A Study of Empowerment and Engagement of ITES/BPO Professionals in Delhi-NCR

Puja Khatri[1] and Khushboo[2]

Abstract - With the advent of globalization, technology revolution has fastened its pace. Owing to availability of skilled, English speaking and cheap manpower, India enjoys being the favorite destination for outsourcing. These organizations are characterized by IT enabled operations, strategic HR practices, rotational shifts and high employee turnover rate. Despite good remuneration and other benefits, this sector witnesses maximum attrition. Managers try to empower and support their subordinates but the engagement level of employees is decreasing day by day. The present study seeks to understand the perception of employees pertaining to the level of empowerment and engagement with respect to variables like, job security, work-life balance, concern from top management, performance review system etc.. The study was conducted in Delhi NCR region wherein the respondents were selected through multistage sampling (N=100). Data was collected through self-constructed questionnaire (cronbach alpha =0.83).Demographic differences were also explored as male and female employees are treated differently at BPOs. Relationship between the level of empowerment and engagement was also analyzed. The paper seeks to provide an insight to top management and corporate practitioners of BPOs, who can use advanced techniques to develop an empowered culture thus, promoting engagement.

Index Terms – Attrition in BPOs, Empowerment of BPO employees, Engagement, Gender issues in BPOs, ITES.

1. INTRODUCTION

India is full of educated, English speaking and tech-savvy graduates who are ready to work in fewer salaries as compared to their western counterparts. Indian IT sector offers cost effective services to the customers situated globally and has emerged as one of the major key players in this global village. Companies readily assign their non core functions to the outsourcing firms in order to focus on their core competence. Such companies to which these functions are assigned are known as BPOs (Business Process Outsourcing) (Pathak and Sarin, 2011) [1]. Availability of skilled and relatively cheap manpower makes India a favorite destination for running operations of ITES/BPO sector. By the advent of technology revolution on global front, organizations are adopting ITES for almost every aspect of their employees make huge money out of it but on its contrary, it leads to high turnover rate as well

[1, 2]USMS, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi, India

E-Mail: [1]pujakhatri12@gmail.com and
[2]khushboo0803@gmail.com

(Desai, Majumdar and Prabhu, 2010) [2]. Present workforce is of knowledge workers who want to upgrade their skills and knowledge on continuous basis. They want respect at workplace, fair treatment, compensation according to their contribution, transparent reward policies etc. In the rise of such events, the role of HR has evolved from that of personnel management to strategic HRM. HR managers are striving for betterment in this sector. They have initiated incentive schemes, socialization ceremonies, career development programs, reward and recognition programs, open door policy etc. Infrastructure of such companies is outstanding and workstations are ergonomically designed. Still this sector needs reinvention in terms of transparent practices, fair workload and reward distribution and competitive salary packages. Meaningful work is said to have great influence on the cognitive part of performance (Spreitzer, 1995) [3]. Also, role of transformational leadership is crucial. The way supervisors behave can mould the performance level of employees. Poaching is another issue faced by this sector (Mishra, 2007) [4]. This happens in absence of sufficient growth opportunities in the organization. Organizations need to understand that individual growth matters to employees. Govt. of India along with State Govts. are taking significant steps to promote India as the most preferred destination for ITES. NASSCOM is helping govt. in formulating certain policies and frameworks in order to revive this industry (Begum, 2013) [5].

This study is an attempt to understand the underlying factors affecting empowerment and engagement level of employees and to establish a relationship between two. The findings of this study will provide invaluable insights to BPO managers so that they can redesign or improve the work patterns.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Business Process Outsourcing is the branch of IT by which services are rendered to the companies' clients. These services can be customer care, handling IT operations, financial backend processes etc. In present context India's competence in IT has been widely recognized and appreciated in ITES sector majorly. In India, BPO industry has grown in the last decade. India enjoys being the favorite offshore destination because of people (manpower) and location. Over 2million students graduate every year in India who are computer literate and can speak English. They are willing to work at nearly 80% less salary than their western counterparts (Raman, Budhwar and Balasubramanian, 2007) [6]. BPOs have a formal and structured HRM system in place which performs many strategic functions to enhance involvement and commitment of employees (Raman et al, 2007) [6]. The extent to which an employee is involved in one's task will enhance the engagement level of employee with the

organization. Evolution of the concept of employee engagement can be traced back to 1990s when Kahn (1990) [7] explained its meaning as "*the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances* (p.694)".The concept of engagement may be defined by different organizations differently but the end result is same for all and i.e. discretionary effort (Perrin, 2003) [8]. Devi (2009) [9] opines that engagement is the degree to which an employee puts discretionary efforts into his or her work over and above required time, brainpower or energy. Apart from competitive remuneration, teamwork, healthy working conditions, peer relationship, skill development, advancement opportunities and learning opportunities are said to have an impeccable effect on the level of engagement. Saks (2006) [10] conducted a study in order to test a model of the antecedents and consequences of job and organization engagements based on social exchange theory. He identified that engagement can be at two levels: job engagement and organization engagement and concluded that different factors act as their antecedents. Perceived organizational support predicts both; job characteristics act as antecedent to only job engagement and procedural justice predicts organization engagement. Job and organization engagement mediated the relationships between the antecedents and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intentions to quit, and organizational citizenship behaviour.

Pritchard (2008) [11] opines that the concept of Employee Engagement can be fairly defined in terms of: Say (Measure of how employees are going to portray their own organization), Stay (measuring employees' loyalty towards their organization) and Strive (measures employees' readiness to do "over and above" their duties to attain organizational success). These three dimensions so mentioned are clearly relevant for the BPO workforce. May, Gilson and Harter (2004) [12] opine that meaningful jobs, job-security and presence of transformational leaders are significantly related to engagement. Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001) [13] argue that job engagement is associated with a fair allocation of workload, autonomy to exercise choice and control, receiving recognition and rewards for efforts, a supportive work environment, fairness and justice, and meaningful and valued work. IT managers largely depend on their subordinates for understanding the technical solutions to propose strategies for business. They need to play the role of a coach and communicator in order to have coordination (Kanooni, 2005) [14]. The support extended by the supervisor indeed enhances the engagement level of employees.

Studies have revealed that engaged employees tend to be more productive, efficient and have more chances to stay with their organization. Employee engagement has a positive correlation with enhanced performance. According to Lockwood (2007) [15], employee engagement acts as a strong antecedent to organizational success. Greater the engagement greater will be the employee retention, loyalty, customer satisfaction and enhanced organizational reputation (Lockwood, 2007; Gallup, 2008; Desai et al, 2010 and Hallberg and Schaufeli, 2006) [15]

[16] [2] [17]. Engaged employees are capable of propelling organization to new heights of growth. A proper communication channel in place, employee participation and empowerment are very crucial elements of employee engagement. An empowered employee base is considered to be more engaged resulting in improved productivity, motivation level and better aligned with the organizational objectives. Such employees have less or no intention to leave their organization. In a study conducted by Stander and Rothmann (2010) [18], it has been found that Psychological empowerment predicts Engagement. It emphasizes that employees who recognize a purpose in their work, recognize their own caliber and skills, capable of pursuing their career goals and believe that they can control the system in which they are working, are more engaged as compared to their peers. The dictionary meaning of "Empower" is to promote the self-actualization or influence of or to give official authority or legal power to. Spreitzer (1995) [3] defines empowerment as an individual's experience of internal motivation that is based on cognitions about oneself in relation to one's job role. He also identified four individual psychological determinants which may affect behavior of an employee viz. meaning, competence, self determination and impact. These four determinants might be considered as psychological conditions that lead to engagement (Stander et al, 2010) [18]. The final goal of empowerment is to create and empowered organizational culture, which is time consuming and demands dedication of top management and involvement of employees (Kanooni, 2005) [14]. One cannot deny the importance of leadership in creating an empowered culture. Leaders exhibiting empowerment behavior are capable of fostering success as employees feel empowered through enhanced responsibility, authority to take decisions, receiving timely information and feedback, motivation and encouragement. Elmuti (1997) [19] opines that empowerment process can't be initiated where autocratic form of leadership exists. So, role of leadership can't be ignored. BPO industry is struggling to fill the gap of demand and supply of professionals (Agarwal, 2012) [20]. The employees don't consider BPO jobs to be long lasting. The very nature of BPO jobs is monotonous and mind numbing. These jobs are characterized by rotational shifts and long working hours. The pace of the work in call centers is controlled by automatic call distributor (ACD) or predictive dialer. The time spent on each call, break taken and response given is also monitored by team leaders. All these things create a pressure on employees leaving them more frustrated with the job and thus encouraging attrition (Budhwar, Varma, Singh and Dhar, 2007) [21]. Also, BPO doesn't provide any scope for skill up gradation and the work experience of BPOs is not considered to be relevant for other job profiles (Babu, 2004) [22]. Due to such reasons, Indian outsourcing industry experiences high level of attrition rate and low level of employee tenure as employees keep looking for better opportunities continuously (Holman, Batt and Holtgrewe, 2007) [23]. BPO industry is said to have highest attrition rate and fast employment growth which reduces the average tenure of an employee in an organization. ITES/BPO witnesses the entry of highly qualified professionals but only for a short time period as

they make exit in short stint of time (Thite and Russell, 2010) [24]. Where engaged employees are the assets for an organization, disengaged employees act as liability. Disengagement of employees incurs huge cost to the companies. "Engagement" is not an individual phenomenon, it comprises many elements; job security, support from supervisors and availability of resources which act as positive predictors of engagement. Seijts and Crim (2006) [25] identified 10 C's of engagement: Connect, Career, Clarity, Convey, Congratulate, Contribute, Control, Collaborate, Credibility and Confidence. These include almost all aspects of engagement. According to Hickman (2010) [26] there are 5 dimensions of engagement: a) 'Belonging' wherein employees identify with the organization's core values and develop an understanding of relating their acts to the accomplishment of organization's goals b) 'Inspiration' which means that there must be a trust between the employee and the leader. Employees must know that their opinion counts, for this a participative form of leadership will work c) 'Understanding' entails communication of plans in time and clearly. Employees must understand what are they expected to do. Feedback practice should be followed to intimate employees about their performance d) 'Support'- an environment of supportiveness develops when supervisors are there for employees. It is the duty of leaders to develop such an organizational culture and e) 'Appreciation' means to encourage employees by appreciating their efforts in front of all, it gives a feeling of accomplishment and enhances morale.

It can be seen that according to many authors, an empowered work culture is capable of enhancing engagement level of employees which further boosts up the performance and productivity of employees. Such employees have fewer intentions to leave their organizations. BPOs implement strategic HR practices to empower their employees and enhance involvement. Still, the employees at these organizations are not engaged. ITES sector of India is renowned globally for rendering quality and relatively cheap services to the organizations. There is an urgent need to identify other factors which account for this attrition rate in BPOs

2.1 Women at BPOs

Women represent almost one-third part of the BPO sector and their contribution in this industry is major. Technology and certain regulatory changes have accentuated the demand of female employees in BPO sector. The Factories Act (2005) has been amended to allow women working in night shifts provided, all provisions in place to ensure their safety. Employers need to provide equal opportunities to women employees and must maintain their dignity at workplace (Pathak and Sarin, 2011) [1]. Major reasons behind joining this industry are easy entry and exit, fair remuneration, not much qualification required and lifestyle. Yet, they face serious issues like, night shifts, flexible working hours, transportation, socio-cultural factors and sexual harassment, which need to be addressed (Kaur and Gupta, 2012) [27]. Women working in night shifts suffer from certain behavioral and psychological

syndromes like, irritability, alcohol use, anxiety and depression etc. (Begum, 2013) [5]. In India, women are supposed to take care of their families as home maker which disturbs their work-life balance while working in this sector.

Gender discrimination is quite visible in this sector. Women employees need to put in their best effort to come at par with their male counterparts. Employers have less trust on them for accomplishing challenging jobs. Only repetitive tasks are given to them and that too without any autonomy. If any woman happens to precede as a boss then employers don't let her take important decisions independently (Pathak and Sarin, 2011) [1].

2.2 HR practices at BPOs

The prime objective of HRD is to unleash the unlimited potential of employees and to develop that potential by appropriate and systematic efforts (Selvi, 2012) [28]. HR department has begun to understand the issues faced by women now. Day care facilities for their kids, recreational activities, paid maternity leaves, provision for short leaves etc. have been initiated by the HR managers. Though these practices resolve this problem only at the face (Pathak and Sarin, 2011) [1]. Budhwar et. al.(2007) [21] opine that almost all BPO units follow their written HR strategies. The objectives of the department remain a) accurate 'recruitment' wherein they look for people having excellent communication, technical and problem solving skills, b) providing 'fair compensation which depends on grade, previous work experience, skills of employees, c) conducting 'performance appraisal' on the basis of how well an employee performed, d) giving 'training' required for performing a job like soft skills, basic software knowledge etc. and e) ensuring 'retention' by addressing key problem areas of BPOs like bureaucratic work settings, monotonous jobs, lack of growth opportunities etc. Practices followed by HR departments in Indian BPOs are setting benchmark for even developed nations, as they keep improvising their performance appraisal and career development programs. MNCs in India are adopting similar talent retention strategies as that of their western counterparts (Stumpf, Doh and Tymon, 2010) [29].

3. HYPOTHESES

H1: There exists a positive relationship between the level of engagement and level of empowerment of working professionals of BPOs.

H1a: There exists a positive relationship between belonging and the level of empowerment of working professionals of BPOs.

H1b: There exists a positive relationship between inspiration and the level of empowerment of working professionals of BPOs.

H1c: There exists a positive relationship between understanding and the level of empowerment of working professionals of BPOs.

H1d: There exists a positive relationship between support and the level of empowerment of working professionals of BPOs.

H1e: There exists a positive relationship between appreciation and the level of empowerment of working professionals of BPOs.

H2: There exists a significant difference between male and female employees of BPOs as regards their perceived level of empowerment.
H2a: There exists a significant difference between male and female employees of BPOs as regards their perceived level of autonomy in deciding job methods.
H2b: There exists a significant difference between male and female employees of BPOs as regards their perceived level of impact in organization.
H2c: There exists a significant difference between male and female employees of BPOs as regards their perceived level of performing meaningful job activities.
H2d: There exists a significant difference between male and female employees of BPOs as regards their perceived level of possessing complete knowledge of required skills

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
This research initiative studies the perception of working executives of BPO sector in the NCR region regarding their levels of empowerment and engagement. The research has been carried out with a self constructed questionnaire. The questionnaire had several items related to the perception of respondents regarding belongingness, inspiration, understanding, support and appreciation extended to employees in corporate organizations. The questionnaire had two parts, part A was purely focused on collecting demographic details. Part B mapped the perception of respondents as regards different variables related to empowerment level of employees like, autonomy in deciding job methods and know how, importance of one's job, control over work etc. and engagement level of employees like autonomy in decision-making, growth opportunities, involvement, availability of information and communication etc. and The questionnaire was constructed on a five point Likert agreement scale to measure the responses on the decided variables. The questionnaire was subjected to review by experts and their inputs have been incorporated accordingly. Reliability of the same was computed to be Cronbach Alpha .83. According to Nunnally (1978, p. 245) the instruments used in basic research have reliability of about .70 or better.
The sampling was multistage. In the first place it was purposive wherein the researchers drew out a list of 32 BPO organizations in the NCR. The list was generated through the web link *(http://www.fundoodata.com/advance_search_results.php?and new_industry_id[]=18andcompany_type_id[]=3andlevel_id=1 andcity_id=0andcriteria=1andsearch_type=1). Eight companies were shortlisted from the list such that one company each was selected from the east ,west ,north , south ,central ,Gurgaon, Faridabad and Noida region .Questionnaires were administered to about 20 managerial level employees from each of these companies . About 100 completed questionnaires (out of 160) were taken for the study.* The data was subjected to inferential and descriptive analysis.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS
The descriptive analysis of data is presented in Table 1. Engagement has been measured in five dimensions viz. Belonging, Inspiration, Understanding, Support and Appreciation.
Employees develop a sense of belongingness when they identify with the core values of their organization and start relating the impact of their acts on accomplishment of organizational goals. In BPOs, employees get easy entry but to sustain that job becomes a challenge. Rotational shifts, monotonous tasks and strenuous work environment make employees frustrated, disturb their work-life balance and thus, force them to move out of the organization. These jobs are not considered long lasting by the employees and job-hopping becomes a frequent practice. Owing to such reasons, employees are not able to establish that bond with the organization and don't develop a sense of belongingness towards their organization (m=3.59, s.d.=0.58). They feel that organization is concerned for its own profits and not towards their individual career goals. It de-motivates employees. Employees feel inspired when their leaders encourage them to participate in important decision making discussions and when they get fair remuneration according to their contribution. Relationship between team leaders and team members and remuneration plays a pivotal role here. These are the constituents of 'inspiration' dimension and the perception towards this dimension is lowest amongst BPO employees (m=3.45, s.d.=0.66). This is because top level management don't invite opinions of lower level employees. Also, BPO handles more than one process simultaneously where the concerned operation manager may discuss important and urgent things with the team leader only but not employees. Even if top or middle level managers don't show their concern, team leaders of the different processes take due care of the team members needs. They keep all communication channels in place in order to keep everyone aware, listen to problems faced by team members on workstations and maintain a healthy working environment. This forms the reason for enhanced level of perception of employees towards 'understanding' dimension (m=3.88, s.d.=0.53). The presence of such practices at workplace indeed enhances the intrinsic motivation of employees and creates a bond between employer and employees. Team leaders care for their team members and their professional needs. They act as liaison between them and top management. Furthermore, corporate programs and annual meets are organized to fulfill the social needs of employees as well as ensuring availability of required materials and information, so, many respondents are satisfied with the level of 'support' they receive from their organization (m= 3.85, s.d.=0.51). In order to enhance the empowerment level of employees, BPOs have developed a tradition to give "star of the week" and "employee of the month" titles to employees who outperform in the given tasks. These titles are announced amongst all employees and operations managers and gifts are given to such employees. Such recognition boosts up the morale of such employees and others as well. 'Appreciation' dimension of engagement comprises it all and employees are found to be

contented about it (m=3.81, s.d.=0.57). Overall Engagement of the professionals working in BPOs on the basis of these five dimensions is moderate (m=3.71 and s.d.=0.57). The reasons behind this are less concern of top management towards employees who are working day and night in different processes for the organization. Employees feel bounded as log-in hours and breaks are fixed. They are not free to move frequently out of their floors as punch-in entries are recorded for each employee.

Such reasons frustrate employees and force them to leave the organization.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Understanding	100	2.25	5	3.88	0.53
support	100	2.75	5	3.85	0.51
appreciation	100	2	5	3.81	0.57
Belongingness	100	2	5	3.59	0.58
Inspiration	100	1.25	5	3.45	0.66
Engagement				3.71	0.57

Table 1: Mean scores of five dimensions of Engagement

In order to understand the relationship between the dimensions of engagement viz. belonging, inspiration, understanding, support, appreciation and the perceived level of empowerment, correlation coefficients were calculated. A higher coefficient indicates a stronger correlation between variables.

There existed a moderate and positive relationship between the perceptions of employees regarding the feeling of belongingness and perceived level of empowerment (r=.490, p<.01)- Table 2. Employees understand that in order to develop that intrinsic motivation to come to work, there has to be a "connect" between them and the organization. When employees feel that they are the integral part of their workplace, they feel empowered. The systems, practices and managers should give pertinence to this and use it to retain human capital. Therefore, H1a stands accepted.

		Belongingness	Empowerment
Belongingness	Pearson Correlation	1	.490[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	N	100	100
Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	.490[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	100	100

Table 2: Correlation between Belongingness & Empowerment

A positive relationship was observed between the inspiration dimension and perception towards empowerment (r=.514, p<.01)- Table 3. This study was conducted on BPOs rendering IT services and it can't be denied that technology is dynamic in nature. In this sector, learning can take place only by exchanging information, so, team leaders and managers seek certain technical information and details of working by employees. They need to extend required support to such employees in return. Also, these team leaders seek others' opinions regarding certain decisions. It gives team members a sense of recognition in their department. On the remuneration front, overtime and incentive schemes also contribute to inspiration for working in this type of working environment. Hence, H1b is accepted.

		Inspiration	Empowerment
Inspiration	Pearson Correlation	1	.514[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	N	100	100
Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	.514[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	100	100

Table 3: Correlation between Inspiration & Empowerment

Timely communication from team leaders, safe working environment and sound feedback mechanisms are the elements of understanding. It was observed that team members exhibit higher level of perceptions about the relationship of understanding and empowerment (r=.425, p<.01)-Table 4. This may be attributed to the reasons that BPOs have systems in place to provide regular and immediate feedback to the employees working in various processes. Every voice call or backend task gets vetted first by auditor and relevant feedback is given to the employee. Team leaders are informed and directed in advance to communicate all requisite information to the team members. Therefore, H1c also stands accepted.

		Understanding	Empowerment
Understanding	Pearson Correlation	1	.425[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	N	100	100
Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	.425[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	100	100

Table 4: Correlation between Understanding & Empowerment

A positive relationship was observed between the support received from team leaders and peers and perceived level of empowerment (r=.429, p<.01)-Table 5. Role of leader support and peer relationship in enhancing empowerment can't be sidelined. Support from superiors is shown when they address the work related issues of employees and extend the required help. Relationship with peers plays an important role on and off workplace as it fulfills the social need of employees. BPOs frequently organize corporate meets and get-togethers to fulfill this need of employees and to make them aware of new trends of technology prevailing in global scenario in an informal manner. It was observed that presence of such provisions increases the perception of employees towards relationship of support and empowerment. So, H1d is accepted.

		Support	Empowerment
Support	Pearson Correlation	1	.429**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	N	100	100
Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	.429**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	100	100

Table 5: Correlation between Support and Empowerment

Appreciation, one of the most crucial dimensions of engagement is fairly addressed in BPO sector. Literature suggests that when employees receive recognition for their efforts and appreciated by team leaders and managers, they feel empowered. BPO employees possess positive perceptions about the relationship of appreciation and empowerment (r=.441, p<.01)-Table 6. BPOs have a culture to reward outperformers in front of all team members, team leaders and concerned managers. Titles like "Star of the week" and "Employee of the month" along with small gifts are given to such employees. This enhances the motivation level of employees and thus boosts up performance. Therefore, H1e is accepted.

		Appreciation	Empowerment
Appreciation	Pearson Correlation	1	.441**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	N	100	100
Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	.441**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	100	100

Table 6: Correlation between Appreciation & Empowerment

Many authors suggest that empowerment is one of the major driving forces of engagement which further enhances performance and productivity and helps to retain employees. BPO employees show a higher level of perception about the relationship between engagement and empowerment (r=.705,p<,01) from Table 7. The employers at BPO sector have understood the need of the hour. They look up to the standards of western nations in order to come at par with them. They have started decentralizing decision making powers to their employees in order to give autonomy to them, open door policy has been implemented by superiors in order to make employees feel comfortable contacting them, reward and recognition policies have been revived and a trend of corporate and annual meets have been started. As all five dimensions of engagement bear a positive and strong relationship with empowerment, H1 which states that there exists a positive relationship between engagement and empowerment is accepted. Literature suggested that empowerment and engagement are positively and strongly related in different sectors. No study has been conducted to establish this relationship in BPO sector empirically. The researchers of this study conclude that empowerment acts as a driving force for engagement in BPO sector as well and can work miraculously in retaining employees.

		Engagement	Empowerment
Engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	.705**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	N	100	100
Empowerment	Pearson Correlation	.705**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	100	100

Table 7: Correlation between Engagement & Empowerment

Levene's t-test for equality of variances (Table 8) has been applied to test hypothesis H2 that there exists a difference between male and female respondents as regards their level of empowerment in their organization. It can be observed that there exists no difference between male and female respondents as regards their perceived level of autonomy in deciding job methods (t= -0.275, p<0.05). This is because women constitute majority portion of the workforce of BPOs. HR managers prefer women employees as they possess required patient to handle queries, have convincing and soft voice and are good administrators. Recruiting female employees, for most of the processes remains priority for HR managers. Post joining, team leaders leave certain job related decisions up to them only, which gives women employees a sense of control over their work. Hence, H2a is rejected. The level of empowerment gets affected when one gets to know one's impact/influence in his/her organization. Employees feel empowered when they realize that their contribution to their organization matters.

There found to be no difference between male and female employees of BPO sector as regards their perceived level of impact in their organization (t=0.739, p<0.05). Women employees are very converse with the fact that they occupy a significant position in this industry because of traits they possess and so are the BPO managers. For their efforts in accomplishing given tasks they get recognition and appreciation by the managers. It enhances their motivation level and they feel that their contribution matters to the organization. Therefore, H2b stands refuted. Organizations in the present era are evolving as learning organizations and employees as knowledge workers. All employees are concerned towards what they do at their workplace. They want to enrich their job roles by adding some meaning to it. They demand challenging roles for personal growth. To meet such expectations of employees, HR department design tasks in specialized manner and thus, monotonous, repetitive tasks are being replaced by challenging ones. Women employees are given such challenging tasks to perform and they feel no difference is there in the kind of work they get to do and their male counterparts (t= -0.63, p<0.05). Females have overcome various taboos levied over them in past. They are mobile, professionally educated and are ready to take opportunities hands-on. Hence, H2c stands rejected. Information and skills required to perform such specialized tasks demand continuous upgradation. There found to be no difference between male and female employees of BPOs about possession of complete knowledge of required skills (t= -0.183, p<0.05). This can be because in order to garner the job related needs of employees, HR department of BPOs organizes workshops by experts. HR department in consolidation with other managers design policies to be at par with western MNCs. With such unbiased approach of managers in training employees, female employees believe that they possess complete knowledge of all required skills. Therefore, H2d is also refuted. It becomes very evident that HR department has understood the significance of female workforce very well and is working towards addressing their workplace issues. Owing to these findings, Hypothesis 2 which states that there exists a significant difference between male and female employees of BPOs as regards their perceived level of empowerment stands refuted.

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION
Indian ITES/BPO sector is rampantly growing but has its own set of challenges. Young professionals are entering the workforce in BPOs in huge numbers so; it has become crucial to understand their characteristics and expectations from workplace. Career development practices help managers in retaining talent at workplace (Sullivan and Mainiero, 2007) [30]. These practices can enhance the productivity and performance of employees. According to Dash, Singh and Vivekanand (2008) [31], chances of promotion and opportunities for personal growth also boost up the engagement level of BPO employees. Few good MNCs help employees in completing their post graduation in order to enhance their knowledge. It also motivates employees and makes them feel

empowered. They need people who have got required skills. Wrong selections also lead to enhanced employee turnover rate. Organizations must try to gain an insight into the behavioral dynamics of present workforce and its implications for the leaders of tomorrow. The analysis of the data tells that managers working in BPOs are not satisfied with the leadership shown by the immediate superiors as well as top management. 'Boundations' created by strict patterns of working, force employees to leave the companies. Only professional care is not enough for employees to keep them motivated. They are of the opinion that there is much to life than just work. Top management and superiors need to improve their personal working relationships in order to meet their individual needs. Top management must live up to their commitments in order to build trust amongst young managers. Also, the biasness must be eliminated completely from the system in order to make things transparent.

The BPO workforce which belongs to different backgrounds demands support, recognition and praise from their bosses. Female employees need to be empowered by employers. They are capable of performing challenging tasks, so must be provided with significant growth opportunities. They don't appreciate unethical or unjustified practices. Unfair allocation of workload, uncompetitive salary structure and unfair review system lessens their morale level leading to disengagement from organization. The jobs situations are needed to be redesigned. Advanced technologies like e-learning programs, simulation exercises, motivational training etc. must be used to train them. Challenging work, support system of bright and creative people, team membership, autonomy at workplace, continuous learning and concern for their personal needs can transform the face of working practices for females at BPOs. Family support is also required to enhance the mobility of women managers. Organizations take due care regarding the security of females working in BPOs. This must be accompanied with some autonomy at workplace as well. Stereotyping must be addressed seriously now by the means of mentoring and counseling male employees. Also, continuing education courses to keep such employees updated about the advancements of industry, career development skills training, opportunities for growth and promotion, mentoring and leadership development programs are other avenues which must be considered by the management (Monis and Sreedhara, 2011) [32]. These factors are important components of empowerment as well which make employees feel important in the organization.

7. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY AND AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH
There are certain limitations to this study. It was conducted on the sample of 100 respondents from the BPO organizations in Delhi-NCR. The results so obtained cannot be generalized for whole BPO sector. Time constraint to conduct this study posed another limitation.
BPO culture is characterized by monotonous tasks, rotational shifts, unfair distribution of rewards, stiff competition, stressful jobs and different working practices for male and female

managers. The employees of this dynamic industry are ambitious and look out for better opportunities always. This study can be extended to larger sample in order to identify other factors which affect performance of BPO employees. Career development and talent retention strategies can be studied in same sector by other researchers.

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