



# Sustainable HR Practices and Its influence on employee Turnover

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**Abstract.** Sustainable HR practices are created in or to reduce employee turnover, avoid attrition, induce retention and propel employee engagement. Some of the common Sustainable HR practices that involve concepts of sustainability in practice and processes related to Performance management, Sustainable employee development, Compensation and benefits, Work place policies, employee engagement etc. The Sustainable HR practices primarily aims to create an environment for the employees to bring in best productivity and to improve employee satisfaction and to build a positive sustainable work place culture in an attempt to contribute in overall success of the organization. Sustainable HR practices or Green HR are policies and procedures structured to manage the company's employees effectively and to keep them engaged. This study tries to learn about the various Sustainable HR Policies followed in IT organization and also tries to find out if it can be a useful tool in controlling attrition. The study was carried out in a leading information technology company to study if their Sustainable HR practices can help in reducing employee turnover. The HR personnel and Employees who left the organization were interviewed to provide data for the study. Further tools like correlation and Friedman test were also used which supported the theory that Sustainable HR Practice or Green HR policies has a positive relationship with Job satisfaction. This study contributes by providing insights of a successful Sustainable Human Resource Practice and by filling the gap of less literature on Relationship between Sustainable HR practices and Employee turnover in IT sector of India.

**Keywords:** Sustainable HR, Turn Over, Job Satisfaction, Green HR

## 1 Introduction

The Business world is more dynamic than ever and is continuously evolving. This rapid growth is marked by Technological advancements, shifting demographic patterns and high competition. In the past years, the call for Talent has been continually growing and the phrases "Talent acquisition, Talent Management and Employee Retention" are under limelight. The talent retention expands beyond a trifling administrative function it proves to be a strategic imperative. As the look for High- caliber personnel are challenging. The effective dealing with of Talent doesn't end with attracting and obtaining them, it's far a non-stop method of handling and improving for a sustainable growth. Every organization invests a lot of time, money and efforts to hire/acquire skilled employees, retaining these employees is as much important as acquiring considering the resources involved for each hiring cycle. According to Swetha Jha

(2014) Turnover impacts recruitment cost, induction and training of new recruit is also additional cost but the loss of experience gained by the employee on the job in the role is valuable. Turnover results in shortage of manpower that leads to decreased effectiveness. Turnover has negative impact on the employee. Turnover intention is consequential to actual quitting behavior. Hence, determinants of turnover intentions need to be understood so as to arrest the outflow of key personnel and retain competitive advantage.

### **1.1 Sustainable HR Practices**

Robin Kramar. (2014) Sustainable HR practices are the practices and procedures that organizations create and use to reduce employee turnover, prevent attrition, increase retention and foster employee engagement. HR practices that are sustainable Performance management, Sustainable employee development, Compensation and benefits, Work place policies, employee engagement etc. The Sustainable HR practices primarily aims to create an environment for the employees to increase productivity and to improve employee satisfaction thereby build a positive sustainable work place culture to contribute in overall success of the organization. Various studies show that Employee commitment is one of the key factors of Organizational success. This paper tries to get an overview of how effective these attempts of companies are and the committed work force not only fortifies a company against attrition related challenges but also becomes a catalyst for sustainable innovation and productivity. In essence Talent Retention emerges not merely as a reactive measure but as proactive investment in long term growth of company in addressing the sustainability concerns of the environment.

The term “Employee Retention is an organization’s ability to make its employee stay with the organization for a period of time”. It also includes the process of creating and implementing sustainable policies and culture to encourage employees to stick to organization for long term. This in turn tries to encourage Organizational commitment which is expected by all the companies regardless of the industry, Organizational commitment in simple terms is emotional attachment and a sense of loyalty felt by the employee. It’s the degree of belief and dedication of employees towards the organization’s goals and values. It is an indication of high employee engagement.

### **1.2 Employee Turnover – an important factor in employee retention**

A reduced turn over denotes better employee retention, employee turnover is basically employees leaving an organization, it is usually denoted as rate of employee turnover which shows the percentage of employees leaving. It is evident that having committed work force in place gives productivity or enhancements in company or project, but the effectiveness of strategies made to retain these forces is yet to be completely determined. According to Lakshmi Kanchana (2023). Reduction of Employee turnover brings in lot of benefits like Experienced employees, improved culture, better customer service and a lot more. It also paves way for a stronger work relationship.

### 1.3 Scope of the study

The IT industry is thriving on its talents and Human Skills which makes Sustainable HR very crucial in the successful operation of the firm. Wherein HR is facing challenges in retaining its skilled employees due to various reasons. According to LinkedIn, the average cost per hire in IT sector in India approximates to 50,000 rupees and Business insider reports that the average time to hire is around 32 days. Clearly, there is a huge amount of cost and time involved. Also, if we consider training costs, it expands much beyond, so replacing the employees causes loss of resources to the organization. A higher turnover ratio also affects the operational efficiency and customer satisfaction, so it is of paramount importance to keep the turnover ratio as low as possible. The aim of this research paper is to investigate various reasons for employees leaving the organization and to what level Sustainable HR practices are involved in it.

## 2 Literature Review

Sustainable HR Practices refers to human resources strategies that are designed to be environmentally and socially sensitive as well as economically viable. These practices consider the unique challenges and opportunities that organizations face in business scenarios according to Pellegrini, C., Rizzi, F., & Frey, M. (2018). Association between sustainability and HR practices is innovative and the relevant gap to be filled and this is based on the role of human resource in promoting organizational sustainability (Cohen et al., 2012; Ehnert et al., 2013; Guerci and Pedrini, 2014). Shwetha Jha (2014) classifies the Sustainable HR practices into Individual Factors – which include personality, physical and mental abilities, motivation level. The Organizational Factors – that include recognition, type of work, achievements, responsibility, salary, opportunities of growth, job security, interpersonal relationships, technical supervision, company policies, work conditions, and administration. Especially Job stress is a major organizational factor. The Mediating Factors consist of commitment, job satisfaction, self-esteem. Abdul and Saraih. (2016), In their study explore the problem of increasing retention in the past few years in private sector and try to understand the causes for retention. The study examines the relationship between human resources practices and employee turnover. The HR practices influence employees' selections that influences turnover that is voluntarily or involuntarily. The findings indicate some HR practices, like powerful staffing techniques and employee tracking, are related to a lower involuntary turnover, but no considerable impact on voluntary turnover. The paper begins by giving an overview of the importance of employee commitment towards the organization and how it has a positive effect on organization and overall productivity. According to Choi Sang Long, & Panniruky Permal. (2014), employee retention is a management issue rather than HR issue. The competencies required for employee retention such as sustain the organization change, performance improvement, analyze results, benchmark best practices, integrate strategies. It also points out on suggestions to building an organizational culture that's a win-win and develop effective retention strategies. It concludes that this role is emerging and is sure to grow rapidly. (Roger E. Herman-2005). Kumar, S. (2020) argues Talent management is the method

of attracting, developing, and keeping pinnacle skills and may affect employee retention. When employees experience that they are valued and identify possibilities to develop and broaden, they're more likely to live with their modern-day company. The talent management had a significant impact on employee retention it noticed that employees were willing to stay when they felt included in the work space overall talent management is an important influencer in retention. Krishnan, T. N., & Scullion, H. (2017) predicts a tremendous impact of talent management on skills retention. This article attempts to find out how the talent retention strategies and lists out 5 expertise retention strategies with the criticality level of employees' abilities, Incentives, revenue increases and variable remuneration, responsibilities and profession opportunities Norms and values; involvement with agency's goals and a sense of belongingness. The benefits of talent management include: Improved organizational performance, Increased employee satisfaction. Sparrow, P. R., & Makram, H. (2015). A systemic strategy for managing talent is required and has gained mainstream in HRM and the phrase 'the war for talent' is true in the current dynamics The Talent available plays an important role in decision making. They also highlight the intellectual boundaries of global talent management and also it touched upon the factors that influencing the emergence of talent management globally which proves to be a multi-disciplinary field.

The related literature claims that there is link between these aspects, Sustainable Human Resource practices (SHRP) as determinants of employee turnover by Jantan and Aminu establishes that SHRP has a significant impact on employee turnover which forms the base of the frame work that SHRP and Turnover are interlinked. Also determinant of employee turnover by Swetha Jha Shows that there are various factors that cause employee dissatisfaction which ends up in attrition. Global Talent Management by Collings says that we can control the turnover significantly by focusing on the factors that are controllable by the HRM hence we merge both the component and list down the factors and further categorize them as Under the control and Not under the control by this we can understand what are the factors of employee turnover that are under the control of SHRM thereby creating a possibility to reduce attrition with respect to those factors.

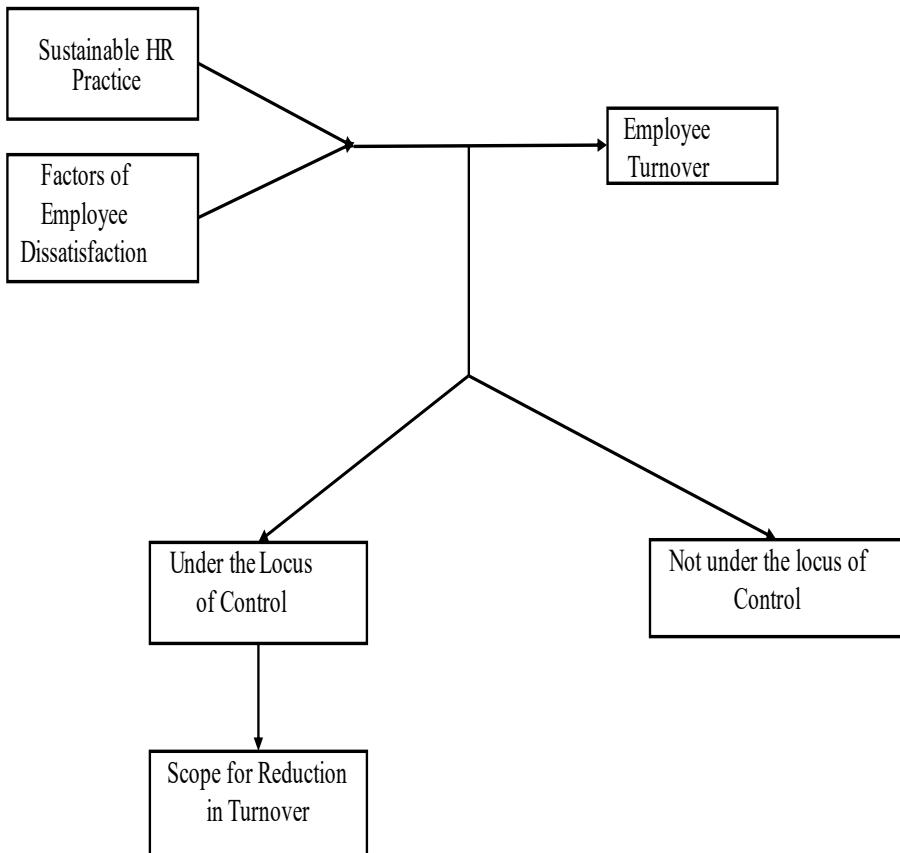
## **2.1 Research Gap**

Each company undertakes their own methods and levels of strategies they apply in order to retain their talent. Yet every company faces a considerable amount of attrition this shows that there are variable factors for employee turnover. Sustainable HR practices is one among them, still the level of impact of HR practices needs to be understood. When looking for a theoretical model that gives a clear overview of relationship between Sustainable HR practices and Employee Turnover, studies carried out on this subject provide very few established relationships. And Researches also conclude Sustainable HR practices are also a factor of employee turnover, but studies which analyze the level of influence of Sustainable HR practices compared to other factors especially with Indian context is are very limited.

### **3. Methodology**

The methodology followed for this research is centered on a qualitative research design, as it is well suited for understanding the influencing factors, scenarios and causes that triggered employees to leave the organization as it is often subjective and also a personal decision. This research type is explanatory aimed at gaining insights on reasons for employee turnover and extent of Sustainable HR practices in it with respect to IT Companies. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, employee ratings and document analysis. Random Sampling provides an unbiased estimate of the population parameters. The sample unit consists of 124 employees who left the organization in the past three years, based on their willingness to participate and not to reveal the Company name. Data collection primarily involved semi-structured interviews, where employees of the organization who resigned in the past three years were individually interviewed. The interviews were guided by open ended questions to allow for an understanding of root causes and subjective factors and also to understand the motive to resign. Data Analysis was done through Multiple Correlation has been used in order to find the relationship between Sustainable HR and Job Satisfaction. This study also used Friedman Test to Find the Ranking of the Sustainable HR Practices with employee expectation.

#### **3. 1 Frame work of the study**



**Figure 1. Conceptual Farmwork**

Source: Author

## 4. Analysis and Interpretation

### 4.1 Demographics of the Sample:

From the survey conducted, it is noted that 52% of the respondents are Male and 48% of the respondent are female, denoting an even distribution of the sample.

**The Tenure of employees** It was observed that the majority of the employees (about 41%) left the Organization within a period of 0 to 2 years, 26% of the employees left the organization after working for 3 to 5 years. The least percentage was observed for employees working around 6 to 10 years.

**Table 1: Employee count and attrition rate of the companies in the last three years**

| Financial Year | Total Employees (average) | Attrition Percentage (average) |
|----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2022-2023      | 2100                      | 9.5%                           |
| 2021-2022      | 2100                      | 8.5%                           |
| 2020-2021      | 1800                      | 9.25%                          |

This table 1 shows the employee count and attrition rate of the companies in the last three years, there is notable fluctuation in the rate but is still considerably lesser than the industry average (20%).

**4.2 Sustainable HR Practices followed In IT in India**

Table 2 depicts the top Sustainable HR Practices along with the ratings given by the former employees regarding their satisfaction level with respect to each practice individually.

**Table 2: Sustainable HR Practices**

| Sustainable HR Practices                  | Employee Rating (weighted Avg) |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Paying above market standards             | 4.7                            |
| Regular hikes based on performance        | 4.2                            |
| One Time Reward for excellent performance | 2.8                            |
| Flexible work hours                       | 4                              |
| Hybrid Work Mode                          | 3.9                            |
| CDD program                               | 3.6                            |
| Annual Leave Plan Allowance               | 3.8                            |
| Medical Reimbursement                     | 3.5                            |
| Company sponsored Higher education        | 3.2                            |

|                  |     |
|------------------|-----|
| Sabbatical Leave | 3.7 |
|------------------|-----|

source: author

**4.3 Sustainable HR practice Of IT Companies is given below**

The first and foremost important strategy that IT companies follows is paying their employees well above the market average which they claim to keep the employees sound and satisfied financially. The HRM of IT in India conducts performance reviews semi-annually and provides hikes to its employees based on their performance in order to motivate the employees. This is a Bulk reward given to any employee who provides excellent insight or does an extraordinary work or any revolutionary idea. IT employees who are working for more than 2 years can switch to Hybrid work mode, where they are expected to come to office for three days in a week and rest 2-3 days they can work from home. IT employees who are working for more than 2 years can also be entitled for flexible wherein there is not strict time for punch-in and punch-out however the working hours should cover 9 hours a day. CDD program is a Career Development program where the HR team assesses the employees and provides them guidance and tailor-made opportunities in their own area of interest. To contribute to employee work-life balance where they provide 6 days holidays every year without loss of pay and also provides a certain amount under the name of leave plan allowance based on their position. IT majors in India not only provides employees health insurance but they also provide medical reimbursement to its employees. Higher educational opportunities are being offered to employees where they sponsor the existing employees to pursue their higher education like Post graduation or Doctorate under a fixed time working agreement. An extended leave that the IT company provides for its employees to take a break from work due to various reasons. This can be availed by employees working more than 5 years with the organization and the leave tenure is between 1 to 2 years – sabbatical. Other minor practices include complimentary lunch and evening snacks, National Pension Scheme, Annual medical checkup, fitness sessions and more.

**4.4 Factors of Employee Turnover of IT majors**

Table 3 depicts the most stated factors for resignation along with the ratings provided by employees with respect to their level of influence in resignation decision.

**Table 3: Most stated factors for resignation**

| Factors                    | Ratings given by employees (weighted avg) |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Lack of Motivation         | 4.2                                       |
| Lack of Career Progression | 4.2                                       |
| Team related issues        | 3.8                                       |

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Work place discrimination    | 3.4 |
| Lack of benefits             | 3   |
| Manager and workload         | 4   |
| Better opportunities outside | 4.3 |
| Higher education             | 3.5 |
| Other personal reasons       | 3.6 |

Source: author

**4.5 Categorization of the Factors**

The above list covers the major reasons stated by the employees who left the organization in the past three years. In order to determine the scope for reduction in turnover we have to know the factors that can be addressed by the HR; hence we need to categorize the reasons.

The factors categorized by A classification of Sustainable HRM Types (Source: Dimensions adapted and extended from Dyllick, Muff, (2016), Sang Long (2019) in examining the impact of Sustainable human resource management practices on employee turnover intentions has been considered while categorizing the factors.

**Table 4: Categorization of the Factors**

| <b>Under Locus of control – HR practices</b>                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Not Under Locus of Control – HR practices</b>                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Lack of Motivating Factors</b></li><li>● <b>Lack of career Progression</b></li><li>● <b>No appealing Benefits</b></li><li>● <b>Work place discrimination</b></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Opportunities outside</b></li><li>● <b>Manager and Team related issues</b></li><li>● <b>Personal reasons</b></li></ul> |

Source author

**4.6 Top rated HR practices:**

The Top-rated Sustainable HR practices based on responses of the employees and Friedman Rankingtest is given below:

1. Paying above the market standards
2. Sustainable Career Development Program
3. Hybrid / Flexible work options
4. Regular hikes based on Performance

## 5. Rewards and Recognition

**Table 5: showing Friedman Test**

|                                  |                 |               |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>X<sup>2</sup></b>             | <b>28.9</b>     |               |
| <b>df</b>                        | <b>4</b>        |               |
| <b>p</b>                         | <b>&lt;.001</b> |               |
| <b>Descriptives</b>              | <b>Mean</b>     | <b>Median</b> |
| Compensation                     | 1.75            | 2.00          |
| Hybrid / flexible work           | 3.17            | 3.00          |
| Career development opportunities | 2.58            | 2.50          |
| Regular hikes                    | 3.50            | 4.00          |
| Rewards and recognition          | 4.00            | 4.00          |

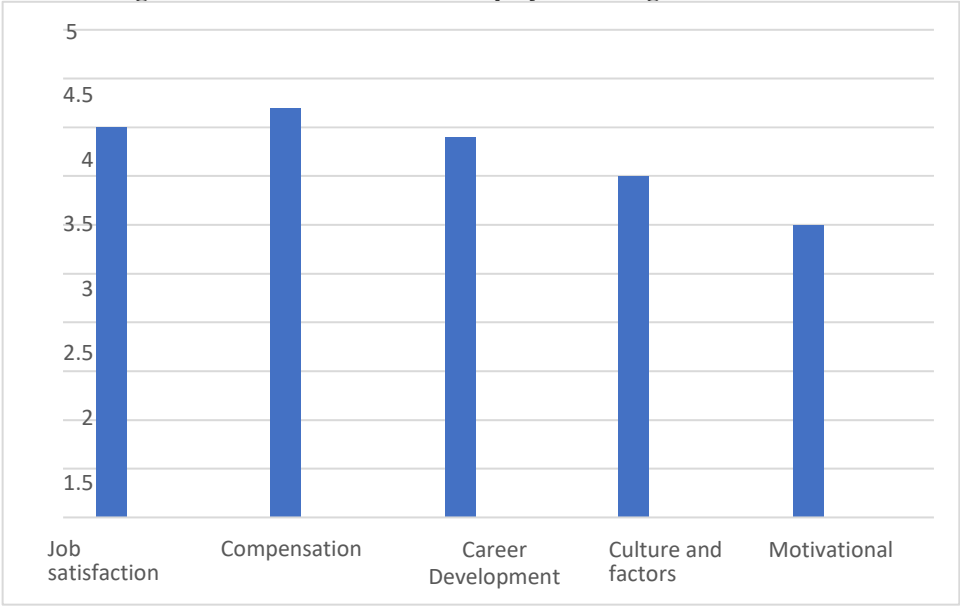
The Friedman test shows the level of priority that the employees exhibit to each individual aspect, it can be seen from the data Compensation is ranked higher by the employees (Median = 2), followed by Sustainable Career Development Opportunities and Hybrid/Flexible work. Regular Hikes, reward and recognitions are ranked least by the employees (median = 4). The above table is valid as the chi-square table value is ( $X^2 = 28.9$ ,  $p < .001$ ) are statistically significant.

### 4.7 Least rated HR practices

1. National Pension Scheme
2. Annual Leave Plan Allowance
3. One Time Rewards.

The figure 2 represents the average level of satisfaction of the employees with respect to major Sustainable HR practices, the above are the satisfaction level of each parameter where Compensation being highest at 4.2 and job satisfaction standing second with 4 rating which indicates that Bosch is strong in that area it is followed by Career development with 3.9 and the least rated aspects are culture and management, Motivational Factors with 3.5 and 3.1. From this we can understand that Compensation and Career development forms the strengths of the company and motivational factors and management requires additional focus to be given.

**Figure 2: Satisfaction levels of employees during the tenure**



Multiple correlation test was carried out in order to find if the Sustainable HR practices had any influence with the Overall Job satisfaction of the employee. The correlation matrix shows that each of the individual aspects have a positive correlation with Overall Job satisfaction. The p values of each parameter are as follows Compensation (0.686), hikes (0.657), hybrid work (0.420), CDD (0.773), one time reward (0.720) and flexible work (0.754), annual leave plan (0.685), Company sponsored education (0.660) and sabbatical leave (0.491). CDD and Flexible work has the highest correlation meaning that these play a major role in influencing overall satisfaction. Thereby this matrix shows that there is a positive relation between HR Practices and Job Satisfaction both individually and combined.

**4.8 Independent T Test**

From this test we can infer that there is not significant relationship between age and Job satisfaction as the p value is more than 0.05, which means age does not act as an influencing factor in overall job satisfaction levels.

**Table 6: Independent samples T-test**

|                                          |                    | <b>Statistic</b> | <b>df</b>   | <b>p</b>     |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|
| <b>Overall level of Job satisfaction</b> | <b>Student's t</b> | <b>0.248</b>     | <b>22.0</b> | <b>0.807</b> |

## 5. Findings and Suggestions

- Attrition rate is significantly less standing at 8.5% compared to the industry average which is around 20%. This shows that the companies are doing very well with respect to Employee Retention and the Sustainable HR Practices is favoring the cause. This is supported by the news article published by Mint which discusses about the attrition rates in IT sector in India and some companies are still exhibiting good progress.
- IT majors in India is also a highly rated company with respect to employee satisfaction and employee engagement. Further proven by the fact that, Great Place to Work certified which shows that the Model of Sustainable HRM can be studied for reference while structuring a HRM system.
- A well-paying compensation is the key factor having significantly less attrition than the industry average, this is supported by the fact that almost all individuals interviewed were satisfied with the Compensation component.
- Competitive compensation, Flexible work and Regular hikes form strengths of IT major's HR practices and is well received by the employees.
- Lack of Motivation, Limited career progression, Team Related issues and personal reason were the most stated factors of resignation.
- Policies like 'Leave plan allowance', 'One time reward' did not appeal to employees as expected by the company.
- Nearly Half of the Reasons for Employee Turnover is either directly or indirectly linked to Human Resource practices and company culture.

## 6. Suggestions

- Focus more on increasing motivational factors through plans like increased rewards and recognition to increase employee motivation, various theories state the positive effect of rewards and recognition on employee motivation.
- Work space bias poses a serious threat of losing hard-working and motivated employees hence it is very important to address work place bias with proper training programs for managers and stricter policies against bias and effectively handle the existing bias related grievances.
- Try modifying the benefits structure with respect to employee expectations, providing a basket of benefits from which employees can choose for themselves is recommended. Thunnisen (2014) on his paper on Talent Management also talks about using Benefits as a powerful tool in increasing employee engagement.

- Consider collecting anonymous feedback and work on manager and team related issues to reduce dissatisfaction with managers and team members.
- To focus more on the weak links of the existing practices so that Employee turnover can be reduced.
- Some practices are applied only to employees with the organization for more than three years thereby creating a gap for the freshers that can be addressed by adding some policies that appeal to the freshers.

## **7. Conclusion**

IT companies India has laid a strong basis for employee engagement and satisfaction, leading the way with highly competitive salaries, better work life balance and more to support employee wellbeing. However different employees expect and prioritize different components, hence in order to outperform the competition they have to strengthen their weak links which includes better career progression and customizable basket of benefits to attract and retain talents. Which can Save a lot of time, effort and other resources involved in the hiring cycle.

Investing in employee welfare is a key strategy to foster loyalty and engagement. Past case studies have shown that companies have succeeded in controlling HRP related attrition. Nevertheless, The Sustainable HRM structure of IT companies are considerable and can be referred while structuring or improving a HR Practices. Still, it is worth mentioning that there is scope for improvement because a lower turnover is always beneficial, which indicates that HRM is an ever-evolving concept by itself.

## **Disclosure of Interests**

The authors have no competing interests to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

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