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Extended Abstract on The Theme Of Voice And Representation At Work

Title of the Paper: Voice and Representation at Workplace in Indian Companies

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The member and title of the tract for which the paper should be considered:

Number 2. Voice and Representation at Work

A clear Outline of the aim of the paper including some statistics, how it contributes to the theme of the conference

In the Indian context not much was known of the successful practices of voice and representation although so much had been written on the reasons of failure. The aim of the paper, based on case studies, is to bridge the gap in the existing literature of the successful practices of voice and representation in companies as well as to draw a historical perspective and examine the present status of the subject in two of the most successful industrial companies in India

A statement on how the paper will contribute theoretically and empirically to the field of the study.

In this competitive environment, the complexion of voice and representation at workplace is changing. It is possible that the traditional theoretical framework of looking at representation may need a change. The empirical analyses, through the in-depth case studies, will help the practitioners in understanding not only the change in the complexion of voice and representation but also the managerial inputs which are required to achieve bottom line results by creating avenues through voice and representation at workplace.

Clearly Articulated research Question(s), details about research approach and methods, data collection and/or analysis

Research Questions

- 1) What are the successful practices of voice and representation at work in Indian companies.
- 2) What are the management strategies, the contextual factors, forms and outcomes of these practices
- 3) What is the status of voice and representation and how these have changed overtime in the two most successful Automobile companies of India

Research Approach and Methods, data Collection and/or analysis – First set of Case Studies

Criteria of selection of companies

- 1) Representation from Public, Private and the worker Managed companies
- 2) The selected company should be more than 5 years old.
- 3) The strength of workers should be above 500
- 4) The selected company should be profit making.

The selection process

- 1) Universe of Industrial companies
An attempt was made to get data on the universe of companies in India from the Economic Times list of 100 companies, employer organizations (FICCI, ASSOCHM, PHD, EFI, AIMO), HRD Network, Quality Circle Federation, Resource Persons from Academics and Practitioners and Documented and Published studies on the subject.
- 2) *Mail Survey*
Sent to all the identified companies , 64 filled Performa's were received back.
- 3) *Visit to the Companies*
42 companies were short listed and personally visited.

4) *Final selection*

Based on these visits, Eight Companies were selected for the study. Four companies were from the Public sector, three from the Private sector and one was a worker managed company.

5) *Data Collection and Analysis*

Data were collected through detailed discussions and semi structured interview with a cross section of the workforce including representatives of the management, trade unions and workers. The researcher sat through some of the meetings and other forums of participation. This was supplemented by official records.

6) *Second set of case studies*: Data were conducted in two of the most successful companies in the Automobile sector. The criterion was to study the status of voice and representation at work in these companies. The data were collected through intensive discussions, observations and supplemented by the office records.

A summary of the central argument/summary of key findings

- 1) A study of brief literature in India shows that while the government led initiatives have failed, those guided by the employers/management have succeeded. However, very few companies have considered it useful to have these forums.
- 2) The value orientations of the promoters have played a key role in operationalizing participation/Voice and Consultations at work.
- 3) The goal of efficiency and productivity has been paramount in Companies with successful participation.
- 4) Participation has been achieved through Suggestions Schemes, QCs, shop floor and departmental committees, collective bargaining etc. An informal enabling organization culture has been the main determinant of their success.
- 5) The outcomes have been very positive .

- 6) The case studies in two of the most successful companies in India shows that historically they began with a high value orientation of human development and developing their talent through voice and representation at the workplace as a means of achieving bottom-line results. There has been a paradigm shift in both the companies and the only orientation is to stay competitive, make profits.. In the process there has been an absolute change in its complexion.

A list of selective or indicative references

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