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RESEARCH PAPER

On Employee Engagement and Organizational Reforms Perception amongst Workforce of Inland Revenue Services (IRS) of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines issues related to employee engagement in ongoing reforms in Inland Revenues Services (IRS) of Government of Pakistan. The study is important in the backdrop of current reforms regime in the largest tax collection agency of the country where employees generally feel not to have due participation in the process. A qualitative approach is adopted, and 112 employees of officer and non-officer grades are interviews in all major tax offices. The interviews data is analysed using thematic analysis. The study reports minimal employee engagement in IRS, and employees are generally disengaged and demoralized. They fear for the loss of their 'civil servant' status amid reforms. The psychological conditions necessary for employee engagement are nonexistent and there is a serious lack of trust between employees and top management. It is recommended to promote engagement culture at all levels of hierarch in IRS with performance focused incentives in place.

Introduction

Employee engagement is essential to organizational stability, growth and long-term strategy. It enlarges upon sense of inclusiveness, ownership and responsibility amongst employees and make them willing workers extending more commitment to the organisation than what their contractual arrangement requires. The management literature also suggests that employees get more professionally engaged when they feel they are trusted and valued (Crawford et al., 2010). Engaged employees are more invested towards their roles leading to endorsement of arduous in-role performances ((Rothbard, 2001; Macey & Schneider, 2008). Numerous studies have stated that employee engagement is a predictor of employee behavior, organizational accomplishment and performance (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019); Richman et al., 2008; Harter et. Al., 2003; Baumruk, 2004). Employee engagement works as a potential moderator to kindle relationship between HRM practices and employee performance (Sabi'u & Umar, 2016). The literature guides that employee engagement is linked with numerous organizational outcomes including performance, both from individual and organizational perspectives (Kwon and Kim, 2020). Employee engagement reinforces clear understanding of responsibilities as part of an organic whole. Furthermore, psychological contract, mental & physical wellbeing and rewards work together in establishing employee engagement.

Over the years, employee engagement in Inland Revenue Service of Pakistan has declined while it underwent a series of restructurings. Although, automation brought better tax administration and revenue collection, the motivation among employees have been dipping. Frequent reforms and experimentations in the last two decades usually never solicited any participation or input from IRS employees who felt estranged and detached from reforms processes (Muhammad & Rehman, 2011). It is hence very pertinent to

scrutinize employee engagement through previous reforms and current pulse in IRS offices striving for a participatory role to propose and successfully implement new reforms.

In October 2019, the meeting to review restructuring of Federal Board of Revenue and Domestic Resource Mobilization ended in Prime Minister's approval of the proposed reforms process. This created a widespread distress in IRS fraternity that had recently conducted its first elections in the newly formed, Inland Revenue Services Officers Association (IRSOA). The IRSOA voiced its concerns and its office bearers in all provinces remained highly instrumental against non-inclusiveness of IRS in the process. They believed that working for an 'authority' would question their status as civil servants. Moreover, as the reforms envisaged, putting a sizeable workforce on surplus pool (reserve employees) and subsequent voluntary retirement, offers was believed to be detrimental to the morale in IRS employees across Pakistan. Owing to the objections primarily by the IRS fraternity, the newly appointed FBR chairman upon directions of the Prime Minister announced four sub-committees comprising FBR officers and officials to develop blueprints of proposed reforms to be implemented in the next fiscal year.

Literature Review

Theoretical Context

Employee engagement is an evolving concept that reflects greater motivational state of employees (Jones & Harter, 2005). Engagement breeds from the extent to which employees are simply 'informed' to have a 'due say' in changes in the functions (Wilkinson et al., 2015). To attain 'full engagement', the integration between employee engagement and psychological wellbeing provides better basis for individual and organizational sustainability (Robertson & Cooper, 2010). One of the three types of engagement is intellectual engagement in which employees think hard about the job and doing better. The affective engagement, on the other hand, is positive feelings about better performance. Finally in social engagement, employees actively take opportunities to communicate about work-related improvement with co-workers (Alfes et al, 2010). Broader theorization of engagement redirects value congruence, core self-evaluation and perceived organizational support with task performance and organizational citizenship behavior (Rich et al., 2010). Further, Rich et al. (2010) proposed that when individuals become 'engaged individuals', they invest their head, heart and hands in their performance.

Many researchers believe that due to conceptional ambiguity about employee engagement, organizations fail to foster an engaged workforce to its true potential (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Pati & Kumar, 2010). William A, Kahn's 1990 paper 'Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work' is a seminal work in this regard. Kahn (1990, p.704) defines psychological meaningfulness as a *"feeling that one is receiving a return on investment of oneself in a currency of physical, cognitive, or emotional energy."* Kahn (1990, p.708) signifies psychological safety as *"To feel able to express and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career".* Kahn (1990. p.694) also outlines employee engagement as *"the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performance".* Kahn's (1990) framework also found support in the 'positive psychology' movement that has its emphasis on employees' capabilities and strengths rather than weaknesses and the potential gains of employee well-being (Harter et al., 2003; Luthans, 2002; Peterson & Spiker, 2005).

Blau (1964) establishes the fundamental premise of social exchange theory suggesting the reciprocation of receiving party with something equally 'valuable' that was conferred upon them. This essential 'reciprocation' is translated into relationship between the employee and organizational leaders (Strom et al., 2014). Workplace and socioemotional engagement stems from 'sense of inclusiveness' extended by the leaders in

the organizational processes and objectives and employees feel obliged to repay through work engagement (Saks, 2006). The social exchange theory revolves around links between inclusive leadership and creativity offered by employees because of greater involvement and increased attachment with the organization (Carmeli et al., 2010). The path goal theory of leadership effectiveness (House, 1971) could be contextualized with Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation to identify outcome variable of the subordinates because of leadership behaviors. The reformulated path goal theory elucidates that it is the leadership behavior that largely defines the subordinate effectiveness. Robinson et al (2004) stated that the most significant employee engagement driver is the sense of being valued and involved in the organizations. Highest engagement level could be achieved when they are involved in decision-making processes, and they feel they are heard. This hypothesis is supported by Kahn's (1990) study that focuses on managerial support and recognition facilitating engagement as to what they perceive in recognition for their performance.

Significance of employee engagement in modern private and government organizations

The four enablers of employee engagement are strategic narrative, engaging managers, employee voice and integrity (MacLeod & Clarke, 2010). People in the workplace experience meaningfulness when are considered worthwhile, valuable, useful, and not taken for granted. Workplaces that invest in self-in-role have more likelihood of leading to psychological meaningfulness (Kahn, 1990). Employee engagement is one of the greatest modern-day challenges to any organization. Most private and government organizations tend to miss out on engagement, and this readily reflects upon their external engagement functions halting meaningful sustainability and service delivery. The disengaged and passionless employees, in turn, distance themselves from professional obligations and their aloofness from organizational citizenship can negatively affect their individual, inter-related and organizational performance.

Employee voice has been examined in disciplines like Human Resource Management and Organizational Behavior as a fundamental indicator leading to participation, as without voice the participation cannot be enacted (Glew et al., 1995). Employee voice is gauged through effective engagement and representative participation (MacLeod et al., 2011). The modern-day acceptance of engaged employees as more of 'strategic partners' is gaining traction. Many organizations having adopted this new form of employee-employer relationship report that it leads to competitive advantage (Madhura & Pandita, 2014). Enhancing subordinate empowerment through leadership behavior is essential to expect high achievements from the workforce (Shamir et al., 1993). Entrepreneurship is a significant enabler that is positively associated with employee engagement.

Kwon & Kim (2020) has described clear goals, resource distribution, clear policies and procedures and organizational processes in strategies to avoid organizational conflict. Conflict may be reduced by attention to such features as authority structure, patterns of communication, sharing of information, democratic functioning of organisation, moving away from bureaucratic systems, and rigid official rules and regulations. Frank et al. (2004) emphasized the discretionary employee participation in job roles to foster engagement. Conversely, the manner in which employee repay the organisation is through their engagement levels. The choice to engage or not to engage is in relation to the resources organisations extends to them (Saks, 2006).

Ensuring integrity entails a relationship between employee engagement and empowered decision-making with performance and reward system (Nazre et al., 2011). Locus of control is an imperative personal factor in workplace psychology that refers to the extent the individuals believe they could control events that affect them. Adequate support in job assignments through objective policies, meritocracy, service rules and distributive justice in performance appraisals and promotional policies resultantly lead towards greater

engagement. Most significantly, performance management system upholds target setting based on consent of employees that are specific and achievable (Agrawal & Sharma, 2015).

In organisational context, job resources play both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational roles. Motivational potential could be intrinsic as they satisfy and supports in central psychological needs such as learning growth and development and could be extrinsic as they become instrumental to achieve organisational goals (Bakker et al., 2011; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). According to Perry & Wise (1990), motivation, commitment and meaningful public servant participation in broader public policies serve as intrinsic incentive in maintaining their sense of pride. In the context of a Federal Government, employee-led employee engagement initiatives are conducive in increasing engagement levels in the Federal Government employees (Rivera & Flinck, 2011). In the realm of public or civil services, work involvement requires particular attention in boosting performance of public administrators in developing countries. Engagement of employees as social innovators in corporate sector, NGOs' or in government agencies is a cardinal concept in which employees function as intrapreneurs or as members of innovation teams and their participation positively impacts organisation-wide-innovations (Mirvis & Googins, 2018).

Effectiveness of employee engagement in restructuring and organizational change

It is generally agreed that employees who are engaged in the 'process changes' including structuring, designing and implementing changes in the workplace or functions are more engaged. When employees are empowered to make decisions about their own performance, have unhindered access to information, adequate trainings to catch up with changing work dimensions and are rewarded for their efforts, they become further productive (Lockwood, 2007). In the context of organisational change, Sharpe (2009) stated that fairness perception affected the extent to which organisational change is accepted and adjusted by employees. Amidst any organisational change the employee involvement and trust should be ensured as a human resource practice. Structural reorganisation could spark distrust in management and the role to engage workforce during change hence becomes indispensable and the key question to be addressed by the management is how to manage corrosive trust in them (Morgan & Zeffane, 2003). Any successful change is not only the development of more efficient and effective processes but alignment to an organisational culture that supports the new processes (Price & Chahal, 2007).

In the case of Pakistan Inland Revenue Service, the perceived structural changes resulted in estrangement by officers and they started voicing the need for participatory role in the process. Considering the effects of organization change and restructuring, the chronic stress is driven by various factors including perceived injustices and inequity, inadequate communication by management and the uncertainty factor. Employee resistance to change is a major reason of implementation failure (Egan, 2005). However, if managed well, it could play a vital part in implementation success. The reasons of resistance vary from negative perception of the change and lack of interest and participation often resulting in strikes and boycotts (Zafar & Naveed, 2008).

Any change that the management processes require extensive brainstorming and collaborative goal setting. The broader spectrum of 'personal engagement' exceeds the scope of employee motivation, job satisfaction, employee commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. Employee engagement is a stronger predictor of achieving better performance output and standards (kompaso & Sridevi, 2010). Communication, involvement, and honest information about the change objectives with consequential opportunities to partake in decision-making process is pivotal to employee engagement wherein employees can express their views and concerns ahead of a foreseeable organisational change. Employee engagement through communication and involvement helps them make sense of the new environment to persist with commitment and loyalty to the organisation (Baldwin, 2006). According to Schaufeli et al. (2002, p. 74), engagement is

not a specific or momentary state rather *"a more persistent and pervasive affective cognitive state that is not focussed on any particular object, event, individual or behaviour"*. Hence, engaged employees have high levels of energy and are enthusiastic about their work, and are often fully immersed in their work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Contextualizing public service in Federal Government, employee-led employee engagement initiatives are conducive in increasing engagement levels in the Federal Government employees (Rivera & Flinck, 2011). In the realm of public or civil services, work involvement requires particular attention in boosting performance of public administrators in developing countries (Tioumagneng and Issofou, 2019).

Material and Methods

Qualitative research methodology is adopted to explore and derive new conclusions as the study will gather and analyze non-numerical descriptive data. To test Kahn's (1990) theoretical model amidst restructuring of Inland Revenue Service Pakistan, the qualitative research method is planned on the touchstone of selected theory that pioneered the concept of employee engagement. Yin's Case Study Research Design and Methods is selected in an all-encompassing method with its own research design as Yin's vision to *"to improve our social science methods and practices over those of previous generations of scholars"* (Yin, 2014). The case study design is selected to explore engagement levels in IRS employees in the times when service is going through a major transformational process.

Interviews are designed to test the hypothesis and interview questions covered theoretical underpinning derived from and detailed in the literature review. Descriptive questions are designed, and open-ended questions are included. The central idea is to enquire whether employee engagement had ever been a consideration and what are present levels of engagement in the department if the concept had previously existed in the organization. Interviews are conducted in Regional Tax Office Karachi, RTOII Karachi, Large Taxpayers Unit Karachi, Corporate RTO Lahore, RTO Sarghoda, RTO Sialkot, RTO Multan, RTO Peshawar and RTO Quetta. The sample size is 100 interviews conducted in tax collecting offices in all four provinces of Pakistan and major tax offices in the capital city of each of all four provinces in Pakistan. Equal number of interviews are divided between officers of grade 17 or above (Officers that are appointed after competitive Central Superior Service), and employees of grade 16 or below (Direct non-commissioned appointments). Interviews are conducted through skype and frequent guidance extended to the focal person through telephone, skype and email. The responses are recorded manually in handwritten notes.

Data analysis is carried out by placing employees in 'engaged' or 'disengaged' category. This is essential in deriving right results to be applied regarding employee engagement in the department. Descriptive data is carefully analyzed without indiscriminating between officers and officials of the department. However, separate analysis is made to check discrepancy between the two cadres. Considering small sample size in this qualitative research, inductive research approach was deemed appropriate for this study. Sample selection was not a problem because the methodology aims to apply Kahn's (1990) theoretical framework based on direct relationship with their employment experiences and expectations. It is also ensured that clerical staff also give their input to better enhance the results. Semi-structured questions in interviews are used as a guide to theory-based and open-ended questions and assess their responses by cross-matching the responses with other answers in the interview and consistent answers are included in the analysis.

Results and Discussion

A total number of 117 responses received, however, 5 were not included in final analysis either due to insufficient replies to key questions. The final 112 responses analyzed are distributed as follows:

Table 1
Profile of Respondents

Group	Responses	Grade	Job titles
A	59	17 or above	Commissioners, Additional Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners
B	53	16 or below	Inspectors, Audit Officers, Superintendents, Supervisors, Upper Division Clerks, Lower Division Clerks

Five responses were rejected due to irrelevant or incomplete answers. The range of respondents were thoroughly analyzed, and each response was studied, and the results were compiled and discussed and stated under the followings heads:

Understanding of the concept

It was found that the concept was largely clear to the participants in Group A, and they fully understood what employee engagement was and how it mattered to them. The respondents in Group B were not very coherent in their responses. However, only 3 respondents in Group B failed to answer about their understanding of the concept. Of the responses received, only 6 respondents stated that they feel partially invested with the department but also added that there is minimal reciprocation by the management and board. Most of the responses were detailed with several perspectives that lead to better understanding of the subject.

Meaningful engagement

The question regarding meaningful engagement was affirmatively answered by 7 respondents but 6 of the respondents were inconsistent to theme in their answers to the remaining questions. Kahn (1990) pinpoints 'meaningfulness' as a distinctive phenomenon in which the real value of engagement resides. This meaningfulness, according to majority of respondents, there is a mechanistic organizational structure in vogue and employees largely feel disengaged while some said they find themselves engaged only due the pride of being part of a prestigious organization and there is no motivation to work more than the task required. An overpowering number of respondents in Group B stated that the senior administration is only concerned about vaguely assigned tasks and they rarely extend themselves to assist a junior officer or any official below grade 16. The performance is only judged by numbers and their support efforts in tax recoveries are neither measured nor they are brought into their credit in the end. This detaches them from fully engaging themselves as the culture is quite individualistic and discouraging in the face of any official hiccup, they feel left alone, and the responsibility is normally fixed on them without supporting resources. There is no engagement in the task-related activities as daily tasks are carried out with little assistance available to their disposal. The results hence overwhelmingly denied any presence of meaningful employee engagement in Inland Revenue Service.

Relevant Safety factors

Mixed responses were recorded in terms of safety factors that the employees consider relevant in any engagement/disengagement. 39% of the employees stated that basic safety factors (refer to Kahn's safety factors) are non-existent in the department. The results concluded that work related inertia is prevalent in disengaged employees as 29% of the employees strongly feel that due to their inconsequential role in the processes, they are mainly tasked to do menial and mundane assignments which disengage them as they feel

that their tax-oriented skills are not normally tested as most of the 'tax collection' workload is borne by the officers as an organizational culture. The first-line officers (Assistant and Deputy Commissioners) identified trust deficit between them and senior officers that they believe has normalized in the department. Several responses stated that the delegation of powers entrusted to officers also come with single choice of action by the seniors and they are hardly allowed or given time to apply their legal mind in the cases. The responses corroborated lack of Kahn's safety procedures in IRS. By and large, the results underscored pessimism in employees. Those employees who indicated sporadic presence of safety factors in the workplace, the status quo, according to their recorded responses, still prevailed. In certain cases, employee due to the fear of complaints of corruption and malpractices, observe lackluster attitudes which effects their performance.

The results indicated that there is unclear job description and organizational strategy and previous experimentations in the department did not yield benefits from individuals and as a collective revenue force. The question of psychological safety in the context of employee participation in departmental restructuring was unanimously answered (92%) in negative. Employees have highlighted communication as a significant factor that needs to be improved should they consider themselves valuable enough to be consulted and properly backed by the chain of command. This was relevant to hierarchical levels in both groups.

Presence of effective HR in relation to employee engagement

Both the groups confirmed through their responses that effective HR management ensuring employee engagement is either absent or not up to the required levels. HR functions are performed by headquarters in each office and are considered non-specialized assignments. There is never an impetus on engagement and HR in field formations mostly hiring, transfer, punctuality and discipline issues. There is no ongoing program that educates them with related concepts such as employee motivation and satisfaction. Employees recorded that the modern concept of HR that imparts trainings, awareness sessions, adequate counselling and appreciation are all in vague state in the department. Policies are made at the board level that are inconsistent with employee-oriented policies which results in demoralization. The employees also articulated that facilitating circumstances such as ownership and participation has never been HR's priority. An Inspector notes, *"Unfortunately the HR wing remains dysfunctional and has largely escaped its essential objectives."*

Communication about Restructuring

Results safely conclude that there has been insufficient communication with the IRS employees about restructuring process. A total 103 out of 112 respondents have negated adequate communication about reforms. Employees showed uncertainty about how the organization will look like in future. The officers in Group B confirmed that they were only consulted as means of formality after the PM's meeting with FBR officers. Officers pointed out the need of inclusiveness as being frontline audit and recovery officers with their concerns about empowering them in true sense. Senior officials, on the other hand, presented a critical picture of department's communicative misgivings. Several employees had only heard about reforms draft proposal from newspapers or television. This further supports that communication about restructuring was probably not considered a necessary action due to which it came as a shock when IRS employees came to know that their service structure could be diametrically changed, and their constitutional status as civil servants might be in threat. By and large, the results show unsatisfactory communication between the policy designers and implementers. A senior member form Group A stated, *"stakeholders who have to implement a new organizational strategy must not be kept aloof from the process as their participation will also mean sharing responsibility to achieve new reforms and*

contrary to the popular notion of FBR employees being threatened by the new reforms in entirety".

Employees' sense of ownership with the department

Results pertaining sense of ownership of IRS employees with their department exhibit nominal ownership. Out of 112 responses, a majority of 89 negated any sense of ownership and belonging. Only seven respondents answered in affirmative that sense of ownership does exist to an extent. Employees have generally desired more ownership, but they have deliberated that this ownership is not reciprocated by the management. They were asked whether this sense of ownership could unilaterally prevail, and majority of 82% answered that there cannot be a one-way ownership. If employees are not provided due recognition and support by the management, their sense of ownership will remain very low. Analysis of the responses demonstrated that ownership comes with empowerment and trust. They cited that they want to communicate with higher ups regarding their issues but due to lack of communicative channels and procedural threats, they stay silent and estranged. This negatively impacts their sense of belonging with the department. They believe that person-specific phenomenon is also responsible in diminishing ownership amongst employees. The officials cited that they were not encouraged to work in the field assignments, and it is normally boss-driven and not always adhered by rules and performance indicators. An Inspector posted in Intelligence and Investigation wing responded, *"No official communication. Only news and rumors which is creating curiosity".*

Psychological availability- physically, cognitively and psychologically invested in the department

The underlying assumption in psychological availability was explained to the interviewees and later they were asked to give their feedback on it. A total of 61 out of 112 answers negated it. They believed that wellbeing of employees and simultaneously resolving their work-life balance problems is essential in achieving psychological availability. From the results, 27 respondents were on the same page that the employees might 'only' be physically invested as work culture does discourage psychological availability. The employees also stated that being psychologically invested in the department requires mutual trust and regard of the employees that is not present in entirety. Employees also argued that due to repeated episodes of ignoring tax collecting human resource in the department, psychological availability could hardly be achieved.

Optimism in achieving actual participation in restructuring process

Results support that the employees are largely pessimistic about achieving any actual participation in restructuring process. Employees also highlighted the absence of their participation in the past reforms and hence they believe that they will again be cornered. Worryingly, 74% respondents have mentioned that they are not hopeful to be given participation in restructuring process. However, 18% of interviewees vested their hope in IRS leadership after their meeting with Prime Minister of Pakistan and they thought that they will be able to give meaningful input which will be considered before final approval of the parliament. Seven respondents stated that they did not have anything to say about it and answers of 4 respondents were unclear and were separated from analysis on this question. A Deputy Commissioner IRS recorded, *"…there are those with years of service and are comfortable with the current structure and more prone to resist change and those who joined the department in the last 2-3 years and are rather rational in this respect…."*

Employee engagement in planning and achieving reforms

This question was dealt in various ways by the employees implying similar course of action. 72% of the respondents agreed that employee engagement is a fundamental factor

that must be realized both by employee and employer. In the case for FBR's reforms, they believed that as a surfacing step for any organizational change, it is quite imperative that the employees are involved in the processes. Engagement is a holistic concept and a decisive number of employees who agreed to the significance of employee engagement before venturing upon reforms, also stressed upon the need for employee-focused policy promising a participatory role in strategic decisions to bolster organizational delivery. General expectations that are arisen about the reforms and future of Pakistan's tax collection are quite high and they can better deliver if their practical input is sought and implemented. A significant majority in both groups believed that even if these reforms are finalized without their engagement, it is successful implementation is highly unlikely. Overall, it is found that that although employee engagement is cardinal in planning and achieving new reforms, the very concept has not yet been evolved in the organization. It is succinctly stated by an Assistant Commissioner of IRS, *"employee engagement is crucial to the success of any reforms and IRS is no exception."*

Real challenges hindering employee engagement in IRS

Several responses brought forward blunt and direct answers such as mindset of senior management, centralization of powers, and inability to utilise powers lawfully vested in them due to organizational culture. Almost 64% of employees mentioned organisational culture being a process culture broadly running along bureaucratic lines and is solely responsible for their demoralization and estrangement from active participation. In the words of an IRS Commissioner, *"lack of Government trust to make IRS independent is one of the many challenges impeding employee engagement in the department".*

Primarily, the policies of frequent change and experiments were criticized by over 30% respondents. They believed that employees have been alienated from management. This has disengaged employees and on interviewing 35 newly appointed inspectors, it was verified that only after one year of service, they feel demotivated. This proposition was supported by majority of the respondents who believed that they expected a supportive organization, and this gradually results in demoralization and limited engagement with work. One important factor that has hampered employee engagement is that previous reforms brought automation in the processes but failed to train and develop its human resource to counter a major shift in organizational culture and strategies. These changes were brought in the absence of on-job trainings further distancing them from new working patterns like one window operation and digitalization in working processes. The respondents overwhelmingly feel that there is no performance-based evaluation and annual performance reports are no reflective guide to measure performance. A flat 'performance allowance' they believe discourage high performing employees and salary structure is still not at par with that of provincial employees and authorities. They believed that seeking permissions from the competent authority to resource mobilization in the department, a lot of time is wasted without results. Another important factor that was mentioned was poor infrastructure in the department. Officers opined that from decent offices to other perquisites that other departments have is still not accorded to them. Field officers still share vehicles for their official assignments and surveys. Indifference of seniors is another highlighted factor and supported by 68% of IRS employees are of the view that senior management does not own employee and they are unable to protect, support and inspire.

Pre-requisite for further engagement

Mixed responses were received in which there was no right or wrong answer. Respondents generally put forth their recommendations about achieving further engagement. Employees reinforced the concerns about rewards system, incentives on recoveries, health support, performance allowance, capacity development in employees, professional trainings, performance-based assessments, scientific performance evaluation parameters and social activities with co-workers. Alignment of personal and organizational

objectives, infrastructural support and autonomy in tasks and positions were regarded crucial in gaining further engagement.

Conclusion

Employee engagement is a modern concept that is more comprehensive than related subjects like motivation and job satisfaction as employee engagement has a much broader scope. William Kahn's (1990) theory of employee engagement was applied in the context of Inland Revenue Service, Pakistan in the times when restructuring process is underway in the department. Kahn (1990) underlined three psychological conditions such as meaningfulness, safety and availability that enable employees to harness their 'full self' in the organization.

The study reveals that employee engagement in IRS is alarmingly low. The employees are discontented about their engagement and are pessimistic about their career prospects. They believe that employees in IRS were not meaningfully consulted about the reforms process which will bear negative consequences in future. The employees, however, supported the need of a new tax collecting body and emphasized to become strategic partners with top management in planning and achieving reforms being empowered in the process. Employees have enlarged on employee engagement as a keystone benchmark to be realized as enunciated by Kahn (1990). They also have asserted their reservations that any reform effecting a department can never be successfully implemented unless its human resource is not engaged. To conclude, the study shows that Inland Revenue Service in Pakistan has not been able to bring 'preferred self' out of its employees and need of the hour is to address their genuine concerns to achieve further engagement. It is recommended to promote engagement culture at all levels of hierarch in Inland Revenue Department with performance focused incentives in place.

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