly should accept it as a guiding principle for running the organization smoothly.
12. Knowledge may be considered to be information gained and remembered through a learning process. In organizations, knowledge gap may exist in two forms : being ignorant of an issue and / lacking an in – depth awareness for any topic. Now both these scenarios may prove preposterous causing substantial damage to the cause of empowerment. To overcome this situation, organizations should have in place proper knowledge management structures which support the creation, organization, and dissemination of business knowledge to everyone in an organization, irrespective of his status within the workplace. This will broaden the organization's knowledge, and cause the empowerment principles to be implemented very easily.