ENHANCING HUMAN CAPACITY THROUGH DIAGNOSING, ASSESSING AND BUILDING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AMONG PUMP MANUFACTURING FIRMS

ABSTRACT

This research study aims at developing the human capacity through enhancing capacity of Knowledge Management practices among the firms in the pump manufacturing cluster. The study specifically considers knowledge creation, acquisition, sharing, storage and utilization as the five practices that constitute the whole cycle of knowledge management.

Indian manufacturing industry has gone through various phases of development and has contributed to the economic growth of the country. Manufacturing industry comprises of large number of micro, medium and small scale enterprises (MSMEs). Owing to their small size, these firms agglomerate as clusters. These clusters greatly contribute to the employment creation in the region in which they are located. In the recent years, the manufacturing sector is on a declining trend. This declining trend urges for a need for inclusive development of small and medium scale enterprises along with large organizations. The key challenges faced by the MSMEs are lack of sector specific skilled frontline employees and managers. There is a need for a systematic process to build the capacity of organizations and employees to be proactive to the changes in the environment.

Capacity Building is an ongoing process through which individuals, groups, organizations and societies enhance their abilities to identify and meet challenges. The extensive review of CB literature reveals that Capacity Building process is carried out in various organizational sectors using different interventions for varied purposes. The literature review identified that Capacity Building by managing the knowledge available in organizations has not been studied and there exists a gap in research. This research study was conducted to explore the possibilities of enhancing human capacity by assessing and building the Knowledge Management capacity of organizations thereby contributing to the still growing field of Capacity Building and Knowledge Management.

This research study consisted of three phases. The first phase diagnosed the KM practices and its influence on the individual work performance. A theoretical model to diagnose the KM practices and understand the relationship between KM practices and work performance was developed based on the literature review and hypotheses were deduced. A KM Capacity Assessment Instrument was developed and survey technique was used for the first phase. The second phase assessed the existing capacity of KM practices by using a capacity assessment methodology. The third phase used critical reflection and brainstorming techniques to develop appropriate strategies for building the capacity of knowledge management practices.

The population for this study consisted of pump manufacturing firms in the city of Coimbatore in India. The sampling frame was pump manufacturing companies who were members of South India Engineering Manufacturers Association (SIEMA). There were about 103 pump manufacturing firms and all the 103 firms were included in the

study. A total of 239 responses were collected. The results were consolidated and analyzed to achieve the objectives.

The analysis showed that all the five practices were significantly present in the pump manufacturing cluster. The hypotheses testing and model validation results revealed that knowledge management practices is a significant variable, enhancing the work performance of individuals. The KM capacity GRID showed that Originating Ba of knowledge creation, Socialization mode for knowledge acquisition, organizational factors and employee focused factors for knowledge sharing fall in High Capacity-High Consensus quadrant. Exercising ba, Dialoguing ba of Knowledge Creation and Knowledge Utilization fell in High capacity-Low consensus quadrant. Knowledge acquisition through combination mode and knowledge storage practices were cited in Low Capacity - Low Consensus quadrant. Technical factors for sharing knowledge and Systematizing ba for knowledge creation lies on the brim between high consensus and low consensus quadrants. In the third phase, critical reflection and brainstorming sessions were conducted and strategies were devised to move the all the knowledge management practices to high capacity – high consensus quadrant. Implementation of these strategies will build the capacity of KM practices in organizations.

The capacity building exercise given in this research study can be conducted periodically, atleast once a year and the outcome of the assessment can be used as reference for comparative analysis among the firms in the cluster. This capacity assessment and capacity building activities can be extended to the national level in different clusters to build the capacity of the workforce with the help of the knowledge residing within the organizations and has immense scope for further research.