EXISTENCE AND EXTENT OF GENDER EQUALITY IN TALENT ACQUISITION AND RETENTION PRACTICES: A STUDY OF IT/ ITES COMPANIES

[1] Ms. Latika Malhotra [2] Dr. Jagdeep Singh

[1]Research Scholar, [2]Director, Institute of Management Studies, IET Bhaddal,

[1]Management Department,

[1] Punjab Technical University, Jalandhar, Punjab, India

Abstract: When the World is debating on the inclusion of third gender in every aspect of life and career, we in India are struggling to improve the situation of gender parity at all the levels. This shows why India is ranked 108 in Global Gender Gap Index of World Economic Forum, out of 144 countries. This has been a very extensively researched area. All the disciplines and field of studies take interest in Gender Equality and women inclusion. Be it economics, political science or management studies. This probably is the reason that we have come a long way since post stereotypes and standards of impartiality for women. Management is the area which actually can improve the situation and brighten the picture of gender equality at workplace by implementing and including the women friendly practices and gender parity in their human resource practices. The present paper tries to acquire an array of research from this field to compile a clear picture of the talent acquisition and retention practices in the light of gender equality in IT/ITES organizations based at Delhi/ NCR Region. The study is based on secondary sources of data collected through various databases in the field of management, social sciences and labour studies, etc. It has been proposed that this paper will help in moving ahead in the direction of making working environment 'equal' for both male and female employees and conducive for developing human resources the competitive advantage for the organizations in this sector.

Index Terms: **Gender Equality, Talent Acquisition, Talent Retention, Gender Discrimination, Glass Ceiling, Gender Inequality**

I. INTRODUCTION

World Economic Forum's 2017 report has placed India at 108th place among 144 countries on the Index of Global Gender Gap. This shows that the fastest growing economy has been lacking in the area of gender parity in different sectors. Being one of the extensively researched area, gender parity and women participation has been receiving a lot of attention from the government, management and other agencies. Although gender stereotypes have weakened in last six decades and more females have taken over the role of an active earning member of the family (Bhalla & Kaur, 2011). This kind of transformations demand major changes in the employment policies at all the levels in an economic system. Indian labour legislation provides sufficient laws for equal opportunity and policies for women in organization, however, the implementation at the ground is something that matters in reality.

Indisputably, Talent acquisition practices and talent retention practices are the most crucial factors of a firm because of their contribution in giving a strategic edge to business. It is the human resource policies that make a great organization different from the others (Warrier, 2013). Talent is something that is rare, onerous to substitute and valuable. It is evident from various researches that the organizations that attract, acquire and retain better talent, they outperform the other organizations (Barney and Wright, 1998). Also, talent is not characterized by one's gender, race and ethnicities. However, due to deep rooted patriarchy, sexual stereotypes exist in talent acquisition and retention practices. Many researchers have stated about persistent gender inequalities on the basis of their studies.

This is a combination of various areas across different fields of studies. Researchers from social sciences to behavioral sciences, psychology to economics and labour studies to management have been studying this field. However, from the point of view of an organization, a practical and objective analysis is the need of the hour so that it could explore the positive implications of these studies and implement these in their human resource practices.

This brings to us an opportunity to study various kinds of literature in this area and present a practical view with implementable practices. Therefore, defining the objectives of this study, firstly, the present paper intends to assimilate the studies undertaken in the field of human resource practices by various researchers worldwide and examine the existence and extent of gender equality in talent acquisition and retention practices. Further, the paper also proposes to highlight various stages and eras through which the organizations have reached the current extent of these practices in the light of gender equality.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on secondary sources of data collected through various databases like Proquest (ABI Inform), Scopus and Business Source Premier (EBSCO), etc. in the field of management, social sciences and labour studies, etc. Through this research paper, we are trying to assess the patterns of talent acquisition and management in the light of gender equality in the IT/ITES companies. This research paper tries to conceptualize the practices and their extent in the organization. The data hence has been taken from various other researches and company's claimed Human Resource Practices on their policy manuals and websites. This paper therefore provides a comprehensive view of researches and discussions about how to achieve gender equality at workplace. This review is divided into two major parts which are explained in the forthcoming sections. First section defines the conceptual perspectives of talent acquisition and retention practices in general, second section assimilates the literature related to gender equality and gender discrimination at organizational level and the last section tries to assimilate the existence and extent of gender equality in talent acquisition and retention practices of the IT/ITES organizations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE RELATED TO CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVES OF TALENT ACQUISITION AND RETENTION PRACTICES

There is no concrete definition of talent. Many researchers have tried to define it. Shikha and Parimoo (2012), defined talent as a connotation of distinction and an individual's inherent ability to do a task in his own particular manner. The most compelling element of competitive advantage is 'Human capital' (Poorhosseinzadeh and Subramaniam, 2013). It has been acknowledged by the organizations worldwide. Talent management has been a captivating area for many researchers from last few years. As unique as strategy for the organizations, talent management cannot be same for different companies and have to be strategically aligned with company's goals (Pruis, 2011). Due to the practical approach relevance of talent management in achieving strategic business goals, this concept is widely used by the organizations these days (Morgan and Jardin, 2010).

Researches have supported that the companies which excel in recruiting the right talent experience more growth in the revenue and higher profit margin than their competitors (Bhati and Manimala, 2011). Right talent acquisition is a challenge. Many factors influence the right choice and hiring of the candidates, more than anything it's the talent and right fit matters. The candidates are more aware about their career choices, future and kind of working environment they are looking forward to. Talent acquisition has evolved from being a tactical and back office process to a strategic effort that directly effects the organizational growth. (Laureno, 2013).

A pool of talent is not eternal. Since skilled human resources are not abundant, the supply of talent is also limited. Insufficient flow of talented workforce forced organizations to fight for better talents (Chambers et al., 1998) through 'war for talent'. The scarcity of talent makes its retention more significant for the organizations. Effective retention of employees is a systematic and organized effort by organizations to develop the environment that motivates the talented employees to remain loyal and employed with the organization. Organizations have started to realize the importance of talent retention because of two major reasons: firstly, huge cost of labour turnover and secondly, organizational performance is driven by the top performers. A strong talent retention strategy is a powerful tool for long term success of any organization (Kumar and Mathimaran, 2017). Employee attrition is often originated by poor selection and acquisition. However, policies towards induction, training, wages, job designs etc. also influence attrition in a significant way (Rowland, 2008).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE RELATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AT THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL: TRENDS AND PATTERNS

Gender is one of the most important factors in Indian Labour Market (Kaur 2013). Gender equality signifies that both men and women should get equal opportunities and have the ability to make choices (Klugman, Kolb and Morton, 2014). Gender equality is generally expressed in the attitudes, behaviours, beliefs and policies that mirror similar values and opportunities for both the genders. Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen had classified different types of gender inequalities viz. mortality inequality, natality inequality, employment inequality, ownership inequality, special opportunity inequality, basic facility inequality and household inequality. In India, stereotyped ideologies and male dominance led to inequality in all the spheres of life like politics, employment and opportunities.

Gender discrimination has always been an important issue in organizations. Employees often perceive discrimination on the basis of gender in the workplace (Gutek, 2001). When females entered the arenas of employment and workplace, researchers' interest in their inner experience and perception developed. Equality practices are based on the absorption of different groups instead of the attempt to equality which takes historical perspectives into account.

Somewhere in the beginning of 1960s, 'work force participation' was the focal theme in this field of study (De Leon 1988). Traditionally, women sought work as a means for supplementing their families' income. However, today's women do not fall under this perspective of employment. Meaningful life, social interaction, sense of accomplishment and Psychological needs also drive women to work (Conway, Ahem, & Steuemagel, 1999). Female engagement in employment, regardless of these reasons, created a major change in the ethos of the society and gave a new dimension to the research in the field of gender studies. Having said that, discriminations, biasness and harassments at workplaces cannot be denied. Poster (2008) specifically studies the Indian companies in comparison to United States global corporations in the context of sexual harassment. American Companies were found to be more sensitized towards gender equality and implementing practices that focus on equal opportunities, grievance procedures for sexual harassments, diversity and sensitivity councils, etc. On the other hand, Indian companies have not yet reached that level but policies do exist here also.

Therefore, it would be more appropriate now to understand the extent of gender equality on talent acquisition and retention practices in the context of Indian IT companies.

III. EXTENT AND PURVIEW OF GENDER EQUALITY ON TALENT ACQUISITION AND RETENTION PRACTICES IN IT COMPANIES

Indian Information Technology Sector has been on incline since the opening up of Indian Economy in1991. It has observed huge opportunities and growth. The whole IT/ ITES sector has been significant for the economy since its growth due to its contribution in the GDP of the country. The business process outsourcing has been developed as one of the strengths of this sector because of the availability of skilled, English speaking and economical labour. Not only being one of the most contributing sectors in GDP, IT industry is also making the country self-reliant in various aspects. NASSCOM reports that IT/ ITES sector is expected to provide 10 million direct and 20 million indirect employment by 2020. However, the attrition rate in this industry is following the inclining trend as well as the employment. Employee attrition is often originated by poor selection and acquisition. However, policies towards induction, training, wages, job designs etc. also influence attrition in a significant way. Today's generation does not show high loyalty for their organizations, this makes the organizations hard to retain talent. Researchers in the field of human resources have been finding out the ways to decrease employee attrition and labour turnover. This has also channeled the companies' focus on retention of human resources. This can be attributed to many factors like economic changes, demographic trends, globalization, better opportunities, etc. Many of these factors are uncontrollable. Turnover and engaging the employees are new crucial issues of organizations. Therefore, it has been recommended strongly to focus on talent management strategies (Rowland, 2008).

Employee acquisition retention and gender equality have one more thing in common, that is the significant role of personal, social and professional needs. Family problems were considered to be one of the biggest issue in employee attrition (Srivastava and Rastogi, 2008). Blau (1960) established in his research that mutual dependency between partners which lead to repetitive exchanges that produce reciprocal and equivalent social obligations. It means, the perceptions of employees towards their firms are shaped by firm's policies and actions for their employees. Gender discrimination penetrates various processes in IT organizations (Armstrong et al., 2012). It has also been noticed that the lack of career development opportunities lead to female attrition in organizations (Jawahar and Hemmasi, 2006).

Wages and Salaries were viewed as one of the most important motivator and technique of employee acquisition as well as retention (Pierce and Gardner, 2004). Monetary pay was believed to be the most rewarding and significant in retention (Milkovich and Newman, 2008). Dhillon (2017) also suggested that compensation in monetary and non-monetary form influences the talent retention. Even after skill up gradation, there existed a wage gap between male and female employees in the organization (Enomoto et al., 2016). Therefore, the companies have constantly been advised by NASSCOM regarding unbiased, fair and ethical human resource practices.

Table 3.1: Theoretical Framework of Gender Equality, Talent Acquisition and Retention

Context	Theoretical Framework
Talent	Abstractly defined Human Capital Scarcity of Skilled Talent
Talent Management	Origin and Significance As a unique strategy Elements: Attraction, deployment, development and retention
Talent Acquisition	Relationship between right talent and organizational growth From Tactical to Strategic Process Relationship between acquisition and organizational growth Factors influencing acquisition
Talent Retention	Scarcity, Huge cost of labour turnover War for Talent Relationship between retention and organizational performance Factors affecting retention
Gender Equality	Demography of Indian Talent Market Gender Equality defined Areas of gender inequality Gender Equality Issues at Workplace Gender biased practices in organizations

IV. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUDING DISCUSSIONS

Being one of the most important sectors of the Indian economy, IT sector does influence other industries with its global and multi-national human resource practices. It is often seen that even if the HR practices are standardized and professional in

IT/ITES Sector companies, their implementation and perception remain different. This result in high employee attrition. It was also found that the organizations understand the requirement of developing competitive advantage in the market. Physical Infrastructure, Financial assets, machineries and technology are no doubt important in developing competencies but human resources are irreplaceable neither competencies, nor talent are determined by the gender of employee. Therefore the present study tried to assess the perception of employees towards the talent acquisition and retention policies. Talent acquisition and retention practices are significant in keeping the companies in the ways of development. Therefore, companies must practice fair and unbiased talent acquisition and retention practices.

Further, it was also implied as per the review of literature that it may be expensive and impractical for each and every company to design their own talent acquisition and retention practices. Many factors have been identified in the review of literature that influence the fairness and biasness of human resource practices. Therefore, this study can be utilized further to strengthen the gender equality component of those identified practices so as to improve acquisition and retention of employees. The companies may use the best practices in this context and modify them as per their requirements. This would yield a more conducive and gender sensitive environment for all the employees impartially.

REFERENCES

[1] Armstrong, D. J., Nelms, J. E., Riemenschneider, C. K., & Reid, M. F. (2012). Revisiting the barriers facing women in information systems. The Journal of Computer Information Systems, 53(2), 65-74.

[2] Barney, J.B. and Wright, P.M. (1998). On becoming a strategic partner: the role of human resources in gaining competitive advantage, Human Resource Management, Vol. 37, pp. 31- 46.

[3] Bhati, A., & Manimala, M. J. (2011). Talent acquisition and retention in social enterprises. *Journal of Security and Sustainability Issues*, *1*(1), 39–52. Retrieved from http://www.scopus.com/inward/record.url?eid=2-s2.0-84897436168&partnerID=tZOtx3y1

[4] Blau, P. (1964). *Exchange and Power in Social Life*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, NY.

[5] Boxall, P., Macky, K. & Rasmussen, E. (2003). Labour Turnover and Retention in New Zealand: The Causes and Consequences of Leaving and Staying with Employers. Asia pacific journal of human resources, Vol 41, Issue 2

[6] Chambers, E., M. Foulon, H. Handfield-Jones, S. Hanki and E. Michaels, (1998). The war for talent. *Mckinsey Quarterly, 3:* 44-57.

[7] Conway, M., Ahem, D., & Steuemagel, G. (1999). Women & Public Policy: A Revolution in Progress. 2nd. ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press, A Division of Congressional Quarterly, Inc.

[8] De Leon, D. (1988). Everything is Changing: Contemporary U.S. Movements in Historical Perspective. Wesport, CT: Praeger.

[9] Dhillon, M. (2017.). Employee Retention- A Real Time Challenges In Indian IT Sector, IJRDO- Journal of Business Management Vol. 3, Issue (8), 229–240. ISSN: 2455-6661

[10] Enomoto, A., Ed, D., Larick, K., & Ed, D. (2016). A Qualitative Exploration of the Workplace Culture of Women in Information Technology Careers A Dissertation by Andrea Hemphill (Merrills) Irvine , California School of Education Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doc.

[11] Gutek, B. A. (2001), Women and paid work. Psychology of Women Quarterly, 25, 379–393. doi:10.1111/1471-6402.00036.

[12] Jawahar, I. M., and Pegah Hemmasi. "Perceived Organizational Support for Women's Advancement and Tirnover Intentions: The Mediating Role of Job and Employer Satisfaction." Women in Management Review 2, no. 8 (2006): 643-661.

[13] Jon L. Pierce, Donald G. Gardner (2004), Self-Esteem Within the Work and Organizational Context: A Review of the Organization-Based Self-Esteem Literature, Journal of Management 2004 30(5) 591–622

[14] Kaur, P. (2013). Corporate Social Responsibility and Gender in Workplace. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, *2*(11), 36–40.

[15] Klugman, J., Kolb, H., & Morton, M. (2014). Persistent Gender Inequality in the World of Work. *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, *38*(2), 133–152. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/docview/1565808435?accountid=14872%5Cnhttp://sfxhosted.exlibrisgroup.com/waldenu?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&rft_val_fmt=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:journal&genre=unknown&sid=ProQ:ProQ%3Apoliticalscience&atitle=Persisten

[16] Kumar, A., & Mathimaran, B. (2017). Employee Retention Strategies - An Empirical Research. *Global Journal of Management And Business Research; Vol 17, No 1-E (2017): Global Journal of Management and Business*, *17*(1). Retrieved from https://www.journalofbusiness.org/index.php/GJMBR/article/view/2243

[17] Laureno, M. (2013). *Talent Acquisition 2013: Adapt your strategy or fail*, September 2013. www.aberdeen.com. Milkovich, G.T.,

[18] Newman, J.M. & Milkovich, C. (2008). Compensation management. McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 2008

[19] Morgan, H. and D. Jardin, 2010. HR+OD= Integrated talent management as a management. In: NETWORK, R. D. (ed). OD Practioner, 42.

[20] Poorhosseinzadeh, M., & Subramaniam, I. D. (2013). Talent Management Literature Review. *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences*, *7*(6), 330–338.

[21] Poster, W. R. (2008). Filtering Diversity. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *52*(3), 307–341. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764208323509

[22] Pruis, E., 2011. The five key principles for talent development. Industrial and Commercial Training, 43:206-216
Rowland, M., (2011). How to cement a diversity policy: The key role of talent development. *Human Resource Management International Digest, 19*(5): 36-38.

[23] Shikha, & Parimoo, D. (2012). Talent Acquisition & Retention Issues of Faculty in Higher Education. *International Journal of Human Resource Management and Research*, *2*(3), 99–110. Retrieved from http://www.tjprc.org/download.php?fname=--1346752559-5. Human Res - IJHRMR - Talent Aquisition - Shika.pdf

[24] Rowland, M., (2011). How to cement a diversity policy: The key role of talent development. *Human Resource Management International Digest, 19*(5): 36-38.

[]Sen, A.K. (2000) 'Consequential Evaluations and Practical Reason', Journal of Philosophy, xcvii(9).

[25] Srivastava, K. V., Rastogi, S. (2008). Employee retention by way of management control systems, Ubiquity, Volume 2008 Issue April, http://ubiquity.acm.org/article.cfm?id=1376139

[26] S. Bhalla and R. Kaur, "Labour Force Participation of Women in India: Some Facts, Some Queries," Asia Research Centre Working Paper 40 (2011).

[27] Warrier, U. (2013). A Study on Work-life Balance as a Function of Demographic Variables at an IT Company in Bangalore. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, *2*(3), 40–48.