

# Talent Management Retention Strategy for the Indian Employees

## Evidence from a Multinational Information Technology Organisation in India

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### Abstract

Multinational Organisations (MNOs) represent one kind of workplace setting within the new Indian market. Information Technology (IT) professionals are the key resources to this type of organisations. Retaining talented employees within an organisation has become difficult in an Indian market scenario currently due to plethora of similar job opportunities available with the competitors in the IT market. An in-depth, interpretative case study of a MNO located in Chennai, India, was used to understand how the talent management practices help in the retention of the employees. Certain mechanisms were identified behind the retention practices for employees through an interpretive analysis of the empirical data — organisational identification, sense of belonging (SOB), organisational commitment, empowerment and employee engagement. The mechanisms and retention practices of the talent management within this organisation were seen to relate to how MNO retain their employees who are competitive IT professionals. This paper has practical implications.

### Introduction

There is a heavy pressure on today's Human Resource (HR) professionals to acquire, utilise, develop and retain the talented employees of a multinational organisation. Talent has been defined as "the resource that includes the potential and realised capacities of individuals and groups and how they are organised, including within the organisation and those who might join the organisation" (Boudreau and Ramstad, 2007: 2).

The concept of 'talent management' was derived from World War II (Cappelli, 2008), however its strategic importance has been realised when McKinsey consultants group claimed the human resource as "War for Talent" in late 1990's (Scullion and Collings, 2010). Talent management is therefore generally concerned with practices associated with developing strategy, identifying talent gaps, succession planning, and recruiting, selecting, educating, motivating and retaining talented employees through a variety of initiatives (Ringo et al., 2010).

Although companies are facing talent management difficulties in several regions of the world, the challenges may be most acute for young IT professionals and new managers in emerging markets - India is a prime example (Tymon, et al., 2010). The present scenario with abundant opportunities has triggered a wave of employees, perpetually "on the move", forever seeking better opportunities whenever, wherever and however they can particularly in emerging economies (Tymon et al., 2010). How to slow down the move of these talented employees out of the organisation? One of the answers could be the role of talent management practices and mechanisms devised that are intended to retain employees.

However, to our knowledge, there is scarce research in the literature that examines the talent management practices for retention of Indian employees in the IT industry. Further, there is a clear need for qualitative research in this area to investigate the mechanisms that are involved in retention of employees, along with relevant talent management practices. Hence this study explores how the retention practices of talent management works in retaining the employees of a multinational organisation from the IT industry in India.

### **The context of Talent management and the retention of employees in India**

Debrah and Budhwar (2001) observed that talent management was playing a noticeable role in bringing about changes in Indian organisations, and more recently noted that talent management continues to be a key to success for organisations located in India (Siani and Budhwar, 2007).

A significant amount of research has been done in call centres, whilst hardly any study focuses on the IT industry. For example, Budhwar et al. (2006) demonstrate that employee turnover, particularly at the junior level in call centres is severe and individuals often leave due to dissatisfaction with the work culture, e.g. shift work, as well as for better opportunities. With regard to IT offshore outsourcing, Chiamsiri et al. (2005), observe that retention is a major issue, when there is poaching and no clear salary growth plan identified for employees.

This paper is the first of its kind to explore the retention practices and its associated mechanisms in the Indian IT industry. A rich qualitative case study was conducted, consisting of 50 in-depth interviews with employees and 15 in-depth interviews with HR professionals of a multinational organisation belonging to IT industry located in Chennai. The study provides a broad picture by comparing the perspectives of employees and HR professionals in this company, with regard to the talent management retention practices and its influence on their stay with the company.

## **Method**

### **Research Methodology**

This research requires an in-depth qualitative case study to understand comprehensively the talent management retention practices of a multinational organisation in the Indian IT industry context. Firstly, retention mechanisms can be explored best from the employee's view, which calls for an interpretivist, qualitative approach. Secondly, the research is placed in a multinational organisation in the Indian context and the research requires detailed description of the retention practices employed in this context. This can be best achieved through in-depth, case study methods (Yin 2003). Hence qualitative methods within the interpretivist tradition (Klein and Myers, 1999; Walsham, 1993) were adopted for the research work.

### **Data Sources and Analysis**

The data collection was done in a multinational IT organisation in Chennai, India. It is an American organisation that provides technology solutions and consulting services with the help of more than 100000 employees operating around the world. The first author, a female Indian national, conducted 15 in-depth interviews with talent management HR professionals in that organisation. These respondents had been with the company for more than 3 years. The interviews with HR members helped understand their perspectives on the influence of different practices on retention of employees, and the mechanisms involved. 50 in-depth interviews were conducted with the employees of that organisation who have been staying

there for either more than 3 years or less than 3 years. A mix of employees from all levels was interviewed. For example, some employees were Programmer Analyst, some were Associate, some were Senior Associate, some were Technology Specialist, some were Business Analyst, some were Manager, and some were Senior Manager. The semi-structured interviews had open-ended questions giving scope for interviewees to explain themselves.

The study involved this case particularly as it could be an indicator of its peers in the Indian IT industry. Still the case could be considered unique (Yin, 2003) for having better retention of employees when compared to its peers in the industry who suffer more attrition of employees in current scenario (The Hindu, 2012). As the study involves the concept of retention, it was essential to speak to employees who have been staying longer with the firm and also it was valuable to speak to employees who left to another firm within shorter period. Although data collection was done mainly through semi-structured interviewing, extensive field notes and sometimes informal conversations occurring during commuting together to the office and back home was additionally used. Further, information from the company's website about the talent management activities was also used.

Some interviews were recorded and interviews most rich in data were transcribed. The interviews lasted 40 minutes on average. The shortest interview duration was 25 minutes and the longest one was 1 hour 12 minutes. Template analysis was used to identify the common recurrent themes and sub- themes which were documented simultaneously. Template analysis is the process of organising and analysing textual data according to themes (Miller and Crabtree, 1999). A set of themes evolved inductively through an ongoing process of engagement with the data analysis and ongoing reading of relevant literature. Conceptual models were then conceived and developed from the respondents' perspectives with small additions from the own interpretation of the respondents' context.

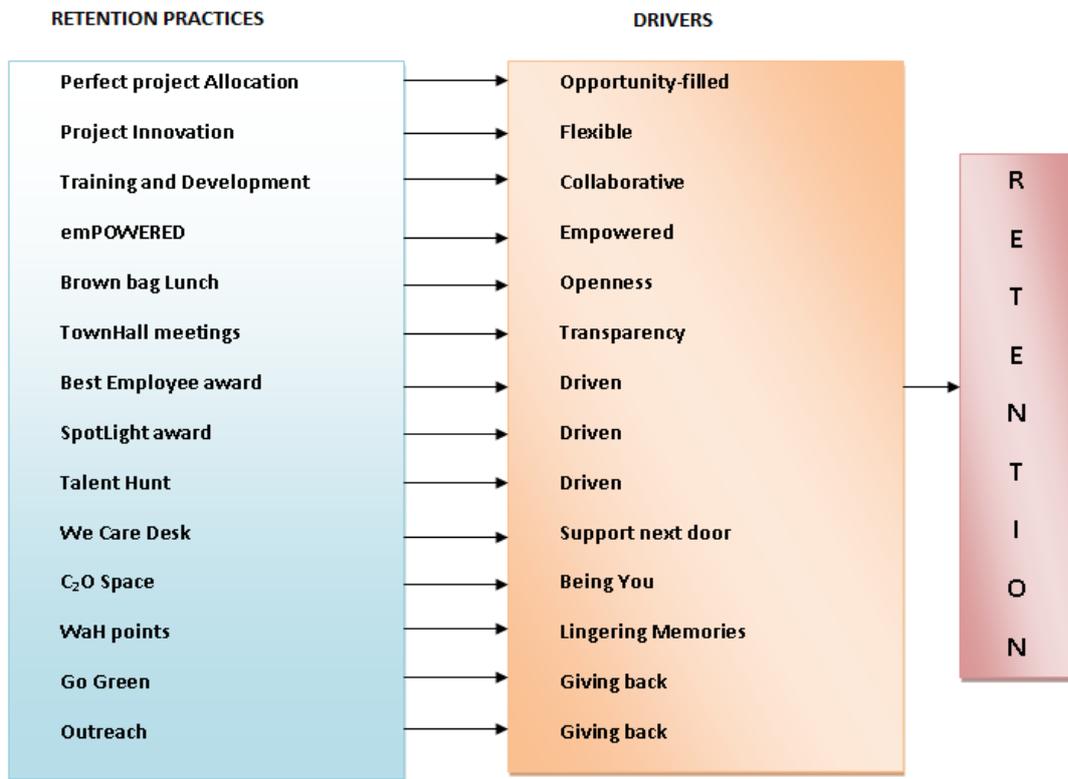
## **Findings**

The findings of this study are represented from two different perspectives: firstly, from the talent management HR's perspectives and secondly, from the other employees of the organisation. This is essential in order to gain complete understanding of their two different worlds in the same organisation.

### **HRs' perspective**

The following figure (Figure I) describes the HR's perspective on the retention practices of talent management that have been put into action within the organisation to retain the employees. The HR professionals reported on so-called 'practices', referring the strategies devised by the talent management HRs to put into action to retain the employees. Moreover, they described certain 'drivers' as the intended outcomes of the practices that brought about the retention of employees.

Figure I.Retention Practices of Talent Management and Associated Drivers



Same practices are followed in all the verticals (verticals are work divisions according to the clients they address) within the organisation. This is because HRs sees every vertical as a mini organisation in itself which all together constitute the entire organisation.

‘Perfect Project allocation’ helps them assign project specific to employee’s skills and talents. They feel it engages employees fully in the work with suitable opportunities and maintains their interest. ‘Project Innovation’ gives employees a lot of freedom and flexibility to bring about new dimensions to their work in the project, thereby giving challenges to make it more meaningful. ‘Training and development’ helps in honing either project specific skills or individual skills which are latent. Trainings are undertaken collaboratively, so HRs feels this helps them enhance their collaborative efforts as a team to produce better results every day.

‘emPOWERed’ is a practice that has several fun- filled games and activities designed to associate employee to everyday life in the organisation and make them feel empowered to take up any challenges in their career. ‘Brown bag lunch’ is the practice where a surprise lunch in a brown bag is given to one of the employees in each project at different times. The brown bag contains an invitation for one-to- one meeting with a senior manager or some other higher cadre employee in their project. In these meetings, employees can discuss any issues or any ideas they have with regard to not only project but the entire organisation. HRs believed strongly that these meetings make the environment open and transparent for employees to work in the organisation. ‘Town Hall meetings’ are also big gatherings of employees from different verticals in the same stage with the head of the verticals in the organisation, where they can discuss any ideas, however trivial and significant they are. These meetings also enhance the transparency of the environment within the organisation according to the HRs.

‘Best employee award’ are given every month, quarterly, half-yearly and annually to motivate employees to aim for higher in their work and career. HRs feels these awards make

them driven to taste the success of their work. Another similar award is ‘Spot Light award’ that recognises the employee’s work on every day basis to reward them instantly and pat them for their work spirit. ‘Talent Hunt’ is the practice that devises different competitions to identify the capability of the employees and gives them an opportunity to showcase their skills to the entire organisation. Employees successful in these competitions get several bigger and significant projects to work. This practice is also designed to make employees work in a driven and competitive environment.

‘We Care Desk’ have special professionals allocated to take care of the employee’s personal life. ‘We Care Desk’ provides support to pay the employees utility bills every month and also provides hot desks and hot lines to discuss any personal problems of employees. Experts from different fields sometimes help them find solutions to their personal problems. HRs feel ‘We Care Desk’ provides them a broad range of support they need during their career span within the organisation, and makes employee realise their oneness with the organisation they work.

‘C2O space’ is a blog that employees of the entire organisation use as a platform to voice their opinions, publish their ideas and thoughts, project their unique talents and skills and also connect with other employees of the organisation. HRs believes this helps in emphasising ‘Being You’ in the organisation to be proud of being oneself. ‘WaH points’ are the points allocated when an employee wins some award or contributes to the organisation in one or another way. Employees can redeem this ‘WaH points’ to buy the goodies associated with the organisation. HRs feels that these goodies give them lingering memories associated with the organisation and connects them to the organisation strongly.

‘Go Green’ and ‘Outreach’ are the activities as part of Corporate Social Responsibility that engages employees throughout the organisation to give back the society in one or other form. ‘Go Green’ is a program where employees work in weekends in different localities to control Carbon footprint and promote planting trees. HRs believes that these activities help bring meaningfulness to the employee’s life and work within the organisation by giving back to the society. ‘Outreach’ is a program where employees travel and work in remote villages all over the state in weekends to teach illiterate children. Funds are also allocated to distribute notebooks, books and other aids for the children’s education.

HRs believed all the above discussed practices and drivers influence the retention of employees. Some employees stayed with the single project they work for longer term. Other employees switch between different projects but remained within the organisation for longer term. HRs felt only employees stayed with the organisation when they enjoyed their work, celebrated their everyday life and advanced with steady progress in their career. Hence HRs devises different practices to influence employee’s life within the organisation and get feedback from the employees through surveys to keep adapting to the employee’s lifestyle. According to the HRs, all employees are considered equally for the design aspect of the practices, because they think every single employee is significant for the overall success of the organisation.

The following figure (Figure II) represents the HR’s perspectives on the retention of employees. HRs believed there are only three major reasons why employees of this organisation work with them longer: Firstly, if they enjoyed the work, secondly if they liked the environment in the organisation and finally if they developed attachment and sense of belonging with the organisation. HRs conveyed that they are constantly taking all steps to bring about either one of this reason for the employees to stay. These findings have emerged as the most recurrent themes and sub- themes from the HRs data. The sub-themes that emanated are shown in the figure in big ovals. For example, in order to make the employee enjoy their work, the HRs has to design the work in such a way that it is not boring, but fun to do. In the same way, to make the employees like their environment, HRs are constantly

redesigning the work milieu to present it in a more comfortable and flexible form. HRs has devised support systems like 'We Care Desk' only to provide extra care and that nourishment to the employees that would make them realise their belongingness to the organisation where they work every day.

Figure II. HR's Perspective on Retention of Employees within the Organisation



### Employees' perspective

The employee's perspectives on why they stay with the organisation are different compared to the HRs perspectives. Employees cite partly different reasons for staying with the organisation and for how these reasons encourage them to stay longer. The retention model in Figure 3 shows the reasons employees stated for staying, which will be compared to the HR's view later on. Figure III also shows how the employees felt these reasons made them stay with the organisation.

Employees who stayed with the organisation just because their project suited their skills and talents were the ones who felt they were engaged properly in the work. Their engagement gave them meaning to the everyday work and thus they stayed with the organisation. Some employees stated challenging work and travel opportunities to be the reasons they stay with the organisation. They felt challenges made them feel more empowered and responsible to

the work with the fullest commitment. They also feel that these challenges made their career sustainable with the organisation. According to employees another popular reason for staying was the best training and development programs that helps them to hone their skills regularly and engages them in everyday work with higher commitment every time they attend these programs.

Employees who stay with the organisation for longer term felt their proper work-life balance enabled them to continue with the same organisation. They also felt that the support given by the organisation with regard to their work and personal life has ensured to strike the balance every day. Employees were moved by the extra care taken from the organisation side and felt they belonged to the organisation. Hence they feel committed to the organisation in return and hence stay and work there for longer term comfortably. They again felt the recognition and awards within the organisation made them committed to the organisation in the longer run. Employees felt motivated and being noticed every minute by instant recognition and surprise rewards for their work within the organisation. They compare this with only other place where they are closely watched and rewarded generously; i.e. at home. Hence they attribute recognition and rewards as well a reason for staying with this organisation. Open communication and transparent systems of the organisation has also increased their association with the organisation thereby inculcating organisational commitment and sense of belonging. Consequently openness and transparency as well becomes a reason for the employee to stay longer with the organisation. The excerpt from one of my interviews with an employee conveys how corporate social responsibility had made them stick to the organisation for longer period. This employee is staying with the organisation for the past 7.5 years.

“One of the many reasons that keep me here is the positive vibes the organisation creates in the society. They emphasise in giving back to the society and to the Mother Nature. I feel being part of good things. I have always wanted to contribute to the society that had helped me to achieve this position. I am able to contribute a lot to society through the corporate social responsibility activities when compared with what I could have done on my own. This way I am able to identify with the organisation and feel being part of it.”

From the above example, it is clear how certain reasons make them stay with the organisation longer. Some employees state that their overall positive experiences have helped them stay longer with the organisation, since this had made them develop a special liking and attachment to the work environment and the organisation.

It has to be noted that there were a few employees who left the organisation for other, more personal reasons. A few employees explained that they stayed with the organisation just because they wanted to earn enough to be able to invest in their future studies in some other field. This was common in the age group of 21 – 26 years. These employees felt they were highly committed with their every day work with the organisation and happily work here because they have been given good care and support. Even then, these employees had the intention of leaving the organisation soon, as they wanted to pursue their full time higher studies. Some employees were even willing to join the same organisation again in the future after completing their higher studies abroad. If this is one case, a few other employees left the organisation just because they had to join their family, mostly a husband who was working in another city. If they have the availability of transfer to the organisation’s another branch in the city, they are happy to continue their stay with the organisation, if there is no opportunity

to get transferred, they leave the job here and look for another job in the city where they want to relocate.

Figure III. Retention Model that Represents Employee’s Perspectives for Staying



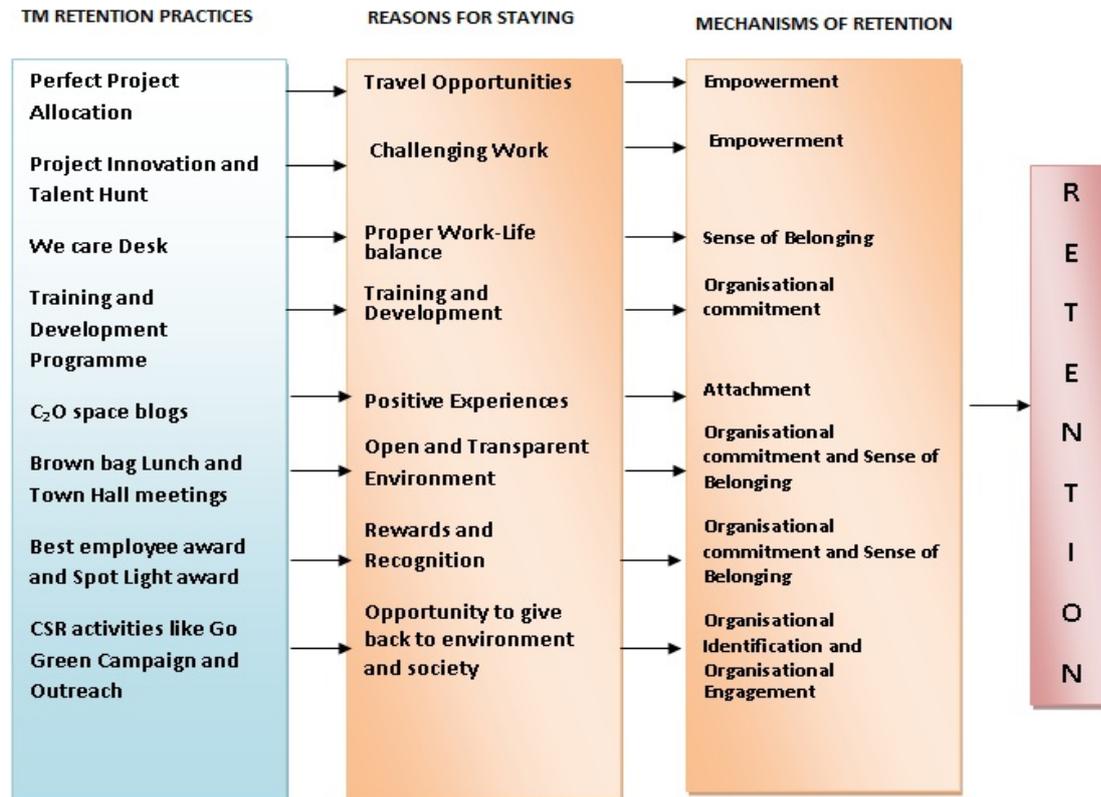
**Joint retention model**

The joint retention model (Figure IV) was conceptualised from the both HR and employee perspectives, and an interpretation of the entire data taken together. In this model, ‘reasons’ refer to the factors that help employees decide whether to stay with the organisation or not. ‘Mechanisms’, in turn, designate the processes or ways by means of which drivers lead to retention of employees.

The joint retention model shows the link between the two perspectives, by modelling how the retention practices followed by HR can provide reasons for employee to stay with the organisation, and how in turn these reasons help them in staying with the organisation. It seems as if the HR-devised retention practices work effectively in retaining the employees. However, there were also certain discrepancies between the views of HRs and employees, as few employees mentioned certain other, more personal reasons for leaving the firm, namely wanting to pursue higher education or re-unite with their family. These reasons were not

related to any of the HR's retention practices. For such reasons, some employees will still leave the organisation in spite of finding a lot of reasons to stay with this organisation from both the employee and HR perspectives. Each link in the model will now be explained (see Figure IV).

Figure IV. Joint Retention Model Combining the Perspectives of Employees and HRs



The HR practice ‘Perfect Project Allocation’ has helped employees by providing travel opportunities in their job, which they consider as a reason for staying with the organisation. Allocating right projects according to their skills, talent and interests have empowered them, and they feel this is how they are able to stay longer in this organisation. Similarly, the practice of ‘Project innovation’ and ‘Talent hunt’ have offered them challenging work, which in turn empowers them and motivates them to stay longer. The ‘We Care Desk’ helps in the maintenance of work-life balance of employees, which in turn inculcates the sense of belonging in them that makes remain longer again. The ‘Training and Development’ program within the organisation offers the training and development needed by the employees to develop their skills and latent talent, which they state as one of the reason to stay with the organisation because they want to show their commitment in return to these programs that develop their overall personality.

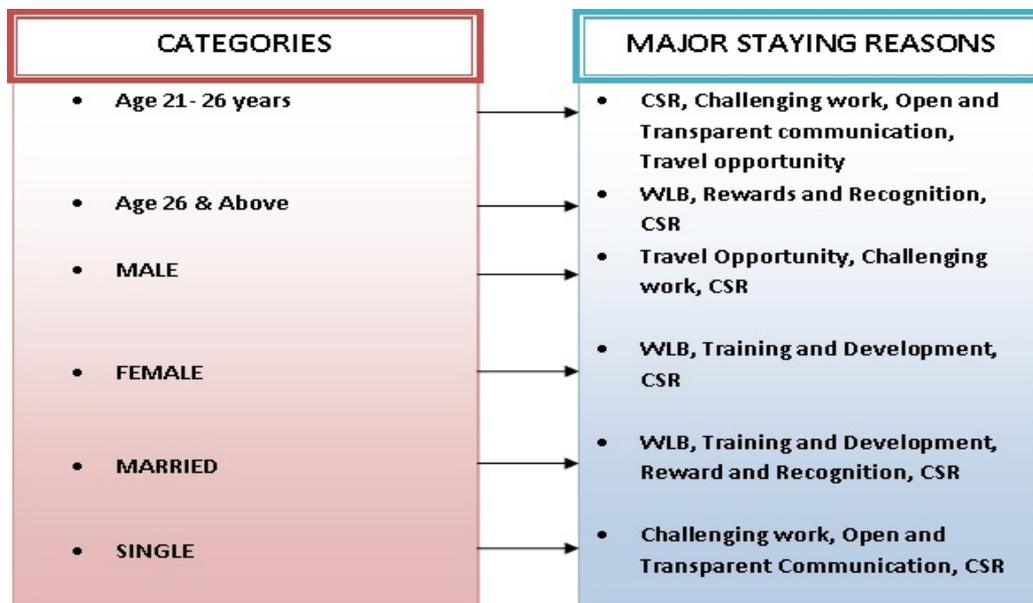
‘C<sub>2</sub>O space blogs’ have given them a platform to achieve positive experiences within the organisation and this helps them stay longer, as they would like to associate themselves with an organisation that gives them such good experiences of lifetime. The ‘Town hall meetings’ and ‘Brown bag lunch’ have given them the feeling of an open and transparent environment, which is again stated by many employees as one of the reason to stay with this organisation, because the open and transparent environment has fostered their organisational commitment and sense of belonging. Similarly, the talent management retention practices of ‘Best

*employee award* and *Spot Light award* have given rewards and recognition to those employees who felt they were needed and therefore should stay with the organisation. CSR activities like *Go Green* and *Outreach* have given them the opportunity to give back to environment and the society, which the employees again stated as one of the reason to stay with the organisation.

### Demographic differences

The reasons stated by the employees to stay with the organisation varied partly according to their age, marital status and other factors. The following figure (Figure V) represents this finding. It is clearly interpreted from the data that these factors decide which reasons they attribute for staying with the organisation. It is noticed from the data that for employees belonging to the age band 21 to 26 years, engagement in CSR activities, challenging work, open and transparent communication and travel opportunities were major reasons to stay with the organisation. For employees belonging to age band of 26 years and above, work-life balance, rewards and recognition and corporate social responsibility of the organisation are the reasons to stay. For the male participants, travel opportunities, challenging work and CSR activities were the major reasons for staying with the organisation. And for female employees, work-life balance, training and development and CSR activities were the reasons for staying with the organisation. In case the employee was a married man or woman, for them work-life balance, training and development, rewards and recognition and CSR activities were the reasons to stay. Finally for the employees who were single, challenging work, open and transparent communication and CSR activities constituted the reasons for staying with the organisation.

Figure V. Categories of employees and their reasons for staying with the organisation



### Unintended consequences of talent management retention practices

In some cases, there were negative influences of certain talent management practices which were of course unintentional, but had a serious impact on the minds of employees who left the organisation. One such example from the interview was in the case of the practice *Perfect Project allocation*. For example, when the talent management team wished to retain the key talent within the same work group to maximise the performance of that work group, they promoted the employee within the same workgroup and this isolated him/her from the

larger picture of the organisation. This hindered the scope of development of the talented employee who wished to be part of the organisation and experience different dimensions to his/her work. Gradually, this type of isolation and pressure to work in the same project or work group made employees feel saturated and lose their interest and engagement in the work. These employees then left the organisation eventually and joined another organisation, which gave them what they wanted with regard to their job and career. These employees envisaged their careers unfolding over a number of different organisations as opposed to within the boundaries of a single organisation. They felt they had not been recognised properly for their work and lost commitment to the project and finally to the organisation. This situation is presented through the words of an interviewee who has been an employee of this organisation for 2.5 years.

“I was recognised for being the best at work with respect to knowledge management portal. And I was presented Spot Light award for that and promoted to next cadre within the same project. But this project is a smaller one with very little scope for one to develop. I was working for the past two years with the same type of work which wasn't dynamic in any sense. At one stage, I felt being locked in the same cell and I wasn't given better work to prove myself. I felt boredom finally and started losing interest in the work. Hence I joined current organisation to experience the type of work and role I wanted in my previous organisation”.

The above example helps in clearly understanding the influence of '*Perfect project allocation*' and the mechanism that was behind for employee leaving the organisation. Different practices have different influences on employees' mind. The above example is of an employee who likes to see a dynamic nature of the work he/she does. By contrast, another employee explained that when he was promoted within the same project, his familiarity with the work helped him finish the work quickly and leave for home early. He felt this flexibility in the organisation helped him in gaining a proper work-life balance. He felt the organisation gave him enough freedom with respect to timings and felt care, which nurtured his sense of belonging with the organisation. This had in turn made his commitment to the organisation stronger and he had been with the organisation for 6 years. It is the same practice, but had different influences on employees according to their priorities for staying with the organisation. The former example is of an employee who gives first priority to challenging work and the latter example is of an employee who gives work-life balance first priority when it comes to staying with the organisation.

## **Discussion, Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

### **Discussion**

The findings of this research have been presented from two different perspectives of the members of the same organisation. The first perspective is of talent management HR members and the second perspective is of employee members of the same organisation. This research proposes a comprehensive model including different talent management retention practices and their corresponding influence on the employees to stay with an organisation. Moreover, I have identified certain demographic characteristics that influenced Indian employees' reasons for staying with the firm, and I have outlined certain unintended consequences of retention practices. The understanding of talent management retention

practices and how they actually work in an organisation in the practical world is a critical concern in the talent management literature. It is imperative to understand the reasons why employees stay with an organisation in the Indian IT industry context, as this industry is facing high attrition in the current scenario, due to increased job opportunities in the market.

The study yielded rich qualitative data which allowed me to elaborate on perceptions by HR and employee members in a particular organisational context, and identify several reasons and mechanisms of retention. In addition, I have demonstrated how organisational identification, organisation commitment, sense of belonging, employee engagement and empowerment can act as mechanisms by which the retention practices influenced employee retention. This lends empirical support to prior research that was conducted in other countries and industries (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Dutton et al., 1994; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Kraimer, Seibert, & Liden, 1999).

It is evident that the talent management retention practices designed by HR of this organisation worked very well with most of the employees. From the above discussed models, it is observed that the HR's expectations of the influence of certain retention practices were consistent with the reasons why employees stay. The retention practices designed by the talent management HRs have driven the mechanisms for retention of employees as seen from the joint retention model in Figure 4. For example, training and development; corporate social responsibility, support systems, openness and transparency are expected by HRs to help in retention, and coincidentally the employees have mentioned these as reasons for their stay with the organisation.

There were, however, also a few employees who left the organisation for personal reasons which could not be changed by any HR retention practices. HRs could try to record the other personal reasons for the employee's resignation from the firm through exit interviews and feedback forms.

It is also necessary to consider that the retention practices did in some cases lead to certain negative outcomes that were purely unintentional. These consequences cannot be completely eliminated, as individuals can have different reactions to the same practices. The most important question is then what can be done in this kind of situation. The employees should get a proper channel to speak their mind to their higher officials, to explain what is exciting for them and what is disappointing them. Through this, the negative unintentional outcomes of the certain practices could be avoided.

It is important to note that no employee left this organisation just because they were getting better salary in some other peer organisation in the IT industry. Hence my research confirms that there are other things that keep employees in the organisation with their full commitment. This confirms the research of Smith (2001) who argues that "money gets employees in the door, but it doesn't keep them there." Ashby and Pell classify money as a "satisfier," meaning that it is a necessary but insufficient factor in employee retention, while Harris and Brannick (1999) agree that money is not the primary motivator for employees. In fact, many companies have done a very good job of retaining their employees without any pay-based retention incentives (Pfeffer, 1998). According to my research, this organisation is doing very well in retaining its employees with the effective talent management retention practices designed by the HRs of the organisation.

### **Practical Implications**

Even though this organisation is performing well in terms of retaining their employees to a great extent, still there is one particularly interesting drawback. The employees are aware of only few talent management retention practices, still they have been influenced by these practices to make them stay with the organisation. Hence talent management HRs can analyse how well the retention practices would work when employees deliberately start reaping

benefits out of different practices with the help of increased awareness. Employees feel that they do not have enough time to do anything else other than work. In such cases, HRs can take care of giving refreshing breaks to employees' work with the help of a proper job design. Constant job designing will help the employees to be in association with a more meaningful work that engages them fully and empowers them. HRs can enhance the communication modes with the employees to make them connect with the talent management retention practices in a better way. Current feedback pattern through surveys did not seem to work very effectively. Hence, HRs could also conduct regular sessions with randomly selected employees to know how well their practices work, and keep an eye out for constant feedback on their retention practices.

### **Limitations and suggestions for future research**

This research was conducted exclusively in a multinational organisation in Chennai, India, and may therefore not be representative of relationships in other countries. Yet, this multinational organisation located in this city in India may well be a significant exemplar for similar scenarios in other developing and emerging regions. This study is limited in its generalisability. However, considering the generalisation framework by Byrne and Sahay (2005), this study has provided a rich, contextualised insight into talent management retention practices and their influence on retention of Indian employees. Further, the specific implications and findings from the case study can potentially be generalised to other similar contexts within India and other developing countries. My research was also constrained by the limited access for conducting in-depth interviews with the employees and HRs of the organisation. Better access to interview participants would have added even more value to the findings of this study. However, the insights gained from the 50 interviewees in this research are likely to pertain across a larger participant group within this firm.

More research is needed to study elaborately why retention practices proposed by talent management HRs fail to retain certain employees of multinational organisations in the IT industry. A natural extension to this study would be to examine why employees' reasons for staying with the organisation depend on demographic factors. This would provide a better understanding of the individual aspects of employee retention. There is also a need for research that can compare different country-specific and industry-specific talent management retention practices, to bring out more insights into how retention practices work in these different contexts. More qualitative, in-depth research is necessary with respect to all of these questions, given the unexplored nature of Indian talent management, particularly in the IT industry.

### **Conclusions**

Retention models were developed from the two different perspectives of HRs and employees in a large multinational IT organisation in India. The models were helpful in examining how retention practices affect retention, from the perspectives of two different groups within the same organisation. The findings that emanated from this research have broad implications for both research and practice. The findings demonstrate the complex and multi-faceted relationships among retention practices of talent management, reasons for staying, and mechanisms for actual retention of employees. While the Indian business environment is unique, it is also indicative of other emerging markets undergoing economic and institutional transitions (Khanna, Palepu, & Sinha, 2005). Multinationals from the most advanced economies see their economic future in large emerging markets and as emerging market organisations seek to motivate and retain their most talented employees; the role of talent

management retention practices will undoubtedly continue to be an important element of organisational success.

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