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Talent Management practices and the mechanisms behind the Retention of employees: Evidence from case studies in Multinational Organisations in India

Ramya Parthasarathy\textsuperscript{a}, Dr. Angelika Zimmermann\textsuperscript{b}

\textsuperscript{a} Research Scholar, School of Business and Economics, Loughborough University
\textsuperscript{b} Lecturer, School of Business and Economics, Loughborough University

Abstract Multinational Organisations (MNO) represents one kind of workplace setting within the new Indian market. Information Technology (IT) professionals are the key resources to this type of organisations. Retaining talented employees within an organisation has become difficult in an Indian market scenario due to plethora of similar job opportunities available with the competitors in the IT market. An in-depth, interpretative case study of a MNO located in Chennai, India, was used in order to understand how the talent management practices help in the retention of the employees. Four kinds of mechanisms were identified behind the retention practices for employees through an interpretive analysis of the empirical data — organisational identification, organisational commitment, empowerment and employee engagement. The mechanisms and retention practices of the talent management within this organisation were seen to relate to how MNO retain their employees who are competitive IT professionals. Another case study of a MNO located in Bengaluru, India is still in progress. This paper has both theoretical and practical implications.

Keywords talent management; organisational commitment; organisational identification; empowerment; employee engagement; retention.

Introduction

There is a heavy pressure on today’s Human Resource (HR) professionals to acquire, utilise, develop and retain the talented employees of a multinational organisation. McKinsey, the pioneers behind talent management, define talent as –the sum of a person's abilities; his or her intrinsic gifts, skills, knowledge, experience, intelligence, judgement, attitude, character and drive. It also includes his or her ability to learn and grow‖ (Michaels et al., 2001: xii). Boudreau and Ramstad (2007: 2) suggest talent is –the resource that includes the potential and realised capacities of individuals and groups and how they are organised, including within the organisation and those who might join the organisation.\textsuperscript{1}

The concept of talent management was derived from World War II (Cappelli, 2008), however its strategic importance has been realised when McKinsey consultants group claimed the human resource as –War for Talent‖ in late 1990’s (Scullion and Collings, 2010). This war for talent was prompted by the realisation that talent shortages were increasingly becoming one of the biggest human resource concerns for multinational corporations (Makela et al., 2010). Talent management is generally concerned with practices associated with developing strategy, identifying talent gaps, succession planning, and recruiting, selecting, educating,
motivating and retaining talented employees though a variety of initiatives (Ringo et al., 2010). Many authors regard talent management as a managerial strategic priority of the 21st century (Farndale et al., 2010).

A serious concern of every HR in order to survive this _War for Talent_, is to fight against a limited and diminishing pool of qualified available candidates to replace valuable employees when they leave, dramatically underscoring the difficulty to attract, motivate and retain the best employees in an organisation. Thus, the organisations interested in maximising productivity and effectiveness adopted systematic and rigorous approaches for attracting, selection, development and retention of talented employees (Huselid et al., 2005). Today, companies have become fiercely competitive when it comes to attracting and retaining talent in certain countries, in particular emerging economies. This dynamically changing and volatile demand-supply equation with such erratic attrition trends and cut throat competition has led organisations to focus on mechanisms pertaining to retaining talent (Tymon, et al., 2010).

Although companies are facing talent management difficulties in several regions of the world, the challenges are most acute for young professionals and new managers in emerging markets—India is a prime example (Tymon, et al., 2010). There is a dearth of studies in this area, though some research is available in the Indian Information Technology (IT) industry and call centres. According to Chiamsiri et al. (2005), retention is a major issue in IT, offshore outsourcing when there is poaching and no clear salary growth plan identified for employees. But this is just one case. According to Budhwar et al. (2006), employee turnover, particularly at the junior level in call centres is severe and individuals often leave due to dissatisfaction with the work culture, e.g. shift work, as well as for better opportunities. Their study also found that there were limited growth and career development opportunities, boring and monotonous work, shift work, lack of emphasis on technical skills, and favouritism by management which resulted in high attrition. This study was based on questionnaires answered by respondents from several call centres in India. At the same time it is seen from the literature, that there is no significant study about retention in the Indian IT industry.

Despite intense competition being the key to market development and success, organisations have failed to identify some of the major reasons which highlight why _good performers_ leave. But, the present scenario with abundant opportunities has triggered a wave of employees, perpetually –on the move, forever seeking better opportunities whenever, wherever and however they can particularly in emerging economies (Tymon et al., 2010). How to slow down the move of these talented employees out of the organisation? One of the answers could be the role of talent management practices and mechanisms devised that are intended to retain employees. There is only scarce research in the literature that examines the talent management practices for retention of Indian employees in a multinational organisation. Further, there is a clear need for qualitative research in this area to investigate the mechanisms that are involved in retention of employees, along with relevant talent management practices. Hence my research addresses this gap in the literature.

The next section presents the background relevant to the title of this paper. This is followed by the objectives and need of the study. Next, follows a section on empirical data collection and its analysis, which is followed by a section on preliminary results and discussion that is further broken down into limitations and implications for practitioners. The final section of this paper presents suggestions for future research needed in this field.
Background

Employee retention is an element of a more general concern that might be best termed 'skills management,' i.e., everything that has to do with recruiting, maintaining and developing the necessary mix and levels of skill required to achieve organisational and business objectives. When a business loses employees, it loses skills. The magnitude and nature of that skills loss is an important management issue, affecting productivity, product and service quality, profitability and a host of other key concerns. The cost of replacing workers can be high, the problems associated with finding and training new employees can be considerable, and the specific workplace-acquired skills and knowledge with which people walk away can take years to replace. Employees' knowledge, skills and competencies are an important competitive weapon, hence talent needs to be maximised and retained as one of the discrete source of organisational competitive advantage (Collings and Mellahi, 2009). In essence, workers at every level are more important than ever to multinationals that hope to be competitive, both globally and locally (Guthridge, et al., 2008; Huselid, Beatty & Becker, 2009). It is therefore within this broader notion of skills management that employee retention assumes such great importance.

Many companies, particularly larger ones with fully developed HR departments, engage in elaborate planning exercises in order to develop a cohesive and unitary strategy to deal with employee retention or, more generally, human resources management (which often includes retention as one objective), and roll out particular programs or interventions with explicit reference to an overall organising principle (Khan et al., 2010). A number of companies have simply developed good corporate and workplace practices over time by being attentive to their workers' needs and conscious of the value of the contribution they have made. It should be noted that good retention practices need not be the result of a single, strategic exercise. They often evolve slowly over time, with programs and policies being implemented on an ad hoc basis in response to perceived employee needs or the evolving demands of business practice (Khan et al., 2010).

Talent management is an approach and a process to retain the talent of an organisation. A talent management system not only works strategically as a part of overall business strategy but also has to be implemented in the organisational routine processes throughout the organisation. It cannot be left exclusively to the human resource department to attract and retain of workforce. Instead it shall be proficient at all levels of hierarchy along the organisation (Khan et al., 2010). Talent management encompasses the instrumentation of unifying strategies or processes in order to enhance the output of a work place by deploying ameliorate systems and processes for attraction, development, retention and utilisation of required skills and abilities of work force and their aptitude matched with the current and upcoming business needs. Talent management strategies centralise around five basic areas which are attracting, selecting, engaging, developing and retaining employees (Perrin, 2003).

In summary, many organisations have realised the value of managing their talent, and have initiated new human resource practices which encourage talent management as the top priority which responds to the change, or crisis arises due to enhancements in knowledge based economic society like Indian market (Tymon et al., 2010). However, scarce literature exists on talent management in India. Finally, researchers highlight the consequences of talent management and suggested various strategies to ensure the retention of key talent,
employee engagement and value addition. More detail on this will follow in later sections with the relevant references.

There continues to be a scarcity of critical research on managing human resources in India. Indeed, where studies are reported, the focus is frequently on call centers (for example, Budhwar, Varma, Singh, & Dhar, 2006). There is a serious dearth of empirical research on knowledge intensive firms that have been the engine of India’s recent economic transformation. Consequently, the aim of this study is to explore and analyse the ways in which mechanisms associated with retention practices initiated by talent management works with employees of the IT industry in India. The study aims to contribute to the literature on talent management and their retention practices along with the mechanisms by providing empirical evidence which extends existing conceptualisation in this area.

Certainly, there is strong evidence to suggest that retention is associated with certain types of HR practices followed by talent management of an organisation, as outlined further below. At the same time, there appears to be reliable evidence to the contrary, indicating perhaps that this area of talent management research requires more development. It seems clear from the literature that none of the research actually succeeds or fails in examining all of the possible combinations of retention practices or strategies that are implemented by talent management in actual firms, nor has it yet been able to encapsulate such intangibles as the —organisational identification— or —affective commitment.— Hence my research would examine in detail the different retention practices implemented by talent management in an actual firm and the functional mechanisms associated with these practices in terms of retention of the employees.

Factors Affecting Retention: Observations from the Literature

One of the important conclusions of this report (discussed later) is that there is no —magic bullet— or set formula for ensuring good employee retention. However, in this section I will discuss some of the common factors that are associated with retention.

Compensation and Benefits
A. Compensation

The HR literature that covers compensation is quite likely the largest part of the literature that applies to employee retention. However, to the extent that it contributes to retention, competitive compensation is also likely to affect both desirable and undesirable turnover: it will help to retain workers, irrespective of the quality of their contribution to the company.

While there is general agreement about the importance of competitive compensation for employee retention, there is also a growing consensus that competitive, or even generous compensation will not single-handedly guarantee that a company will be able to keep its most valuable employees. Eleven years ago, experts such as Lawler (1990), maintained that the key issue in retention is the amount of total compensation relative to levels offered by other organisations. —Organisations that have high levels of compensation,— he wrote, —have lower turnover rates and larger numbers of individuals applying to work for them.— Furthermore, he argued, high wage workplaces may create a —culture of excellence.—

Meyer (2003) argues that retention based on the principle of —compensation-based commitment— is of course sensitive to changes in compensation within the company. Employers that base their retention on compensation-based commitment will always be
vulnerable to the possibility that their competitors will be able to offer better wages and thus lure away their employees.

Similarly, Smith (2001) argues that “money gets employees in the door, but it doesn’t keep them there.” Ashby and Pell classify money as a “satisfier,” meaning that it is a necessary but insufficient factor in employee retention, while Harris and Brannick (1999) agree that money is not the primary motivator for employees. In fact, many companies have done a very good job of retaining their employees without any pay-based retention incentives (Pfeffer, 1998).

As other researchers explain it, “a paycheck may keep a person on the job physically, but it alone will not keep a person on the job emotionally” (Berry and Parasuraman, 1992). Successful retention under such circumstances seems to depend on a wide number of factors. And, one should not discount the possibility that certain companies get along very well without offering high levels of compensation for reasons that are not of their own doing. Workers in large urban centres where industrial establishments are concentrated may be more likely to move to the competitor down the street even for very modest wage differentials. Companies situated in more isolated areas know that their workers are less likely to move for small increments in compensation (Butteriss, 1999). The message, here again, is that companies that wish to develop a successful retention plan that includes compensation and benefits must always understand their own unique characteristics and circumstances.

B. Benefits

Benefits can demonstrate to employees that a company is supportive and fair, and there is evidence to suggest that stable benefits are at the top of the list of reasons why employees choose to stay with their employer or to join the company in the first place (Dibble, 1999; Tompkins and Beech, 2002; Tillman, 2001). However, it is often the case that many employees do not realise the “true value” of the benefits they receive (Meyer, 2003). Nor are they always sure what motivates the employer to provide these benefits. Thus, the link between benefits and employee commitment is not always strong (Tillman, 2001). Adequate communication with employees is, as with most other retention practices, essential (Tillman, 2001).

Employee benefits are constantly evolving as the workforce itself evolves, and people identify new priorities as being important. Thus, while benefits do not necessarily figure prominently within the literature as a major area of HR innovation, they are the subject of considerable concern among employers and workers, and a few key observations are worth making with respect to employee retention.

It is important to note that the relative importance of benefits will vary according to the specific needs of each individual. The importance of a benefit plan to an employee with dependents may assume far greater importance particularly in an environment where benefits costs are increasing rapidly (Tompkins and Beech, 2002). Companies with older workforce demography might see their retention efforts best served through benefit plans that cover health-related expenses, care for elderly parents, etc. Companies with a significantly younger demography may find education subsidies or tuition rebates to be more effective retention drivers.
Recognition and Rewards

Rotundo (2002) argues that reward systems ought to be a significant sphere of innovation for employers. The increasing diversity of the workforce, she says, suggests the need for more creative approaches to tailoring the right rewards to the right people. Nevertheless, it is clear that recognition and rewards—as part of a more comprehensive effort at keeping workers or adopting good workplace practices—can contribute to increased retention.

As with many other authors, Harris and Brannick (1999) offer the general principle that “What get rewarded gets done,” and they emphasise that the principle must be connected to the organisation’s core culture. Rewards must, in other words, “fit in” with people’s perception of their employer and their workplace. Writing from the employer’s perspective, Susan Dibble (1999) does include money in the discussion of financial incentives but she also points out that money is not always an appropriate reward.

Smith (2001) cites the work of Alfie Kohn who, in Punished by Rewards, comes down hard on incentive and bonus plans. Smith cautions that if rewards, recognition, praise and bonuses are used incorrectly, then they can become manipulating and little more than a bribe for behaviour. He further says that they can sometimes undermine intrinsic motivation by turning the employees to just work for the rewards.

Training, Professional Development and Career Planning

Meyer et al (2003) suggest that employee learning — which encompasses training and development but is also related to socialisation within the workplace — contributes to retention by (i) building employee commitment through a show of support, (ii) providing employees with the means to deal with stress related to job demands and change, (iii) serving as an incentive to stay, and (iv) creating a culture of caring. Thus, training and professional development are seen as ways of building employee commitment in that they allow employees to “see a future” where they work, and provide them with the support necessary to face the on-going challenges related to their work.

Gregory Smith (2001) unambiguously states:

Make no mistake about it: all organisations will do a better retention job by spending more resources on training and development.... A business that provides education and training will be more competitive and productive and will win the loyalty of its workforce.

Many employers will of course voice the familiar concern that there is a risk that once trained; workers may be tempted to leave the company for other opportunities. However, the review of the literature suggests that the increased employability that is developed through employer-sponsored training does not inevitably lead to voluntary departures (Meyer et al., 2003). In particular, it is doubtful that employees in whom the company invests training resources will simply gravitate to another employer because of modest differences in pay or benefit offered by the other employer. Investing in training can be interpreted as a strong signal that the employer values the employee and wishes to keep that individual with the firm. To the extent that employees perceive this to be the case, and provided that the way the company actually behaves in such a way — by “putting its money where its mouth is” — employees may in fact be more likely to stay (Meyer et al., 2003). The training incentive is further reinforced if it falls within well-defined and adequately communicated plans for professional development within the company (Meyer et al., 2003).
I found no evidence to suggest that specific forms of training or training content were necessarily more conducive to good retention, nor that any type of training necessarily is conducive to retention. However, it does seem plausible that training, when combined with well-communicated plans for advancement and ongoing professional development within the company, can help companies to keep their valued employees (Meyer et al., 2003).

**Recruitment and Orientation**

The review of the HR literature seems to confirm that good retention is about more than what a company does once an employee has been hired and established within an organisation. How companies recruit and how they provide orientation in the first days on the job can be of crucial importance to keeping workers over the longer term. Failure to effectively recruit and orient employees may impose significant separation and replacement costs down the road (Dibble, 1999).

In terms of recruitment, companies should therefore put an emphasis on not only evaluating formal qualifications, job-relevant technical ability, etc., but also more general types of qualifications and dispositions on the part of the recruit. Of course, the underlying assumption in the literature is that the cost of recruitment will more than compensate for the costs associated with unwanted turnover; naturally each company must also engage in making such calculations. Finally, providing a good initial orientation to the newly-hired employee can not only help to effectively integrate that person into the workplace but can also help to make the new person feel welcome and provide him or her information about how to cope with the demands of the workplace, and any possible problems that may arise (Dibble, 1999). These can be important elements of the socialisation process, and some companies spend two weeks or more on orientation, during which they provide information about the company, its values, structure, goals, objectives, clients, customs, and history (Foundation for Enterprise Development, 1994).

**Work-Life Balance**

Work-life balance programs cover a variety of interventions, and include such practices as dependent care leave, childcare subsidies, eldercare programs, counseling and referral, and flexible working hours (Withers, 2001). As the list suggests, the concept of work-life balance recognises that employees have important family and extraprofessional obligations that compete with their professional commitments; benefits that may be grouped under this concept therefore allow people to strike a more meaningful and potentially less stressful balance between obligations at the workplace and obligations at home.

By relating Work-Life balance to career stage, Sturges (2008) includes younger professionals without family responsibilities into the domain. It is an all encompassing issue that is pertinent for anyone requiring personal space. Seen this way, this concept has relevance to a larger audience. Harris and Brannick (1999), says that we are witnessing a change in culture in the way people are choosing to live their lives, and organise their careers accordingly. Whether or not we are in the midst of a cultural shift, many employers have begun to respond to such demands by implementing work-life balance initiatives in their workplace, and have done so out of a conviction that providing such benefits can substantially enhance productivity, revenues, and employee retention and commitment (Withers, 2001).

Duxbury and Higgins (2001) argue, in this vein, that employers can help to create more supportive work environments by (i) working with employees to identify and implement the
types of support they say they need, and better inform them about policies that may currently be available to them, and (ii) encouraging employees to use the supports that are readily available and ensure that employees who could make use of such assistance do not feel that their career prospects would be jeopardised by doing so (Duxbury and Higgins, 2001).

Work-life balance could be a reason for employees staying with a particular organisation for longer periods. Even though there are quite a lot of studies in this area, still there is a lack of study that clearly investigates the mechanisms associated with work-life balance in order to retain employees of an organisation. Hence this could be one of the important factors to consider in my study to understand whether retention practices of talent management cultivate work-life balance which consequently can be a reason for employees staying with an organisation.

Job Design and Work Teams

The discussion of employee retention thus far suggests that workers stay with a company for reasons other than just good pay, benefits and other sundry perks. With respect to retention, the literature suggests that intrinsic rewards (Deci, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Thomas&Tymon, 1997) are just as important as material rewards. By this I mean that workers value their jobs not only when they are well compensated, but often because doing the job is in itself a rewarding experience — in other words, it is fulfilling, challenging, interesting, and stimulating. Along this line of thinking, much of the contemporary HR literature reflects a growing interest in practices that enhance such intrinsic rewards, and a good part of this interest has focused on business practices that hand over a certain degree of autonomy control and managerial responsibility to the workers themselves.

Harris and Brannick (1999) list allowing employees freedom to control their work as a major ‘best practice’ in retention, while Ashby and Pell (2001) report that the highest turnover rates are those in which the corporate culture is one of domination, autocracy and inflexibility.

Most commentators in the HR field are quick to point out that if the intention behind implementing work teams is to allow a greater degree of flexibility and autonomy in making decisions, then work teams must also take on a corresponding measure of responsibility and accountability for the work they do (Kaye and Jordan-Evans, 1999). Each member of the team must also recognise that she or he has specific responsibilities to the other members of the team, and so there also exists a measure of individual internal accountability for results. At the same time, if autonomous teamwork is valuable to a company, then that company may also be well advised to reward and recognise behaviour that generates positive results through autonomous teamwork (Kaye and Jordan-Evans, 1999).

From the point of view of retention, the concept of the autonomous work team is one among a number of practices that contribute to what is called job enrichment (Hackman and Oldham, 1976; Kaye and Jordan-Evans, 1999), which we can define as: ways of organising work so as to maximise the benefits that employees derive from a job’s intrinsic rewards. Intrinsic rewards in turn have their effects on retention of that employee (Tymon et al., 2010).

And certainly, such practices are seldom embraced solely for the sake of retention but rather because companies perceive that they will also translate into better performance in other areas such as productivity. This is not to downplay the value of re-designing the nature and scope of work with a view to making it more challenging, interesting and intrinsically
rewarding. Rather, I simply suggest that such practices will be effective and sustainable only if they are integrated into work processes through a careful consideration of how they will impact business activity.

Communications and Employee Participation

The discussion of best practices in retention would be far from complete if I did not address the importance of communications. Open, responsive, two-way communications appears to be vital to good employee retention. -The fastest way to transform a top-performing staff into a group of disgruntled, discouraged job-seeking workers,‖ according to Harris and Brannick (1999), ‖is to shut them out of the loop of corporate information.‖ Conversely, they say, the feeling that one is in the loop reinforces the employee’s connection to the organisation.

Open door‘ policies work because workers do not feel apprehensive, fearful or awkward about walking into the boss’s office in the first place: and that in turn depends not on the existence of the open door policy but a basic disposition that allows, and indeed encourages, people at all levels to speak openly (Kaye and Jordan-Evans, 1999).

Communications and employee participation has significance in my study as mechanisms like organisational identification; organisational commitment and empowerment are associated with them. The link between them is discussed in detail in later section with evidences from the literature.

Corporate Social Responsibility

There is also growing evidence that an MNO’s corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities are becoming an increasingly important way to attract and retain high-potential and high-value employees (Macey and Schneider, 2008). It is suggested that employees identify with a company more when they think that it is acting in a socially responsible manner and that CSR contributes to employee identification and pride in the company (Bhattacharaya, et al., 2008). It is also noted that the marketing activity, such as employer branding, is incorporated into the talent management function, but future research should also examine the links between CSR and talent management. This could be particularly fruitful in the emerging markets such as India and China which have seen the infusion of managerial practices from around the world due to the increased openness to international trade and deregulation. Rupp et.al (2006) accentuated that CSR plays a role about fostering positive social relationships between organisations and communities. They highlighted that employees will turn to CSR to assess the extent to which their organisation values such relationships and so high levels of CSR can meet employees’ need for belongingness with the organisation and the society.

Founded in 1972, Sirota Survey Intelligence (www.sirota.com) specialises in attitude research. Compiled since 1972 and continuously updated, Sirota's multi-national, multi-industry database comprises data from millions of employees collected through the firm's employee survey research (predominantly among the Fortune 500). A survey by Sirota Survey Intelligence (2007) affirmed that employees who are satisfied with their organisation’s commitment to social and environmental responsibilities are likely to be more positive, more engaged and more productive than those working for less responsible employers and when employees are positive about their organisations’ CSR commitment, their engagement rises to 86 per cent. On the other hand, when employees are negative about
their employer’s CSR activities, only 37 per cent are highly engaged. Similarly, Murray (2008) on the basis of survey stated that more than one-third of respondents pointed that working for a caring and responsible employer was more important than the salary they earned and nearly half would turn away from an employer that lacked good corporate social responsibility policies.

Burke and Logsdon (1996) support the idea that the influence of social responsibility is through its positive effect on new professionals’ pride in and satisfaction with the organisation. CSR-induced identification engenders outcomes such as high levels of commitment, greater morale, and a dedication to excellence in performing work tasks, job satisfaction, feelings of well-being, and a sense of pride. They cite a consumer goods organisation survey showing that employee engagement in CSR led to pride in the organisation, which was negatively associated with an intention to leave—a finding consistent with the embeddedness construct developed by Mitchell et al. (2001) as a predictor of voluntary turnover. Their findings suggest that cultivating a reputation as a socially responsible company can be an important lever in talent management and retention. A reputation as a socially responsible company could therefore be a source of competitive advantage in the war for talent in India (Branco and Rodrigues, 2006). However, very little research is done in this area with regard to Indian employees. Hence the study addresses this gap by exploring the mechanisms that help corporate social responsibility retain Indian talent in multinational organisations.

Within the literature, a consensus has emerged that virtuous firms are often rewarded in the marketplace for being socially responsible (Margolis and Walsh, 2003; Orlitzky, Schmidt, and Rynes, 2003). One common thread is the role of social responsibility in building and enhancing firm reputation—the opinions about an entity which results in a collective image of it (Bromley, 2001). In addition, research suggests that a good corporate reputation can increase current employees’ motivation, morale, and satisfaction (Branco and Rodrigues, 2006; Riordan, Gatewood, and Bill, 1997). In emerging markets, with India as an example, many employees have experienced poverty first hand. The social responsibility of their employer therefore matters greatly to these professionals (Ready, Hill, and Conger, 2008). They are committed to the stakeholder perspective of the corporation, whereby the success of the firm must provide benefits to the larger community (Ready, Hill, and Conger, 2008). Only when they see this virtuous cycle occurring, they feel pride and satisfaction as employees of the firm, and become committed to it.

In addition, social responsibility and managerial support may work together in improving retention in Indian firms. Consider, for example, Tata Steel, a global firm that is part of the Tata Group. Tata Steel created a leadership competency framework to help identify high-potential managers. Knowing the importance employees placed on the organisation’s commitment to social responsibility, Tata included such competencies as shows sensitivity and genuine concern for the ecosystem (A Journey towards an ideal, 2010). They assessed the potential of managers around these dimensions to be groomed for more responsible assignments. I think one of the outcomes is that Tata is ranked highest among companies considered to have a larger purpose.

Because the relationship of satisfaction with the organisation and intention to leave is strong, taking actions to increase employees’ satisfaction tends to improve retention (Ready, Hill, and Conger, 2008). One’s pride in the organisation is highly related with one’s satisfaction with it. Element of pride include being proud of the work you do and of the organisation's
reputation, being willing to speak high of the organisation’s products and services, and being confident in their organisation’s ability to do the right thing (Ready, Hill, and Conger, 2008).

Organisations that may not have strong performance management practices or strong professional development practices, can still affect their employees' pride, satisfaction, intention to leave, and retention through the support their managers provide to the employees and the social responsibility their organisation exhibits.

**Frequently discussed mechanisms that enable retention – Observations from the Literature**

From the review so far, it has become clear that there are certain mechanisms usually associated with retention. These include foremost, organisational identification, organisational commitment, empowerment and employee engagement. In this section, I will define these concepts in depth and discuss how they may function as retention mechanisms. It is essential to discuss firstly how these mechanisms are linked to each other in order to understand how all these mechanisms contribute to retention in one or other way.

**Organisational Identification**

Since the late 1990s, researchers have expressed widespread interest in organisational identification, which is generally defined as the perception of oneness with or belongingness to the organisation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 34; see Riketta, 2005). One reason for this interest is certainly the positive effects that organisational identification has been shown to have on various work outcomes. It has been linked with lowered turnover intentions (Abrams, Ando, & Hinkle, 1998; Tyler & Blader, 2000), increased extra-role behavior (Dukerich, Golden, & Shortell, 2002; Tyler & Blader, 2000, 2001) and increased job satisfaction (Van Knippenberg & Van Schie, 2000). The human resource activities that enhance identification with the organisation foster employees’ performance and commitment (Grojean & Thomas, 2005). While previous research has predominantly taken the organisation as a whole as the focus of identification, the workplace context also suggests multiple other foci such as the work group or team and the department (e.g., Ashforth & Johnson, 2001; Christ, Van Dick, Wagner, & Stellmacher, 2003; Van Dick & Wagner, 2002; Van Dick, Wagner, Stellmacher, & Christ, 2004; Van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000). It thus appears that organisational identification is a multi-foci construct.

Organisational identification, which is one of the most crucial factors holding employees together and committed to the organisation, is defined as shared beliefs and attitudes among employees on the central, enduring, and distinct characteristics of the organisation (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail (1994, p. 239) assert that identification is the degree to which a member defines him- or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the organisation. Organisation members with high identification with their organisation incorporate organisational goals as their own, and for Dutton et al., common attributes form the bases for identification. In spite of both theoretical and empirical developments, there remains some confusion between organisational identification and commitment (e.g., for a more detailed overview see Riketta, 2005). Also, another study suggested strong correlations between organisational identification and commitment (Harris & Cameron, 2005).
Components of organisational identification

Based on social identity theory, organisational identification is defined as a multiple construct having different components: A cognitive component, which makes reference to an organisational membership on a mental level; an affective component, which reflects the emotional value of the attachment to this group; an evaluative component, which is the positive or negative value regarding that group; and a conative or behavioural component, which refers to behaviours that reflect this identification with the organisation (Van Dick, 2001; Van Dick, Hirst, Grojean, & Wieseke, 2007; Van Dick & Wagner, 2002; Van Dick, Wagner, & Lemmer, 2004; Van Dick, Wagner, Stellmacher, & Christ, 2004). Van Dick and his colleagues also empirically demonstrated that organisational identification is a compound of dimensions (e.g., Van Dick, Wagner, Stellmacher, & Christ, 2004). The cognitive component of identification expresses the extent to which an individual perceives him/herself as being a typical member of the organisation, reflecting the perceived amount of shared interests and goals (Van Knippenberg & Van Schie, 2000). Research has shown the cognitive aspect of organisational identification (e.g., Cremer, Van Dijke, & Bos, 2006; Harquail, 1998). Research has also revealed that organisational identification is accompanied by affective and behavioural components (Cremer et al., 2006; Harquail, 1998; Herrbach, 2006; Jackson, 2002). The more the member comes to view the organization as an exact reflection of his or her own self, the stronger the identification and the higher the emotional and behavioural investment of the individual in the organization (Chreim, 2002). The affective component is the feeling of pride in being part of the organization or feeling acknowledged in it (Smidts, Pruy, & van Riel, 2001). The behavioural component includes the collective behaviours of employees, which are vitally important for human resource management, such as internalisation of organisational norms and practices, desire to remain with the organisation and willingness to cooperate with others, and organisational citizenship behaviours (e.g., Dutton et al., 1994; Jackson, 2002).

Relation between organisational identification and organisational commitment

Organisational identification is also described as contributing to the member’s definition of “who am I” incorporated into the self-concept in terms of the organisation in which he or she belongs and is theorised to develop on the basis of shared fate and meaning (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Organisational commitment, on the other hand, is defined as a more general attitude towards the organisation and is believed to develop on the basis of an exchange-based relationship between the individual and the organisation (Cole & Bruch, 2006; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Recent studies have empirically demonstrated the distinction between organisational identification and commitment. In their study of five Nepalese organisations, Gautam, van Dick, and Wagner (2004) demonstrated that identification was distinguishable from four organisational commitment measures. They also concluded that organisational identification was correlated with, but empirically distinct from organisational commitment. In a study of Dutch university faculty, Van Knippenberg and Sleebos (2006) explored the differences between organisational identification and commitment and showed that identification and commitment were distinct constructs by using confirmatory factor analysis.

Consistently, in their theoretical study, Meyer, Becker, and Van Dick (2006) discussed that organisational identification and commitment conceptually differ in core meaning in terms of relevant foci, characteristic mindset, and behavioural implications. Thus, this form of organisational identification is empirically and conceptually different from organisational
commitment. Van Dick et al. (2004) showed that team identification predicted team climate, whereas organisational identification predicted turnover intentions and job satisfaction. It thus appears that identification with a certain organisational focus may only predict outcomes relevant to it (Van Knippenberg & Ellemers, 2003). Van Knippenberg and Van Schie (2000) also found work-group identification rather than organisational identification to be associated with turnover intentions in some cases, which are generally considered to be an organisation-focused outcome (e.g., Masterson et al., 2000; Van Dick et al., 2004).

Previous research has revealed that employees’ organisational identification is a vital cognitive component for an organisation to obtain better performance and more highly motivated employees by creating a strong psychological binding between employees and the organisation (e.g., Chreim, 2002; Smidts et al., 2001). Those employees, who strongly identify themselves with the organisation, are more likely to feel strong commitment to the vision, mission, values, and long-term goals of the organisation by maintaining their loyalty and membership. Thus, for the long-term continuance of employees within an organisation, retention strategies implemented by talent management requires to increase employees’ organisational identification.

Relation between organisational identification and retention

In the organisational behaviour literature, it is widely accepted that organisational identification plays a critical role in creating a strong bond between employees and the organisation and thus staying with the organisation for a longer period (Dutton et al., 1994). Since it leads to convergent expectations, organisational identification motivates members to coordinate their efforts to achieve the organisation’s strategic goals by enhancing intergroup relations and cooperation (Kramer & Brewer, 1984). Additionally, research suggests that members who identify strongly with the organisation are more likely to accept organisational goals as their own personal goals due to sense of belonging and are more likely to focus on tasks that benefit the whole organisation rather than self-interested objectives which in turn make it easy to retain them within the organisation (Dutton et al., 1994). However, there is very little discussed in literature about the association between organisational identification and retention practices of talent management system especially in Indian context. This study explores how organisational identification is linked with certain specific retention practices employed by talent management for Indian employees.

Relation between empowerment and organisational identification

Providing employees with greater opportunities for decision latitude, challenges, responsibility, as well as self-determination, is expected to result in employees who are more likely to reciprocate with higher levels of commitment to their organisations. When employees are empowered by the management, they will have the opportunity to participate in the decision making processes in the organisation. Involvement in decision-making processes makes it very easy for the employees to accept and own those decisions. When the employees accept and own decisions, they will also accept organisational goals to a great extent. The theoretical claim is that they will perceive the organisational goals as their own goals (Dutton et al., 1994). This situation increases the common attributes between the employee and the organisation, thus fostering the degree to which an employee defines him- or herself by the same attributes with the organisation (Dutton et al., 1994). Hence, when employees feel more empowered, they will also identify more strongly with their organisation. Those employees might think that they could influence the organisation’s
important outcomes, processes, strategies, and accordingly their higher perception of competence and control on their work might affect their identification with the organisation more strongly. That is if they feel they contribute to organisational growth, they identify easily with their organisation.

Relation between employee engagement and organisational identification

Recent academic work has sought to define organisational engagement in terms of emotions and attitudes (state engagement) and behaviour engagement (the traditional interest of management consultants) (Collings and Scullion, 2011). Key components of these different types of engagement with the organisation, include organisational satisfaction and commitment, vigour and absorption displayed towards the organisation and positive organisational citizenship behaviours which are quite similar to the components of organisation identification as discussed earlier (Beijer et al., 2009; Macey and Schneider, 2008). To these we could add employee identification with an organisation, drawing on the well-established concept of organisational identification (Douglas Pugh and Deitz, 2008). The link between them has been developed further by Edwards and Peccei (2007) and Edwards (2009), who proposed three distinct but related factors comprising employee identification and engagement with their organisations. The first refers to how employees self-categorise their personal identities. For many staff, their employment in an organisation plays a major role in their answer to the question: who am I? The second refers to their sense of attachment and belonging to their organisation, often related to how long they have worked in it. The third refers to the extent to which employees share the goals and values of the organisation and incorporate them into their own goals, values and beliefs. High levels of organisational identification and employee engagement are shown to predict all categories of workers’ helping behaviours, staying intentions and feelings of being involved in the organisation.

Relation between CSR and employee engagement

Tymon et al., (2010) found that the key predictors of employee’s intention to leave are satisfaction with and pride in the organisation and perception of the employer as being socially responsible in the Indian context. His study reveals that corporate social responsibility, which fosters employee engagement in social activities, is associated with staying reasons of employees. And, I already discussed above the link between engagement and organisational identification. Hence this suggests that corporate social responsibility could be one of the several reasons associated with retention of employees. I would consider corporate social responsibility in my study when it comes to retention practices as I see it is associated with several mechanisms that help retention. This would then help to understand the link between corporate social responsibility, employee engagement and organisational identification better in terms of retention.

Relation between empowerment, organisational identification, organisational commitment, retention and talent management

Empirical support has begun to build up regarding the relationship between psychological empowerment and important work-related outcomes, such as affective commitment (e.g., Liden, Wayne, & Sparrow, 2000; Seibert, Silver, & Randolph, 2004). Empowerment was predicted by affective, normative and continuance commitment and empowerment and was
seen as an antecedent to organisational commitment (Bhatnagar, 2005). There also seems to be a need to align HR strategies including aspects of talent management, enhancing trust, promoting organisational citizenship behaviour and the policing role of HR in order to move from control oriented to commitment oriented work practices (Bhatnagar, 2005). Liden and his colleagues (2000) have suggested that psychological empowerment may contribute to organisational identification through a process of reciprocation. Employees tend to appreciate organisations that provide opportunities for the feelings of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact, and likely reciprocate by being more committed to the organisation (Kraimer, Seibert, & Liden, 1999). In other words, the more employees feel empowered, the happier they are with their jobs and the more they identify with their organisation. Further, it is argued that organisational commitment is a powerful bridge between talent management and retention of employees (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). Specifically, it is contended that organisational commitment strengthens the positive association between effective talent management and retention. As Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982, p.27) note: –committed employees are willing to give something of themselves in order to contribute to the organisation's well being.

I understand from the above paragraph that empowerment enhances organisational identification. I discussed already the link between organisational identification and organisational commitment which is seen as a powerful bridge between talent management and retention of employees (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). Hence I understand from the literature that empowerment, organisational identification and organisational commitment are interlinked to each other. Further, it is clearly evident from the literature that organisational commitment strengthens the positive association between talent management and retention. Here exists a gap in the literature with regard to study that shows the link between various retention practices of talent management and their corresponding association with these mechanisms which my study addresses.

The quintessential aspect of talent management is retention, which is noted as being increasingly difficult, especially in the emerging markets (Yeung, et al., 2008). In these circumstances talent management practices which inculcate mechanisms that involve high levels of employee engagement, organisational identification and organisational commitment may be effective talent management strategies for retention of employees. However, there is lack of research in this area which is evident from the thorough review of literature. Hence this study addresses this gap in the literature.

Research Gaps and the need for this study

Debrah and Budhwar (2001) observed that talent management was playing a noticeable role in bringing about changes in Indian organisations, and more recently noted that talent management continues to be a key to success for organisations located in India (Siani and Budhwar, 2007). However, despite the contribution of human resource practices, the relevant literature on Indian talent management continues to be scarce. This research would help to address this need.

It is found that companies operating in India have adopted fairly sophisticated systems that reflect global best practices. This is consistent with Budhwar's (2009) recent conclusion that most foreign firms and an increasing number of local firms are adopting formal, structured, and rational approaches to talent management in India. Budhwar (2009) noted the need for
more rationalised systems across sectors in India, and his research suggests this is happening. Progress however continues to be somewhat unevenly distributed among different types of firms and different sectors, and not necessarily in a predictable way (Budhwar, 2009). I propose that more individualised talent management practices are likely to influence employee and employer assessments of individual employees, particularly for talented workers. I am going to study how different retention practices of talent management have its effect on making an individual stay with an organisation.

It is expected that the penetration of talent management practices common in the U.S. and Europe will continue in firms operating in India (Budhwar, 2009). The downturn of 2008-2009 has created retention challenges for IT professionals which is still ongoing. Given these continuing challenges, more study is needed to be done to better understand the effects of talent management systems and their practices specifically on retention of employees (Budhwar, 2009). Budhwar (2009) suggests that there is need for more academic research that underscores the different retention practices of talent management in India in general and in different firm types and sectors specifically. Hence it is evident from the literature that there is a need to study the retention practices of talent management and their influence on retention to check whether desired results are obtained with respect to retention of employees.

It is seen from the literature that some mechanisms like organisational identification, organisational commitment, empowerment and employee engagement have a direct effect on retention. It is also noted from the literature discussed above that several HR practices adopted by talent management influences retention. But at the same time, it is clearly evident from the literature, that there is not enough research on the mechanisms that are involved in making the different talent management practices achieve their desired effects on retention. For these reasons, there is a need for a study on the mechanisms operating behind talent management practices for retention in the Indian context. In addition to more quantitative research approaches, there also is a need for rich qualitative research to explore the psychological processes and behavioral dynamics at work in relation to retention practices of talent management systems in India (Budhwar, 2009).

Research Aims

Based on the outlined considerations, my research pursues the following research aims:

- To investigate the talent management practices that are implemented specifically for retention of Indian employees
- To understand the mechanisms behind these retention practices
- To build a conceptual model that exhibits the relation between retention practices of talent management and the mechanisms by which they help in actual retention

Method, data and the results

Research Methodology

In-depth, qualitative case study research is required to accomplish the research aims. Firstly, retention mechanisms can be explored best from the employee's view, which calls for an interpretivist, qualitative approach. Secondly, I place my study in multinational organisations in the Indian context and the study requires detailed description of the retention practices employed in this context. This can best be achieved through in-depth, case study methods (Yin 2002).
Data Collection
The first phase data collection was done in India during February 3, 2011 to May 28, 2011 in a multinational organisation which will serve as first case study in my research. It is an American organization that provides technology solutions and consulting services by operating with more than 90000 employees around the world. 30 in-depth interviews were conducted with the employees of that organisation who have been staying there for either more than 3 years or less than 3 years. The semi-structured interviews had open-ended questions giving scope for interviewees to explain themselves.

The second phase data collection was done in India during October 3, 2011 to January 21, 2012 in the same multinational organisation. 15 in-depth interviews were conducted with the talent management HRs of that organisation who has been staying there for more than 3 years. The interviews with talent management HR members in the organisation helps understand their perspectives on the influence of different practices on retention of employees, and the psychological mechanisms involved. Again, the interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions giving ample scope for interviewees to explain themselves. I also conducted 12 in-depth interviews with employees of another MNO located in Bengaluru, India. I am planning to conduct some more in-depth interviews with the employees and talent management HR of this organisation in the future. The comparison of the two multinational organisation would help me gain a better understanding and develop a more comprehensive conceptual model of different talent management practices and the mechanisms by which they are related to retention of employees.

As the study involves the concept of retention, it was essential to speak to people who have been staying longer with the organisation and also it was valuable to speak to people who left to another organisation within shorter period. I was also able to speak to five employees who were in an idea to leave the organisation very soon in the future. Also several other sources were used during this data collection like some informal conversations around the subject of the interview and information from company's website about the talent management activities.

Some interviews were recorded. But interviews most rich in data were transcribed. The interviews lasted 40 minutes on average. The shortest interview duration was 25 minutes and the longest one was 1 hour 12 minutes. I listened to the interviews and worked on field notes several times to identify common themes using simple template analysis. Template analysis is the process of organising and analysing textual data according to themes. It could be text that is generated by data collection (e.g. of transcripts of interviews, observed discussions or classes, focus groups, soundtrack from video diaries) (Miller and Crabtree, 1999).

Results
All the tentative results are with subject to the in-depth interviews conducted in MNO located in Chennai. The analysis of the in-depth interviews conducted in MNO located in Bengaluru is in progress.

Some of the findings are presented below from the first phase data collection:
- Most of the employees are either just aware of talent management systems and their team superficially or not completely aware of them at all.
- Employees who either left the organisation or wanting to leave the organisation in future didn't show any organisational identification or sense of belonging. Also these
employees felt that they were not engaged fully in the organisation, so they feel they were not committed to the organisation where they worked.

- At the same time, employees who are staying with the organisation for a longer period have developed organisational identification and felt they belonged to the organisation they worked. Hence they didn’t have any intention to leave the organisation in future unless unavoidable circumstances arise.
- The employees who either left the organisation or wanted to leave the organisation in the future didn’t feel they were contributing to the organisational growth and their own goals.

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) that is kept in consideration while conducting data collection is presented below. Some results have been found in this relation through the first phase data collection. The framework was developed based on the literature review and the initial findings. The second phase of data collection helped to develop a more complete conceptual model.

Figure 1 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework describes that four concepts are generally used in terms of retention by Talent Management. They are Talent Utilisation, Talent retention, Talent rotation and Talent Pyramid. Talent utilisation is about how well the talents are utilised within the organisation in order to keep them fully engaged in the work and motivated to remain with the organisation. Two practices followed for this are Communication and employee participation, Job design and Work-Life Balance. Talent retention is about the practices like corporate social responsibility, employee participation, rewards and recognition that directly influence employees to stay with the organisation. Two practices followed for this approach are Corporate Social Responsibility and Succession Planning. Talent Rotation is about how talents are properly distributed among the organisation at all times. One of the practices followed for this approach is Succession Planning. Talent Pyramid is about developing the talents of its employees through practices like Training and Development. It is assumed that different practices have different mechanisms in terms of actual retention of employees. The
mechanisms that I investigate are organisational identification, organisational commitment, employee engagement and empowerment as these are the most direct mechanisms that help in retention which is also evident from the literature.

The interviews suggested that different talent management practices have different influences on the retention of employees. Some interviews suggested that employees who are better informed and engaged in work and organisational activities were able to extend their stay within the organisation for longer years, because of the employee engagement that enhances their organisational identification. The interviews suggested that when the employees were engaged to the fullest, they developed a feeling of contribution to the organisational growth which in turn fosters their sense of belonging to the organisation. Consequently this helps in making organisational commitment stronger and thus helps them to be a part of the organisation for a longer term.

The interviews also showed that another important factor for retention was corporate social responsibility of the organisation. Some employees were able to develop organisational identification with respect to the corporate social responsibility of their organisation, which made them feel pride and satisfaction on the fact that they were working for one of the best organisations. Eventually the pride and satisfaction they develop makes them work longer for their organisation. This was evident from most of the interviews.

In some cases, there were negative influences of certain talent management practices which were of course unintentional, but had a serious impact on the minds of employees who left the organisation. One such example from the interview was in the case of the practice – Succession Planning. For example, when the talent management team wished to retain the key talent within the same work group to maximise the performance of that work group, promoted the employee within the same workgroup and isolates him/her from the larger picture of the organisation. This hindered the scope of development of the talented employee who wished to be part of the organisation and experienced different dimensions to his/her work. Gradually this type of isolation and pressure to work in the same project or work group made them feel saturated and lose their interest and engagement in the work. These employees then eventually left the organisation and joined another organisation which gave them what they wanted with regard to their job and career. These employees envisaged their careers unfolding over a number of different organisations as opposed to within the boundaries of a single organisation. They felt they hadn't been recognised properly for their work and lost commitment to the project and finally to the organisation. This situation is presented through the words of an interviewee who has been an employee of this organisation for 2.5 years.

“I was recognised for being the best at work with respect to knowledge management portal. And I was presented Spot Light award for that and promoted to next cadre within the same project. But this project is a smaller one with very little scope for one to develop. I was working for the past two years with the same type of work which wasn’t dynamic in any sense. At one stage, I felt being locked in the same cell and I wasn’t given better work to prove myself. I felt boredom finally and started losing interest in the work. Hence I joined current organisation to experience the type of work and role I wanted in my previous organisation.”
From the above example, it is clear to understand the influence of succession planning and the mechanism that was a factor for the employee leaving the organisation. Different practices have different influences on employees mind. The above example is of an employee who likes to see dynamics of work he/she does. Whereas another employee who was one my interviewees explained that when he was promoted within the same project, his familiarity with the work helped him finish the work quickly and leave for home early. He felt this flexibility in the organisation helped him in gaining proper work-life balance. He felt the organisation gave him enough freedom with respect to timings and felt care which nurtures his sense of belonging with the organisation. This has in turn made his commitment to the organisation stronger and he has been with the organisation for 6 years.

It the same practice, but has different influences on employees according to their priorities for staying with the organisation. The former example is of an employee who gives first priority to challenging work and the latter example is of an employee who gives work-life balance first priority when it comes to staying with an organisation.

The second phase data collection proved really valuable as I was able to understand both the perspectives of employees and the talent management HR members. Talent management HR members of the MNO located in Chennai discussed the different practices in place to retain employees and how these practices are driven to lead to retention. The talent management retention model – HR’s perspectives below (Figure 2) shows their perspectives on talent management practices and how they help in the retention of employees.

Figure 2 describes that talent management HR members have put several practices in action within the organisation to retain the employees. I have already discussed the talent management retention domain in the previous section. Here, I will discuss each practice and how they feel it helps in retention. *Perfect Project allocation* helps them assign project specific to employee’s skills and talents. They feel it engages employees fully in the work
and maintains their interest. Project Innovation’ gives employees lot of opportunities to bring about new dimensions to their work in the project thereby giving challenges to make it more meaningful. Training and development’ helps in honing either project specific skills or individual skills which are latent. HRs feels this help employee to rediscover their own skills. Brown bag lunch’ is the practice where a surprise lunch in a brown bag is given to one of the employees in each project at different times. The brown bag contains an invitation for one-to-one meeting with a senior manager or some other higher cadre employee in their project. In these meetings employees can discuss any issues or any ideas they have with regard to not only project but the entire organisation. HRs believes strongly that these meetings make the environment open and transparent for employees to work in the organisation. EmPOWERed’ is a practice that has several fun-filled games and activities designed to associate employee to everyday life in the organisation and make them feel empowered to take up any challenges in their career. Best employee award’ are given every month, quarterly, half-yearly and annually to motivate employees to aim for higher in their work and career. HRs feels these awards make them driven to taste the success of their work. Another similar award is Spot Light award’ that recognises the employee’s work on every day basis to reward them instantly and pat them for their work spirit.

Outreach’ and Go Green‘ are the activities part of Corporate Social Responsibility that engages employees throughout the organisation to give back the society in one or other form. Outreach’ is specifically a program where employees go and work in remote village all over the state in weekends to teach the illiterate children. Funds are also allocated to distribute notebooks, books and other aids for the children’s education. Go Green’ is a program where employees work in weekends in different localities to control Carbon footprint and promote planting trees. HRs believes that these activities help bring meaningfulness to the employee’s life and work within the organisation by giving back to the society. Talent Hunt’ is the practice that devises different competitions to identify the capability of the employees and gives them an opportunity to showcase their skills to the entire organisation. Employees successful in these competitions get several bigger and significant projects to work. C2O space‘ is a blog that employees of entire organisation use as a platform to voice their opinions, publish their ideas and thoughts, project their unique talents and skills and also connect with other employees of the organisation. HRs believes this helps in emphasising Being You’ in the organisation to be proud of being oneself. WaH points’ are the points allocated when employee wins some award or contributes to the organisation in one or other way. Employees can redeem this WaH points‘ to buy the goodies associated with the organisation. HRs feels that these goodies give them lingering memories associated with the organisation and connects them to the organisation strongly. We Care Desk’ have special professionals allocated to take care of the employee’s personal life. We Care Desk’ provides support to pay the employees utility bills every month and also provides hot desks and hot lines to discuss any personal problems employee have in life. Experts from different field sometimes help them to find solutions to their personal problems in life. HRs feel We Care Desk’ provides them all kind of support they need during their career span within the organisation and makes employee realise the oneness with the organisation they work.

HRs believes all the above discussed practices and drivers influences the retention of employees. Some employees stay with the single project they work for longer term. Some other employees switch between different projects but remain within the organisation for longer term. HRs feel only employees stay with the organisation when they enjoy their work, celebrate their everyday life and advances with steady progress in their career. Hence HRs
devises different practices to influence employee’s life within the organisation and get feedback from the employees through survey to keep adapting to the employee’s lifestyle.

The talent management retention model - Employee’s perspectives (Figure 3) below was derived from the field notes of the in-depth interviews with the employees of the same MNO located in Chennai.

figure 3 Talent management retention model – Employee’s perspectives

Discussion, Implications and Limitations

The two models of talent management retention practices of MNO in India from the perspectives of HRs and employees were developed by both literature review and current findings of this academic research. The conceptual framework developed from the literature and initial findings gradually evolved into create more complete conceptual models with the help of extensive phases of data collection. The mechanisms of retention are significant mediating factor in the relation between talent management retention practices and actual retention of employees within the organisation. Because recent literature has focused on
several mechanisms studied, I am able to propose a comprehensive model including different talent management retention practices and their corresponding influence on the employees to stay with an organisation. The understanding of talent management retention practices is a critical concern in the talent management literature, and talent management has gained prominence in the current MNOs in India.

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