

Managing Knowledge Workers: Benchmarking Indian IT Organisations

By

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Knowledge based industries such as information technologies, financial services and consultancy are increasingly becoming more important for developed as well as developing economies. In India, IT industry has grown at the rate of about fifty percent in domestic as well as export market for the last five years. The domestic software industry had a turn over of rupees 40 billion in 1997-98 and is expected to touch rupees 125 billion by the year 2000 AD. The software export from India in 1997-98 had exceeded US \$1 billion and is expected to reach a level of US \$ 4 billion by the year 2000 AD (NASSCOM,1997). This phenomenal growth of IT industry in India has been possible due to availability of highly competent and cost competitive IT professionals. These unique advantages have led to Indian IT industries becoming suppliers of software to a large number of fortune 500 companies. In turn Indian IT professionals have been getting opportunities to work on site with number of these fortune 500 companies. By working with best of the companies in different part of the world, Indian IT professionals have learnt a lot and are on par in terms of professional capabilities with IT professionals anywhere in the world. This has led to creating employment opportunities abroad for Indian IT professionals and has made the task of managing and retaining IT professionals in India very complex and demanding.

Infosys Technologies and Wipro Ltd. are two very respected Indian IT companies. They had phenomenal growth in the past and are poised for higher rates of growth in the future. In 1997-98, Infosys had gross revenue, export, PBIDT and PAT respectively as Rs. 260.37 crore, Rs. 250.94 crore, Rs. 88.61 crore and Rs. 60.36 crore. Corresponding figures for Wipro ltd. for 1997-98 are Rs.1500.3 crore, Rs.391.7 crore, 196.4 crore, 107.8 crore. In terms of market capitalization also both the companies have been doing extremely well on the Indian Capital Market. Wipro had received National Quality Award and has been in news for its adopting the philosophy and practice of Six Sigma Quality. Infosys has received a number of awards for its accounting practices, for its packaged products and for its performance in the field of export. Infosys was also in news for its implementation of Human Resource Accounting and for its brand valuation. Informal interactions with members of these organisations made me feel that they had superior systems for managing knowledge workers. These two organisations are also Bangalore based and hence easily accessible to the author. All these factors led me to choose these two organisations for benchmarking their human resource practices in the field of managing knowledge worker. The data were collected by interacting with HRD and software professionals from these two organisations.

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1.0 Attracting the Best

Being an excellent knowledge organisation requires being able to attract and retain the best knowledge workers for long in the organisation. IT organisations recruit fresh software professionals as well as professionals with experience. Demand for knowledge workers, both for fresh as well as with experience, is higher than the supply. Hence, it requires lot of innovativeness on the part of IT organisations to attract and retain knowledge workers. Some unique recruitment and selection practices from Infosys Technologies and Wipro are as listed below:

- Infosys Technologies and Wipro have excellent corporate image and identity. Knowledge workers enjoy working in these organisations because they experience highly professional and open work culture. These organisations treat their employees with respect and give them lot of professional freedom and opportunities to learn. They have defined corporate values and mission and have created ownership for those values and the mission statements. As stated by members of those organisations, the corporate values and mission statements in turn define what is expected and appropriate behaviour for organisational members in dealing with internal and external stakeholders. An exploratory study done by my postgraduate students had found that knowledge workers value professional freedom, integrity, innovativeness and opportunities to learn. Since these values are very much part of the value and mission statements of Infosys Technologies and Wipro Ltd. and more importantly they are being practiced by these organisations, these organisations are able to attract the best professionals from the market.
- Both the organisations recruit fresh professionals only from the best educational institutions such as Indian Institutes of Technology and regional engineering colleges.
- Technology in IT industry keeps changing very fast. Hence at the time of recruitment, these companies don't give too much importance to assess their knowledge about the current IT technologies. Instead, these companies attempt to find out whether the person being interviewed has excellent learning capabilities and has shown consistent desire for learning. The fresh graduates being interviewed for a job at these companies should have consistently above average academic performance. These companies also put greater emphasis to assess their analytical and logical thinking capabilities through case problems. Further, they look for creating a match between existing organisational culture and the values of the person being interviewed.
- Based on expectations from each other, a psychological contract gets built up when people join an organisation. These expectations are created based on what is revealed by individuals and organisations to each other at the time of selection process. Clarity of expectations from each other and revealing the reality as it exists goes a long way to improve the nature and quality of psychological contract amongst professional aspiring to join an organisation and the organisation itself.

Many of the Indian software professionals aspire to work abroad, especially in USA. Infosys and Wipro are known worldwide in the IT field and work experience in these organisations is considered to be a passport to get job abroad. Hence, software professionals aspire to join these organisations. These organisations spend lot of time and effort to find out whether the candidate being interviewed is genuinely interested in the organisation or is trying to use the organisation as a stepping stone to go abroad. People who are basically interested to go abroad and work for a foreign company are identified and are not selected. However, since most of the customers of these organisations are multinational companies, majority of the software professionals in these organisations get an opportunity to visit and work abroad very soon in their career

These organisations ensure that they don't give a very rosy picture to the professionals aspiring to join these organisations. Both these companies get part of their business from Y2K Projects. These projects require working on Cobol language. Since software professionals do not perceive it to be a great learning opportunity to work on Y2K Projects, they do not like to work on these assignments. People who are selected for working on these assignments are told at the time of interview itself that they would be working for a defined time on these assignments. Subsequently, they would have opportunities to work on projects of their choice. Infosys Technologies, during recruitment of management professionals from national management institutes for its newly created ERP business group, took extra initiative to make the potential participants aware about problems and challenges they would be experiencing in being part of the new business group. The process ensures that professionals join these organisations with realistic expectations. As a policy, both the organisations limit revenue from Y2K projects to twenty five percent of their total revenue.

- Being able to attract right candidates require skills in judging technical capabilities as well as personality of the applicants. Good software professionals/managers may not necessarily be good assessors of these capabilities. Interviewing and assessing others is a specific skill and needs to be systematically acquired. Both the organisations train their managers in interviewing skills. Wipro has trained so far about 300 managers/software professionals who have been associated with the recruitment process. As a policy, Wipro ensures that a professional, who has not attended the Interviewing Skill Programme, is not on any interview panel.
- Due to heavy competition for fresh software professionals, Wipro has started an academy of its own known as Wipro Academy of Software Excellence (WASE) to train and create its own software professionals. It offers a four year sandwiched postgraduate programme in collaboration with a renowned engineering institute, namely Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS), Pilani. The programme is meant for fresh science graduates with specialization in Physics, Mathematics, Computer Science or Electronics. The applicants should have less than one year of experience. The programme consists of alternate modules of classroom inputs by BITS faculties and on-the-job training in different Divisions of Wipro The

participants for the programme are selected through a rigorous selection process on all India basis. During training period they are paid attractive stipend. Once a person joins the programme, he or she must complete the programme. But no bond is taken for serving Wipro after completion of the programme. However, most of the participants after completing the programme join the organisation. After successful completion of the programme, participants receive postgraduate degree in computer science from BITS Pilani.

In the first batch, in 1995, Wipro had taken a small group of 23 participants. Executives from Human Resources Department had to market these participants and the programme to the project leaders and Business Units incharge. Over time, the programme has become so popular in Wipro as well as with the fresh science graduates that in 1998, Wipro has taken 450 participants for its new batch. Participants who join the programme benefit in terms of being able to earn while learning for their postgraduate in computer science. Wipro is able to get trained manpower not only in the fields of software but also people who have organisation specific skills and capabilities. In addition, trainees are able to make substantial contributions during training period itself. In turn, many trainees get rewarded by posting abroad during training period itself.

- Both the companies use referral scheme for induction of software professionals with experience. They also give preference in recruitment to relatives of their existing employees. A permanent employee of the company can recommend an experienced software professional for an employment in the organisation. If the person gets selected, the person who recommends is given a monetary reward, which could be equivalent of about one month salary. Infosys Technologies has further refined the scheme and at every stage of selection such as submission of curriculum vitae by the applicant, interview and offer of appointment, the employee who recommends is given a few prespecified points. These points are subsequently converted into monetary awards. It implies that even if a person, who was invited for an interview, didn't get selected or didn't join the company after selection, Infosys employee who had recommended the person would still get a monetary reward.

The referral process is a less expensive way of recruiting experienced professional. As practiced by these companies, it helps the existing employees to earn some extra money. But more importantly, it makes employees feel that they matter in their work place and their superiors listen to their opinion. Thus the process of referral appointments facilitates creating a work place where people can have their professional friends and relatives, making the workplace much more enjoyable for them.

- These companies also realize that one reason Indian software professionals prefer to work abroad is due to its saving potentials. They know that they can't possibly match the salaries being paid in USA. However, by creating possibilities of extra savings for their employees, they make working in their organisations more attractive. Posting

abroad on assignments, is one of the ways through which these companies facilitate their employees to increase their saving.

2.0 Induction Training

Indian IT industry is growing very fast. Both, Infosys Technologies and Wipro Ltd. have been adding about twenty percent of their existing manpower strength as additional manpower every year. These companies have attrition in the range of 10-15 percent per year. It implies that at any time, these organisations have about 30-35 percent of their manpower, which is new to them. The new entrants need to be helped in acquiring organisation specific software skills. In addition, these new entrants should also be helped to learn beliefs, values and the culture of the organisation.

Induction training is the first exposure to an organisation for a new entrant. The nature of experience may define whether a new entrant would prefer to continue to work in the organisation or not. Both, Infosys Technologies and Wipro take induction training very seriously. They perceive it as an opportunity to create bonds between new entrants and the organisation. Some unique aspects of their induction training programmes are:

- Infosys Technologies provides training for a period of three and half months in software basics as well as project and organisation specific training. As a part of the training programme, participants work on a project, which gives hands-on-training. Participants who are presently with the organisation had lot of praise for the induction training. Many of the ex-Infosysians that have joined our institute for the post-graduate in management also have lot of praise for the training they had received at Infosys. Based on the request of Infosys, the training programme was evaluated by an independent agency from USA, namely, Foundation for International Services, Inc. Washington. It had said that the course was very good and an engineer with the three and half month's induction training can be considered equivalent to B.S. in Computer Science from USA. Infosysians told that this certification helps them to get their Visas much faster from US Consulates.
- Wipro at the time of induction identifies an existing employee as a buddy for a new recruit. The buddy is expected to help the new entrant to understand the functioning of the organisation and make the new person comfortable in the organisation. In Infosys, they identify a mentor who helps a new recruit to get adjusted in the organisation.

3.0 Performance Management System

Being able to perform and deliver what customers require is the only way to survive and grow in a highly competitive software market. Also, being able to attract and retain the best knowledge workers depend upon whether these knowledge workers feel that they have been given big enough roles. Further, knowledge workers expect that the organisation should facilitate them to perform in those roles and help them experience success. Hence, knowledge organisations need to ensure that they have effective performance management systems. These performance management systems should help in providing big enough roles to knowledge workers based on the requirements of the customers. The system should also facilitate knowledge workers and organisations to identify the learning needs of the individuals, which in turn will help them to plan for their growth and development.

Infosys Technologies and Wipro Ltd. have evolved superior performance management systems. More importantly, they have been able to create acceptance and ownership for these systems. Some unique aspects of these systems are:

- Performance is what customers value. Both the organisations ensure that project teams are in touch with their customers on a continuous basis. They ensure that expectations and requirements of a project are clearly understood by every person associated with the project. As a part of induction training, lot of emphasis is placed on creating customer orientation amongst the knowledge workers. One way in which these organisations create customer orientation is by ensuring that more and more employees are in direct touch with their customers. They encourage regular visits to customers' site by project members.
- Superior systems of documentation facilitate an organisation to deliver performance and quality to their customers. Typical software professionals are excited to work on a project. However, the documentation processes come through as routine activities and hence knowledge workers are reluctant to spend time on it. Wipro and Infosys Technologies, both are ISO-9000 organisations. This makes it mandatory for them to define systems of documentation and maintain them on a regular basis.

In addition, these companies have also received certification by Software Engineering Institute at Carnegie Mellon University, USA. Presently, Wipro's Enterprise Solutions group has received Capability Maturity Model (CMM) Level 3 and Technology Solutions has received CMM Level 4 certification. Infosys Technologies have received CMM Level 4 certification. Since people working in these organisations take pride in their organisation being a SEI certified software company, they are willing to invest time and effort for documentation. Superior documentation systems in these organisations also provide continuity to projects when people working on those projects leave the organisation before their completion.

- Wipro Ltd. has adopted the concept of Six Sigma Quality. Six Sigma Quality means a process excellence that yields only 3.4 defects in a million opportunities to make a defect. This applies to design, manufacturing, service as well as other transactions of the business. Along with defect reduction, the Six Sigma initiatives also address Cycle Time Reduction and Continuous Process Improvement. Presently, Six Sigma is in its second year in Wipro, with 100 projects and 27 facilitators. Wipro has planned that by the year 2002, most of its key processes will meet the requirement of Six Sigma.
- Infosys Technologies as well as Wipro have implemented Open Appraisal System. As a part of the system, for every software professional performance targets are set based on the project targets. These performance targets are reviewed and assessed by the software professionals themselves. After that superiors of those software professionals assess their performance as well as give ratings for their performance. These ratings are shown to and discussed with the concerned employees.

Institutionalizing open appraisal system requires a strong culture of openness and trust between software professionals and their superiors. Both these organisations have been able to build a culture of openness, trust and team working through various interventions which have been discussed in a later section.

- Infosys Technologies has a system of Weekly Activity Report (WAR) being submitted by software professionals on a weekly basis to their project leaders and Business Units Incharge. The weekly activity report helps in identifying planned and unplanned activities. It facilitates billing for a project. A software professional that has recently joined the organisation had said that the logging system helped him to become aware of the way he spends his time. This awareness in turn helped him to improve his performance. However, he had also mentioned that some of his colleagues do not like the system of log filling. The Weekly Activity Report is also an important feedback to project leaders and Business Units Incharge about how people in their groups are spending their working time. It helps in reallocating human resources across different projects and facilitates reducing time on bench.

4.0 Managing Reward System

Software professionals tend to be high achievers. Hence, they have a need to receive tangible and immediate feedback about their performance. Since IT industry attempts to link performance with rewards, rewards get perceived as a performance feedback also. In addition, since demand for software professionals is higher than the supply, aspiration levels of software professionals about rewards are much higher. Due to Internet, software professionals are better linked with their counterparts in other organisations not only in India but also in different parts of the world. And hence, they are aware about salaries, perks and other facilities being offered to professionals having education and experience similar to them in other organisations. Thus they not only want higher rewards but also

are very much concerned with equity. This makes the task of managing reward system in software industry really complex and challenging. Some interesting features of reward system of Infosys Technologies and Wipro Ltd. are as listed below:

- Both the organisations have positioned themselves as above average but not the highest paymaster in the Indian software industry. In terms of the percentile, they are at about 75 percentile. However, both the organisations provide excellent infrastructure in terms of superior hardware and software support, pleasant work environment, good canteen facilities, and liberal medical and other perks. Infosys has excellent facilities on its campus for sports such as badminton, tennis, basketball and volleyball. It has a gymnasium and a sauna. Both the companies have excellent facilities to provide snacks and beverages to the employees during as well as after working hours. They run exclusive buses for their employees and arrange taxis for dropping the participants to their home when employees stay back for meeting exigencies of work.
- Both the organisations have systems to identify high performers and reward them appropriately. A senior HR executive at Wipro mentioned that a knowledge worker considers looking at another organisation for changing the job only when the pay differential is in the range of 35–40 percent. Hence, if an organisation identifies and pays its high performers 40 percent more than the average performers, it reduces the possibilities of losing them to its competitors.
- Infosys and Wipro use Employee Stock Option Scheme (ESOP) to retain high performers. Every year a certain percentage of high performers are identified and are given warrants which can be converted into shares after certain lock-in-period. These warrants are like equity shares and are eligible for bonus shares. Experiences of these organisations suggest that these schemes are highly powerful in facilitating long term retention of high performers. Wipro also has a scheme of issuing notional shares, which have a lock-in-period of two years. Difference in value of shares at the end of two years is paid to the employees.
- Project leaders have a major role in identifying the high performers and in deciding the amount of discretionary rewards.
- These organisations provide very attractive short term and long term loans to its employees on nominal interest rates. Long term loans are given for purchase of house and vehicle. Repayment is usually spread to a period of 5-10 years. The process facilitates retaining knowledge workers for a longer period. Both the organisations provide interest free loan to its employees for purchase of computers for their home

5. Creating A Training Culture and Learning Organisation

In the knowledge industry, concept of self for knowledge workers substantially evolves around the knowledge they have. Hence, for holding a positive concept of self and to experience growth, knowledge workers highly value learning. The level of knowledge and how recent it is tends to define their social standing in their professional group. It also defines their marketability and ability to work on the assignments and organisations of their choice. All these factors make it imperative for knowledge workers to learn on a continuous basis. So long a knowledge worker feels that he or she was learning on a given job, one would not be thinking of changing the job. Hence, to retain knowledge workers, knowledge organisations need to create superior systems of training and learning.

Another interesting issue in context of IT knowledge workers is that their learning preference is for technical subjects related to their specialization. Firstly, they are aware of what is latest in their technical field and hence experience an internal pressure to learn about it. Secondly, technical subjects and capabilities are more tangible and apparently more visible to potential employers. Finally, it seems that IT professionals like learning those subjects, which are more logical and quantifiable.

Exigencies of growth for knowledge workers require that they should learn what is latest in their technical field as well as should also acquire managerial capabilities. Knowledge workers in software organisations are expected to perform leadership roles much earlier in their careers as compared to conventional organisations. Usually, after 3-4 years in their career, they become project leaders. Helping the knowledge workers to be updated in their respective technical streams as well as facilitating them to acquire leadership capabilities, is a very challenging and exciting task for HR professionals in IT industry. Some unique aspects of training systems in Infosys Technologies and Wipro Ltd. are:

- Both the organisations give utmost importance to training and development. They spend about 5 percent of their manpower budget on training. Every knowledge worker is expected to spend minimum five days per year in a classroom setting to learn what is relevant for him or her and often these targets are exceeded.
- They have very strong education and research departments that keep scanning the environment about what is latest in the fields of interest to their organisations. They develop plans to help knowledge workers in their organisations to acquire those capabilities. Employees are also expected to identify what is current in their fields and suggest topics/subjects on which the training programmes should be arranged.
- In Infosys Technologies, training calendar is announced every quarter on the bulletin board. The training courses are offered on technical subjects as well as on soft skills. These courses are on full time as well as part time basis. Also, the course duration varies from one day to as high as three and half months for fresher. A knowledge worker can either self sponsor oneself or nominate one's team-members for a programme.

- Wipro has adopted the concept of “competence-based-progression”. They are in the process of identifying competencies required at different levels in the organisation. It has identified seven capabilities required for leaders. These leadership capabilities are vision, high energy, self-confidence, ownership, commitment to excellence, aggressive commitment and building star performers and teams. Wipro has designed a five-day training programme, “Wipro Leaders’ Programme” around those capabilities and all the managers are planned to be covered by the programme. As discussed in the next section, 360 degrees appraisal at Wipro is designed around these leadership qualities. Members of the Corporate Executive Council spend considerable time interacting with the programme participants. Chairman himself spends half-a-day in every training programme addressing the participants and listening to their queries and suggestions.
- These organisations spend considerable time and resources to upgrade the abilities of their trainers. They are encouraged to participate in world-class programmes.
- These organisations are also in the process of developing systems for accrediting external trainers who are associated with the organisation on a continuous basis.
- In a limited way, these organisations have started the process of creating learning organisation. A person sponsored for an external programme/ seminar is expected to prepare a note about his or her learning and circulate it amongst his colleagues. Concerned groups discuss those learning, and specific plans are made to implement learning relevant for the organisation. Education and Research group (E&R) at Infosys maintains a directory on Intranet titled as “Body of Knowledge”. The directory contains learning derived from different projects done at Infosys. It has information about the process assets available at Infosys. The directory also has information about Knowledge Map of Infosys. It provides information about special skills of knowledge workers at Infosys.
- Wipro has targeted to benchmark its practices against world class organisations such as Hewlett Packard, Microsoft, Motorola and General Electric. An Organisation that benchmarks and learns from others, soon becomes benchmark organisation for others.

6. Nurturing Team Work

A knowledge worker by nature is not a great team worker. However, most of the projects in IT industry require teamwork. Hence, IT organisations need to nurture teamwork. Infosys Technologies and Wipro Ltd. have substantially succeeded in creating a work environment that nurtures teamwork. Some unique aspects of these organisations are:

- Both the organisations are very flat in terms of their organisational structure. They encourage their employees to address each other by first name or nickname. They have common canteens, common buses and similar workstations for all knowledge workers

- These organisations have extensively used Out Bound training to help its knowledge workers learn the skills of team working. At Infosys, usually members of a work-team are sent for Out Bound training together and such training is usually based on their request. Wipro has made Out Bound Training part of its Wipro Leaders' Programme. Both the organisations have defined specific objectives for Out Bound Training and they monitor it regularly to ensure that these objectives are achieved.
- Wipro has successfully implemented 360 Degrees Performance Appraisal System for last four years. The system presently covers top and senior executives and this year 293 executives received feedback from their colleagues, superiors and subordinates. Quantified feedback is given on the six leadership attributes. A comparative summary of feedback from the team-members, colleagues and superior is given. Another comparative statement is given which provides data about self-assessment, average and the best on those six dimensions for the business group to which a knowledge worker belongs.

In addition to the quantified feedback, every person is also provided a groupwise summary of what his reference group-members want him or her to continue doing, start doing and stop doing. These qualitative feedback do provide the direction in which a person is expected to move to improve one's own performance and performance of one's team. At Infosys Management Council members provide peer group feedback to each other inclusive of the Chairman.

- Project teams are provided certain allowances, which can be used by them to have fun together such as having tea party, ice cream party or going for dinner together. Project members also create a common directory and use it to communicate and be in touch with each other. Since project teams are usually temporary with project duration being three months to one year, it becomes all the more important to ensure that the team members feel comfortable and enjoy working with each other soon in the life of a project.

7.0 Being A Value Based Organisation

Infosys and Wipro have been striving to be and are perceived as value based organisations by their employees. Infosysians take lot of pride in saying that their organisation is open and honest to its employees and external stakeholders. One Infosysian during interview said that the income tax department respects their organisation. Due to their confidence in Infosys, any amount due to its employees is promptly returned. Similarly, it was stated that US consulate issues visa for Infosys employees without a visit to the consulate. These aspects may not be exclusive to Infosys. But it reflects the beliefs and the images collectively held by the Infosys community.

Infosysians also take lot of pride in saying that they work for an organisation, which is very humane. One Infosysian met with a fatal accident in March 1998. His colleagues voluntarily donated a sum of rupees four lakhs and with company's contribution his

family was given a cheque of rupees one million. In addition, his wife was also given employment. Even for the family of a contract worker who was working for a construction contractor, they contributed a sum of rupees three lakhs on his accidental death.

An employee of Infosys met with an accident in USA and was serious. His brother was immediately flown to USA on company account. An employee from HRD department had resigned for a job in USA. It was narrated that he was so moved by the action of the management that he decided to withdraw his resignation. These incidences suggest that organisation and individuals have money. But more importantly, these incidences are indicative of their willingness to spend that money for a social cause.

Wipro has identified four values that will define their way of being and how they will relate to their environment:

- Human Values- We respect customers as individuals, recognise that they have different needs and continually strive towards satisfying those needs to improve the quality of their lives.
- Integrity- Our individual and business relationships are governed by the highest standard of Integrity
- Innovative Solutions- We constantly research and develop superior products and services that meet the changing needs of the customers.
- Value for money- We promise to serve the customers with continuous improvements in quality, cost and delivery of our products and services.

Infosys and Wipro invest considerable time and effort to institutionalize these values. However, since these organisations are growing very fast, they feel that they need to put much more efforts to ensure that every member of their organisation internalizes these values. They conduct periodical “Employee Perception Surveys” to find out how people feel and think about their being in the organisation. Findings from the surveys are shared with the employees and action plans are made to take corrective actions wherever required.

8.0 Working towards Creating Knowledge based Society

A knowledge organisation is part of the society and it can't have knowledge workers if the society does not produce knowledge workers. Infosys and Wipro has been spending considerable resources and efforts toward sharing and creating a knowledge society. Some of their unique contributions are:

- Wipro has collaborated with IIM Bangalore to start a part time postgraduate diploma programme in software management. Wipro is the major sponsor of the programme and has donated a fund of rupees twenty million towards research and development. The programme is of three years duration and is conducted on Fridays and Saturdays. Twenty software professionals from Wipro and six software professionals from Infosys are participating in the first programme
- Infosys operates a scheme titled as “catch them young”. As a part of the scheme students at school level are selected by Infosys and trained by Infosys for a month in software technologies. Subsequently they work on a project for a period of two months under the guidance of Infosys employees. In addition, Infosys has been working towards creating IT awareness among rural areas. It has been also helping IT teachers to improve their professional competence.

Knowledge workers take pride in these initiatives of their organisations and possibly experience a sense of superordinate purpose in being associated with their respective organisations.

9.0 Beyond Benchmarking: Some Implementation Issues

Infosys Technologies and Wipro Ltd. have a number of excellent HR practices that are possibly helping them to effectively manage the knowledge workers. These HR practices are being followed by world class IT organisations in a number of countries. In fact Infosys and Wipro have learned and adopted these practices by benchmarking best IT organisations. However, these HR practices are not cost free. Every additional HR system requires extra effort, energy and resources. When an organisation implements open appraisal system, it implies that superiors in that organisation have to spend considerable time explaining and justifying the ratings being given by him or her. In spite of all the explanations and justifications, a team member may not be satisfied. Implementing 360 degrees appraisal usually requires taking help from an external agency for compiling and preparing the report. It is expensive. These organisations use discretionary rewards in a big way. Those who don't get these discretionary rewards feel bad. Many of them ask for the rationale and in spite of all the explanations may continue to feel that justice is not done to them.

Indian IT professionals are as good as best of the IT professionals anywhere in the world. Many Indian IT professionals are working with the best IT companies abroad and they are known to have performed. And hence, IT professionals in India expect that companies employing them should adopt HR practices similar to being followed by best IT companies anywhere in the world. Thus any Indian company which aspire to be world class and wish to attract and retain world class IT professionals will have to adopt these or similar practices soon. In a similar way Sri Lankan IT organisations which wish to become world class and have world class IT professionals would have to adopt these practices rather soon. Knowledge organisations in other industries may also benefit by adopting these practices. However, the need for and urgency to adopt these practices will partially depend upon demand and supply position of knowledge workers in those

industries. Another issue that needs to be remembered while implementing these practices are that some of these practices will be more effective when they are implemented together. An open appraisal system will be much more effective when it is accompanied with a discretionary reward system. Finally, many of these practices have evolved in western culture. Societies that are closer to western culture may find it easier to implement these practices. But possibly, individuals and societies are capable of much more learning than the differences between them.

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