IMPACT OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT

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Abstract   *In this era of globalization, there is a need for employees' empowerment in the organization which wants to be competitive and flourish. Level of employee empowerment in an organization depends on the leadership style in the organization. The various types of leadership styles have different impact on empowerment of the employees. Servant leadership can bring about positive change in the organizations and their employees. Servant leadership is demonstrated by empowering and developing people by expressing humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, and stewardship; and by providing direction (Dierendonck.2011). The study is conducted in high technology-oriented organizations in India by developing questionnaire consisting of 68 items to measure the servant leadership characteristics, empowerment and consequence variables based on ten characteristics of servant leadership identified by Spears (1998) and Empowerment instrument developed by Gupta (2009). The study highlights that Foresight, Persuading, Awareness, and Stewardship characteristics of Servant leadership are very important for Employee Empowerment. Stewardship, persuading and conceptualizing characteristics of servant leadership have positive impact on consequences viz. organizational commitment, work environment satisfaction, role satisfaction and job involvement of employees leading to higher performance of the organization providing the competitive advantage to the organization.*

Keywords: *Leadership Style, Servant Leadership, Employee Empowerment, Competitive Advantage*

1. INTRODUCTION

In this era of globalization there is need for employees' empowerment in organization so that employees will be in position to make quick decision and respond quickly to any changes in the environment. Employee empowerment will lead to improving productivity, performance and job satisfaction (Nick et al., 1994). The employee empowerment literature highlights that empowered workforce will lead to achieving a competitive advantage (Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Quinn and Spreitzer, 1997; Sundbo, 1999; Forrester, 2000).

Level of employee empowerment in an organization depends on the leadership style in the organization. The various types of leadership styles have different impact on empowerment of the employees and enhancement of competitiveness of the organization. Servant leadership can bring about positive change. However, when used at the institutional level, the results could be greater than that performed by individuals because of available financial resources.

Although, lot of importance has been given to empowerment and servant leadership whereas no quantitative research has been found in linking the characteristics of servant leadership with the empowering variables and the consequences.

In this study, attempts are made to find out the relationship between servant leadership characteristics and empowerment variables. Also the research tries to find out the impact of servant leadership characteristics and empowerment variables on Self–efficacy, Organizational Commitment, Work Environment Satisfaction, Role Satisfaction and Job Involvement of employees.

Based on the importance given by various scholars to empowerment and servant leadership, this study considers the empowerment variables – Respect for Team Member, Top-Management Attitude, Open Communication, Opportunities for Learning Application, Organizational Support for Innovation, Responsive Superiors, Opportunities for Self-Development, Degree of Formalization, Performance-Linked Feedback and Autonomy identified by Gupta (1999) as significant empowerment variables in Indian context as these are based on the research in India; and ten characteristics of Servant leadership – Listening, Empathy, Healing, Awareness, Persuading, Conceptualizing, Foresight, Stewardship Developing People and Building Community identified by Spears (1998) as important characteristics of servant leadership for quantitative research.

The study highlights that Foresight, Persuading, Awareness, and Stewardship characteristics of Servant leadership are very important for Employee Empowerment. The servant leadership has positive impact on consequences leading to higher performance of the organization providing the competitive advantage to the organization.