Significance of HR Functions For A Leader:
A Case Study Approach

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Abstract:-
This research paper titled, “Significance of HR functions for a leader: A case study approach”, based on study carried out by the researcher in selective organisations. In an organization, there is a separate department which takes care of needs related to human resource functions of an organization. If we look at the departments other than HR, leaders are expert in their domain, but there is a necessity to have knowledge of other domains such as human resource, finance, marketing, information technology and basic management functions as well for functioning effectively in the department, for the mutual benefit of the organization and employees. With reference to the domain of ‘Human Resource Management’ one should know at least basics of HR management functions for managing employees effectively. Researcher has got 23 years of experience in academics and industry and based on his own experience and observations, he has written this research paper. Researcher has narrated incidences of different organizations where ill-treatment by leader is the main cause for development of unhealthy environment in the organization and subsequently best and qualified employees leaving jobs. At the end, based on these examples, we may conclude that there is a significance of HR functions for a leader in managing human resource in an effective manner. In fact, autocratic style of leadership may not be best at all times in any organization.

Key Words:- Autocratic Leader, Human Resource Management, ill-treatment, Workforce, Domain, Culture

Introduction:-
Every organisation from industrial sector of any type has certain number of employees which drive the overall activities / work or business. It is important to have adequate workforce with the right skill sets for the organization. Once employees are on board, it’s the responsibility of the head or leader to make sure how to utilize their skill sets for the organization, rather mutual benefit. There are various stages which an employee needs to go through after joining the organization. Employee gets adjusted with the culture of the organization and starts his innings with a lot of enthusiasm. There is a separate department in the organization, which caters to the demands of the organization and individual both; known as Human Resource (HR) department. If we look at the departments other than HR, leaders are expert in their domain, but there is a necessity to have knowledge of other domains such as human resource, finance, marketing, information technology and basic management functions as well for functioning effectively in the department, for the mutual benefit of the organization and employees. With reference to the domain of ‘Human Resource Management’ one should know at least basics of HR management functions for managing employees effectively. Some are very effective in managing employees because they know how to handle workforce, but some are not. Heads or leaders those who are not much aware how to handle workforce, many a times fail to retain people, this refers to the famous say, “Employees don’t quit jobs, but they leave their bosses”. There are two types of leaders that can be observed 1) having knowledge of HR functions and 2) not having knowledge of HR functions. Many a times number 2 type leaders use autocratic style of leadership, which is not always suitable while managing employees.

HR Functions for managing workforce effectively:-
HR Manager generally carries out HR functions such as acquisition, development, motivation, maintenance of human resources of the organization. These functions generally cover majority aspects of managing employees effectively. However, the responsibility of motivating and maintaining
employees is considered as a major function and starts with the initiatives taken by the concerned leader of the department. For motivating and maintaining or retaining employees, one should have understanding of an employee’s mindset, capabilities, goals, interest and ambitions. Based on this information, the leader can assign task or work to the individual. This act of a boss, acts as a motivator for an individual and he or she works with a lot of enthusiasm. This leads to development of a trust between the leader and employee. Generally, in such cases employees are satisfied and don’t think of leaving the job even in a situations of crisis. If there is an autocratic leader, then lot of problems may occur in the organization. Such autocratic leader does not give importance to individual mindset, capabilities, goals, interest and ambitions etc. Researcher has highlighted such incidences here, where leader is not having adequate knowledge of HR function, which led to inability to handle workforce in an effective manner; which has created unhealthy environment in the organization.

Research Methodology:-
Data:-
Primary data is used for this research conducted.

Method of data collection:-
Observation method is used for data collection for this research. Researcher has got 23 years of work experience in the industry and academics. He has worked as ‘Asst. Officer, HR’ in a steel industry for the period of 3 years, and currently working in the field of academics since last 20 plus years; and based on his experience he has collected the data for this research through close observation.

Incidences:-
Researcher is presenting incidences here for the understanding of the problem. After going through these incidences, reader will understand the severity of not having a boss who handles workforce effectively.

Incident No. 1:-
Mr. Ajit Gadage, a well qualified guy was working with one of the Pvt. Ltd. Company, manufacturing steel sheets, colour coated sheets and other products. Though, he was junior, but very sharp once he understands the task. He was paid very lesser salary. In the recent wage rise agreement all workers got substantial rise in their wage. This wage rise benefit was also given to all white collar job holders and accordingly, Ajit’s salary was also revised but with lesser amount of increment. After repeated requests through applications for revision of his salary, no action was taken by his head of the department. Subsequently, he appeared for an interview in competitive organization, he got excellent hike in the salary and for better prospects he tendered his resignation. Higher level management tried to retain him but it was not fruitful. If leader would have taken appropriate action of taking him in confidence and escalating the matter of salary rise and fulfilling his demand; Mr. Ajit Gadge, would have not taken any decision of leaving the job.

Incident No. 2 (Part 1):-
Dr. Anil Gayake, a well qualified, doctorate person was working as a professional in organization named, ‘MWPU’. After six months, Management appointed Dr. Sairaj as a ‘Director’ for the department where Dr. Anil Gayake was working. Dr. Sairaj, being an autocratic leader had some personal agenda and had a biased view towards senior employees working in the department. Dr. Anil Gayake was lone senior employee in the department and hence had lot of problems. Dr. Sairaj, used to scold subordinates for hours together for petty reasons and never used to give any respect to the subordinates and even to the senior employees. He used to always blame his subordinates for any failure or problems. Employees started complaining to the management about Dr. Sairaj, his overall attitude towards employees which led to creation of unhealthy atmosphere in the department. Subsequently, some of the employees left the organization due to harassment by Dr. Sairaj.
Management came to know all this from other stakeholders as well and then they started taking steps towards damage control. Hence, management transferred Dr. Anil Gayake to one of the sister concerns. This act of management was not welcomed by Dr. Anil Gayake, because he was comfortable in his department and place where he was sitting. Generally, an employee doesn’t want to leave his/her place of sitting where he/she feel comfortable. Due to this incident of transfer, Dr. Anil Gayake started alienation feeling towards the organization. Even the department was unable to use the expertise of Dr. Anil Gayake fully, due to such kind of arrangement. Subsequently, Dr. Anil Gayake, became reserved kind of person and never felt like contributing in the task/work assigned to him whole heartedly. This also affected the development of the department and organization in the long run. In this case if the leader would have behaved with maturity with his colleagues, the result would have been completely different, motivating and healthy.

Incident No. 3 (Part 2):-
Management asked Dr. Sairaj to quit, based on complaints and no development of the department due to his style, attitude and approach towards employees. Dr. Anil Gayake was again transferred to his original place of work. Management appointed Dr. Abhay Magar, as a new director of this department. Dr. Abhay Magar, was a good human being and a knowledgeable person. He was having good knowledge about the tasks to be completed and moreover he was kind hearted towards his colleagues; in fact he was an ideal leader for the department. Dr. Abhay Magar, started interacting with each and every employee and collected important information about each individual. He also interacted with Dr. Anil Gayake, positively and requested his whole hearted support. His words are reproduced here for the benefit of the reader. He said, “Since you are a senior employee of this department, I need your help in taking this department and organization to the next level”. After this healthy interaction, Dr. Anil Gayake changed his mind positively and started behaving with him as a normal colleague. Dr. Abhay Magar, used to give him respect and opportunity where seniority is needed. Subsequently, both of them became not only good colleagues but also good friends. They used to work together, in crisis they used to stay back whenever there is a need. All other colleagues also were happy to work with him, simply because he used to try and understand his colleague’s capabilities, ambition, motivating factors and accordingly used to assign the task to each individual. At the end needless to mention here that, this approach of Dr. Abhay Magar, took the department to the next level. Management also appreciated Dr. Abhay Magar and all colleagues. In fact, Dr. Anil Gayake’s overall performance was also improved dramatically.

Incident No. 4:-
Dr. Ajay Gawali was working with one of the reputed organizations named, ‘ABC’ since last 6 years. Dr. Ajay Gawali’s promotion was due and he has applied for the same. He had necessary qualifications and experience required for the post. He had a lady boss, named, Dr. Bhagawati Dalwai. She also had autocratic style of leadership, where she used to feel that everything should happen according to her wish. Dr. Ajay Gawali appeared for an interview twice with a gap of more than six months, but a promotion was denied to him, simply because his boss, Dr. Bhagawati Dalwai, never wanted him to get a promotion. His well-wishers asked him to launch a complaint against the organization with the appropriate authority for justice. If he would have given this complaint, he would have won the case, but he rather decided to quit. Subsequently, organization had to lose a qualified and worthy employee.

Incident No. 5:-
Dr. Amar Gadakh, was working on his own terms of appointment, with one of the reputed organizations named, ‘XYZ’. Everything was going on smoothly for several months. Seven months later, Dr. Satish Kawade, joined the organization as a Group Head. This Group Head also had autocratic style of leadership and hence he started harassing selective people. After some time due to some personal intentions and biased views towards employees, there were heated arguments, unhealthy correspondence between Group Head and selective people, Dr. Amar Gadakh, was one of
them. This became a regular practice in the organization. Dr. Amar Gadakh wrote a letter to him requesting to stop this harassment, but it was of no use. All of a sudden, couple of people got one month’s notice of termination including Dr. Amar Gadakh. He approached his friend, Dr. Manish Ahiwale, who was influential in this sector. He intervened in this matter and made sure that, Dr. Amar Gadakh’s one month’s notice is revoked by the management. During this entire episode, one can see how immature decisions are taken by the Group Head. This affected negatively on the mindset of Dr. Amar Gadakh. If the Group Head, Dr. Satish Kawade, would have interacted with the employees, tried to understand their capabilities and assigning tasks to each of them after considering their interests, would have been a better option and could have been a reason for development of healthy environment. Ultimately, Dr. Amar Gadakh has developed negative feelings about the organization and started searching for a new job.

Conclusions:-

After going through all these incidences narrated here above, one can understand that, such incidences are taking place more or less in every organization of every sector. Researcher has got rich experience of working in manufacturing industry and academics, based on which he has carried out this research. However, readers may be familiar with such kind of environment or incidences around them and based on such experiences we may conclude that, if head of the department / manager / superior or any leader does not have adequate knowledge of HR functions or unaware of how to handle human resources, will not be successful in the organization. Such a leader will keep on harassing employees knowingly or unknowingly only because subordinates are not behaving or taking up responsibilities as per autocratic leader’s wish, and hence we may conclude that there is a significance of HR functions for a leader in managing human resource in an effective manner in an organization. In fact, autocratic style of leadership may not be best at all times in any organization.

Bibliography:-


Footnote:- Names of the individual and organizations are fictitious in nature for maintaining confidentiality.