CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION
“Employee contribution becomes a critical business issue because in trying to produce more output with less employee input, companies have no choice but to try to engage not only the body, but also the mind and the soul of every employee.”

David Ulrich (1997)

This chapter introduces the concept of employee work engagement, traces its evolution, definitions, theoretical frameworks, classification of employees according to engagement and culminates with the rationale and significance of the study in higher education sector.

1.1 EMPLOYEE WORK ENGAGEMENT

Contemporary organizations envision the creation of an environment in which employees give their very best and stand by during difficult times. In their quest for organizational excellence and value maximization organizations struggle to effectively manage talent and transform employees into engaged associates who are willing to go the extra mile. Bruce Henderson, the founder of Boston Consulting Group believed that dedicated people, their ideas and a commitment to acting with integrity has enormous potential to create value, influence the evolution of industries, and indeed, to change the world (Boston Consulting Group, 2014). Sarah (2014), explained in The Great Place to Work Model, that a great workplace is one where organizational objectives are achieved with employees who enjoy working, take pride in their work and give their personal best as a team, in an environment of trust. The ingredients of a great workplace include great challenges, atmosphere, rewards, pride, communication and great bosses too (Sarah, 2014). Consistent participation of companies like Google Inc, SAS and The Boston Consulting Group in surveys like Great Places to Work is an indicator of their concern for employee work engagement. Most of the companies surveyed acknowledge the need to provide an environment in which employees perceive their work to be meaningful and themselves to be empowered to contribute towards organizational and societal goals. The top ranking companies are able to engage employees from the most
diverse backgrounds and at different stages of their personal and professional lives. A perusal of Fortune’s list of the 100 best companies to work, reveals wide diversity in the tangible and intangible rewards they offer, with the common outcome of being able to successfully engage their workforce (Fortune - Best Companies 2014, 2014). They take the widest range of measures from provision of personalized work space, free food, space to grow vegetables and even avail the facility of nap pods (Sarah, 2014). Unfortunately, the scenario depicted in Fortune’s List of Great Places to Work is not representative of the common workplace where the large majority of the workforce is employed. Studies reveal that work engagement appears to be declining continuously (Shuck & Wollard, 2008). Gruman and Saks (2011) suggested that incremental performance may be best achieved by orienting the performance management system to promote work engagement. Organizations need to build an environment which truly inspires people to give their best. The challenges associated with facilitating an organizational environment that promotes work engagement are well documented. In this context work culture support has been identified as an important factor for predicting higher supervisor support, colleague support and work engagement (Biggs et al., 2014).

Over the years, work engagement has become a well-known construct to both practitioners and social scientists alike. In the field of practice, many reports have been publishing the status of employee work engagement in particular sectors of the work force, thus classifying employees into various segments on the basis of their engagement levels. However there is a lot of variation in the way engagement has been defined in each of these reports. In common parlance, engagement refers to passion, enthusiasm, commitment, involvement, focused effort, absorption and dedication. Merriam - Webster dictionary describes it as “emotional involvement or commitment” and as “being in gear”. The lack of clarity over a common definition of engagement was a major cause of concern for the academic researchers. Hence, some researchers made an in depth study of the construct and developed a common conceptualization of work engagement as a high level of personal investment in the tasks performed on a job (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli et al. 2002; May et al., 2004; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Rich et al., 2010).

Engaged employees are good performers and are willing to go the extra mile. They are creative problem solvers and possess an intrinsic interest and dedication
towards work. Hence, they possess an assortment of ways to handle work related problems. They consistently perform better than their less engaged counterparts. Engagement is not a standalone phenomenon. Engaged employees develop a positive team climate, irrespective of the job demands faced and resources available to them. They influence their colleagues to imbibe a ‘can do’ and ‘make a difference’ approach. Thus engagement can be considered as transmittable. The crossover or transmission of engagement is not limited to the work sphere alone, but spreads across various domains of life. Hence, it can be said that both engagement as well as the lack of it is contagious as it crosses over from one member to the other whether at work or in personal life.

On the other hand disengaged employees do not care about organizational growth, nor do they support a good work culture. They lack enthusiasm and too are busy complaining, making excuses or gossiping. They believe that they ‘know it all’. Hence they do not invest in themselves to become better people and grow within the company. They find it easy to work independently rather than collaborate within and across teams. They seldom take initiative or ask questions. They often lie, miss deadlines are distracted and are thus very difficult to depend upon.

Two critical factors that fuel employee work engagement are the degree of challenge and ownership in the work. Employees own up the work which they consider to be meaningful and challenging, thus getting engaged in it. However, too much challenge might cause stress leading to a natural reaction of withdrawal from work. Managers need to discover the sweet spot where their team can rise to the occasion without being overwhelmed. Since, the level of acceptable challenge varies from one team member to another, managers must be aware of where an associate gets stuck and offer the required support. Too much anxiety leads to disengaged employees.

Little and Little (2006) stated that employee work engagement has been widely discussed in management literature, magazines, newspapers and the websites of many human resource consulting firms. Despite the low numbers of engaged employees, organizational leaders rate employee work engagement among the top priorities (Ketter, 2008) since it has a great association with job performance (Merrill, et al., 2013). Employee work engagement has been shown to have a positive relationship with employee retention, efficiency, organizational profitability
and customer satisfaction (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999; Coffman & Gonzalez-Molina, 2002). Similar relationships have not been shown for traditional constructs such as job satisfaction (Fisher & Locke, 1992). Engaged workers are more open minded, productive and more willing to go the extra mile (Bakker, 2011).

Engaging employees requires a closer examination of the unwritten, psychological contract between the employer and the employees. It is distinguishable from the formal written contract of employment. The written contract identifies mutual duties and responsibilities in a general manner while the psychological contract represents the informal obligations between the employer and employee in the form of unwritten but strongly held beliefs and perceptions. The onset of twenty first century marked a paradigm shift in the psychological contract. A typical employer is faced with the pressure to cut costs, use cutting edge technology for higher productivity and play against rivals trying to poach both employees and customers. This is coupled with high employee attrition rates and corresponding lower average length of service. It leads to an upsurge in the direct costs for replacement and decreases the organization’s ability to develop long-term customer relationships and implement people dependent strategies. Upon examining the employees’ paradigm of the psychological contract it is evident that they now believe that one needs to change jobs more frequently to ensure continued salary growth and career advancement. The idea of a ‘job for life’ is fading and current focus is upon creating employability for future anywhere across the globe (Aselstine and Alletson, 2006). In this scenario research on exploring the dynamics of work engagement is quite meaningful and valuable.

1.2 EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT

According to Schaufeli (2013), it is not clear when the term engagement was used in relation to work, however Gallup organization is credited for having coined the term somewhere in the 1990s. Buckingham and Coffman (1999) in their best selling book titled, First Break All The Rules, published the results of Gallup organization’s research of ‘strong work places’. Employees perception of such workplaces was assessed with a set of 12 questions which later became known as Q12, Gallup’s engagement questionnaire. Around the turn of the century, many other consulting firms followed suit with their measures and reports on employee work
engagement. In fact the first scholarly article on engagement was published by Kahn in the year 1990 in Academy of Management Journal and it took ten years for others to pick up the topic. However, during the period 2000-2010 the number of publications on this topic grew sharply. The basic reason behind a sudden rise of interest in this topic can be understood in terms of some developments in the broader industrial scenario marked by globalization wherein employees were required to mange continuous change, work in diverse teams, craft their jobs and operate in a boundary less manner. Thus the human capital and contribution became more important in the changed scenario.

The surge in interest of academicians on the subject of work engagement can also be attributed to the positive psychology movement, rekindled by Martin E. P. Seligman, President of American Psychological Association. According to Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) positive psychology refers to the scientific study of optimal human functioning aimed at promoting factors that enhance the development of individuals, organizations and communities leading to overall happiness. Hence, under this movement research studies are aimed at studying the state of well being and its enhancement as against states like stress, burnout and the like. Work engagement clearly fits well into this novel approach. Hence, the topic blossomed in academic circles. Thus, the growing body of research on work engagement can be attributed to the increase in importance of human capital requiring psychological involvement of employees and the positive psychology movement.

1.3 DEFINITIONS

Kahn (1990) used the term personal engagement and defined it as the degree to which organizational members’ harness themselves to their work roles expressing physically, mentally, cognitively and emotionally during the performance of their roles. According to Maslach and Leiter (1997) engagement and burnout are the two end points of a single continuum. Engagement is the positive antithesis of burnout. It implies that those who are high on engagement shall be low on burnout. Schaufeli et al. (2002) stated that engagement and burnout are two separate concepts, negatively related to each other. They defined engagement as a positive, fulfilling work related state of mind characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption. According to the
Gallup Organization researchers, engagement refers to an individual’s involvement, satisfaction and enthusiasm for work (Harter et al., 2002). Saks (2006) defined engagement as “a distinct and unique construct consisting of cognitive, emotional and behavioral components that are associated with individual role performance” (p. 602). The common link between this definition and that of Kahn (1990) is that both focus on role performance at work. As an innovation, Saks (2006) categorized engagement into two types namely job engagement and organization engagement. Job engagement refers to performing the work role while organizational engagement relates to performing the role as a member of the organization. Engagement being such a vast and all-inclusive concept, the most sensitive question in defining it is, what to include in it and what not to include. Macey and Schneider (2008) proposed a synthesis of all aspects of engagement. Their conceptual framework includes trait engagement, state engagement and behavioral engagement.

Consultancy firms conceptualized engagement by aggregating and relabeling existing notions, such as involvement, commitment, satisfaction, motivation and extra-role performance. For example, according to the consulting firm Mercer (2007), engagement is ‘commitment’ or ‘motivation’ indicating a psychological state where employees feel a vested interest in the company’s success and perform above the stated requirements of the job. On the engagement continuum, they move from being satisfied, motivated, committed to becoming advocates of organizational ethos (www.rapidbi.com). Towers Watson research (2014) defined engagement in terms of three measurable elements namely employees’ willingness to expend discretionary effort on their job, availability of performance enabling factors like resources and supervisory support and work environment that gives energy for physical, emotional and interpersonal well-being. Another firm, Aon Hewitt (2015), in its survey on Global Employee Engagement Trends - 2015 defined engagement as the psychological state and behavioral outcomes that lead to better performance. They state that engaged employees constantly exhibit three general behaviors namely say, stay and strive. They speak positively about the organization, have a strong desire to be members of the organization despite having opportunities to work elsewhere and put in extra effort, time and initiative in their work. Collectively, these definitions of engagement by various consulting firms suggest that in business, engagement is defined as a mix of three existing concepts namely organizational
commitment, job satisfaction and extra-role behavior i.e. initiative to go beyond the job description.

To sum up, Shuck (2011) gave four approaches under which the various definitions of engagement in the academic circle were classified namely The Needs - Satisfying Approach, The Burnout antithesis approach, The Satisfaction-Engagement Approach, The Multi-dimensional approach. The classification of definitions according to Shuck (2011) is tabulated in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1 : Classification of Definitions of Work Engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Needs - Satisfying Approach</td>
<td>Engagement depends upon the fulfillment of three psychological conditions or needs namely, meaningfulness, safety and availability.</td>
<td>Kahn (1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Burnout antithesis approach</td>
<td>Engagement is the positive antipode of burnout.</td>
<td>Maslach and Leiter (1997); Schaufeli et al. (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Satisfaction-Engagement Approach</td>
<td>Engagement depends on individual’s involvement, satisfaction and enthusiasm for work</td>
<td>Harter et al. (2002);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Multi-dimensional approach</td>
<td>The concept of engagement may relate to job and / or organization and is multi-dimensional - cognitive, emotional, behavioral and trait.</td>
<td>Saks (2006); Macey and Schneider (2008)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In conclusion, it can be said that the various definitions deal with the engagement as a means of satisfying certain needs, its antecedents or its various dimensions ranging from cognitive to behavioral. However, the definition of engagement as proposed by Schaufeli et al. (2002) is precise and focuses on engagement as an experience, clearly distinguished from the factors leading to it or its outcomes.

### 1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

A number of theoretical frameworks of engagement have been proposed out of which four frameworks which are widely quoted have been discussed here.
1.4.1 The Needs-Satisfying Approach

As discussed in the definitions of work engagement, Kahn (1990) gave this approach stating that engagement depends upon the fulfillment of three psychological conditions or needs. They are psychological meaningfulness, safety and availability. How meaningful one finds one’s work depends on the job characteristics and the person – job fit. Psychological safety is determined by the social environment, management style and group dynamics. A non-threatening environment is best suited for engagement. Availability is governed by one’s personal resources such as physical energy, mental resilience and emotional intelligence. As per this approach the strategies for enhancing employee work engagement include job enrichment, role fit coupled with an environment of mutual respect and trust generated through good interpersonal relations at work.

1.4.2 Job Demands and Resources Model (JD-R Model)

This model proposed by Bakker and Demerouti (2008) assumes that work engagement is a function of job resources and personal resources. Job resources such as performance feedback and job control play a key role in accomplishing work goals and personal growth. Personal resources such as mental resilience are aspects of the self which help in controlling the work environment. According to this model, resources energize employees to make focused efforts. While at work one also faces certain job demands such as work overload, time pressure, red tapism which required physical and mental efforts on the parts of the employee. The impact of job demands on work engagement depends on the nature of demand. Hindering job demands such as role conflict reduce engagement while challenging job demands such as high responsibility enhances work engagement. When job demands are high, job resources and personal resources are instrumental in achieving the work goals.

1.4.3 The Affective Shift Model

Individual level of work engagement might vary throughout the day as one shifts from one task to the other facing various types of events at work (Sonnentag et al., 2010). This dynamic nature of work engagement is explained by the affective shift model (Bledlow et al., 2011). The model proposes that high work engagement
results from the transition from negative to positive affect. Negative affect indicates that things are not going on well and motivates the person to take corrective action. It is this effort that creates a shift from negative to positive affect. Work engagement is most likely to occur when the down regulation of negative affect is accompanied by up regulation of positive affect, simultaneously.

1.4.4 Social Exchange Theory

This theory states that over a period of time, relationships evolve into trusting and loyal mutual commitments if both parties adhere to certain rules of exchange. For example when employees receive appropriate resources like decent salary and appreciation from the employer, they feel obliged to repay the organizations. According to Saks (2006) one form of repayment by employees is their higher level of job and organization engagement. This is also supported by Kahn (1990) who proposed that employees feel obliged to repay the organization by investing themselves fully into their work role performances. On the other hand, when the organization does not provide the required resources, employees psychologically withdraw themselves from work, thus disengaging themselves (Schaufeli, 2006).

1.5 CLASSIFICATION OF EMPLOYEES ACCORDING TO ENGAGEMENT

Gallup (2006) proposed that on the basis of engagement level, employees could be categorized into three types namely, the engaged, not engaged and the actively disengaged. A brief description of the characteristics of each category is given in Table 1.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Employees according to Engagement Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Engaged : Such employees work with passion and feel a sense of connection with their organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Not – Engaged : Such employees put in time but not their energy or passion into their work. They can be said to be ‘checked out’ or ‘sleep walking’ through their work day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Actively Disengaged : Such employees are not just unhappy at work but they express their unhappiness to others, thus undermining what their engaged associates achieve.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ‘actively disengaged’ category is of utmost concern to the employer brand because these staff members have a tendency of sharing their discontent with their coworkers and the wider world.

According to a survey titled ‘The employee engagement equation in India’ conducted in partnership by two consulting firms Blessing White and HR Anexi (2008) employees can be categorized into five segments according to their work engagement levels which was considered to be a function of employee contribution and satisfaction. Table 1.3 gives a description of the characteristics of each segment along with the strategy proposed to enhance the level of employee work engagement.

**Table 1.3 : Types of Employees according to Work Engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Proposed Engagement Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Engaged</td>
<td>Such employees make high contribution and possess high satisfaction. They often go the extra mile in order to contribute to organizational goals and draw satisfaction from it. They are not inclined to switch organizations.</td>
<td>Their engagement needs to be sustained in the long term. Organization must recognize their ability to influence and motivate others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost Engaged</td>
<td>A critical group comprising of employees make medium to high contribution and satisfaction. They are amongst the high performers and are reasonably satisfied but may not have consistently high engagement. Since they are highly employable, they are open to employment offers from other organizations. They have a tendency to shift to any of the other engagement segments.</td>
<td>It is critical for organization to invest into the engagement of such employees as they are good performers and are nearest to the engaged segment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honeymooners and Hamsters</td>
<td>Medium to high satisfaction but low contribution. It consists of two categories. The honeymooners are new to the organization. This period lasts from 12 to 18 months. During this time, their satisfaction is medium to high but that are yet to find out as to how they can contribute fully. Hamsters are the long tenured</td>
<td>They need inputs on objectives and expectations. Feedback regarding current performance could be helpful. It should be a priority to get them aligned and contributing as soon as possible.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
 employees who believe that they are contribution but actually they are just ‘spinning their wheels’, without reaching anywhere or contributing to take the organization higher. Some might even be ‘curled up and hiding out’. They are less likely to leave the organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Proposed Engagement Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crash and Burn</td>
<td>Medium to high contribution but low satisfaction. These employees are top producers but getting bitter due to personal dissatisfaction. They are sometimes quite vocal about their dissent with colleagues or even top management. They may leave, but may stop working hard.</td>
<td>They need coaching and support. Recognition of their efforts can be instrumental in changing their attitude.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Disengaged</td>
<td>Low to medium contribution and satisfaction. Mostly cynical about any organizational initiative or communication. They tend to spread their negativity. However they did not start out at this level but ended up being the most disconnected from organizational priorities as they feel that they did not get want they wanted from work.</td>
<td>They need to be very clearly told about expectations and be given an opportunity to meet. If they still fail to respond appropriately their exit from the organization will have to be planned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Employee Engagement Equation in India, Blessing White and HR Anexi, 2008

1.6 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The higher education system in India has grown remarkably, particularly in the post-independence era. At the time of independence in 1947, there were 19 universities and several hundred affiliated colleges (CABE, 2005). According to the Ministry of HRD website, in the year 2014 India had 48,828 higher education institutions consisting of 712 Universities, 36671 colleges and 11445 stand alone institutions. There are 12,09,211 teachers employed in universities and colleges. Such statistics make it one of the largest system of its kind in the world with huge potential for further development. It is targeted that by 2022, India will have 500
million skilled workers. There is an important requirement to train fresh graduates in new skills for ensuring their employability. In the period April 2000 to January 2015, the total amount of foreign direct investments (FDI) inflow into the education sector in India was US$ 1,071.5 million, according to data released by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP). The corporate sector has made major investments in the education and training sector. There are plans to set up 2500 multi-skilling institutions in public private partnership mode. By 2022, India will have to develop the skills of 120 million people in non-farm sectors. The highest requirement of skilled labour is expected to come from the construction sector (31 million), followed by retail (17 million) and logistics (12 million). The Government of India is opening of IITs and IIMs in new locations. With greater popularity of online mode of education adopted by several higher education institutions, this sector is all set for some major changes and developments in the coming years. Appropriate and timely steps in this direction will enable India to take true advantage of its demographic dividend.

According to a report titled, ‘Understanding India - The Future of Higher Education and Opportunities for International Cooperation’ published by the British Council in 2014, despite of significant progress over the last ten years, the system is facing certain challenges:

**The demand-supply gap :** The rate of enrolment in higher education in India at 21.1% is lower than the global average of 26% and is again low as compared to China at 26% and Brazil at 36%. Thus there is a huge demand for higher education which is unmet at the moment. By 2030, The Government of India aims at increasing the gross enrolment to 30% which means that India requires a huge increase in the number of Higher Education Institutions.

**Low quality of teaching and learning :** Many of the educational institutions are suffering from a serious shortage of faculty, outdated curriculum, rigid pedagogy, poor quality teaching, separation of teaching and research, lack of quality assurance and poor accountability.

**Research capacity constraints :** India does not have enough high quality researchers, Ph.D enrolment is very low, opportunities for interdisciplinary research are limited and not properly utilized due to low industry engagement in higher education and on the whole a weak ecosystem for innovation.
Uneven growth and access to opportunity: The access to education is not equitable across the social strata and geographic divisions. Hence the human resource development is quite uneven.

The above constraints are reflected in the three central pillars of the government’s plans for education namely expansion, equity and excellence. The system has many issues of concern at present, of which quality of higher education is a major one. The Higher Education Institutions including the universities and colleges envision to produce an intelligent human resource pool, by making innovations in teaching, research and extension activities. Pandit (2010) expressed conviction in the opinion of Nobel laureate Hans Krebs that it is only a great teacher who can produce a great student. The teacher’s role as a mentor who enthuses a student to think beyond the boundaries of the given text is crucial in shaping the future of education. He further quoted Tim Hunt, ‘Knowing how we know is at least as important, for a real scientist, as what is known’. This calls for a fresh approach to tertiary education, in which the teacher assumes the pivotal role. Pandit (2010) expressed his concern that it is worrying to be struggling with teacher absenteeism and disinterest in colleges and universities. It needs to be immediately reversed with encouraging statistics of teachers’ work engagement in order to achieve the vision of becoming a developed society. This concern is shared by the academicians leading Indian Universities as none of Indian Universities could feature in the list of world’s top 200 Universities as per QS World University rankings for the year 2014-15. According to a study titled, Skilling India: Empowering Indian Youth through World Class Education conducted by the Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM, 2014), Indians spend about $6-7 billion per annum in sending their children abroad for higher education. This is not just the case of the elite population but also the middle class families who spend their life time savings for educating their children abroad. As per the study, more than 2.9 lakh Indians went abroad in 2013 and the count shot up to 6.8 lakh in 2014. One of the major reasons cited for this trend was the lack of quality of education in India. Hence, there is a concern that the country is losing foreign exchange and revenue due to the large exodus of students. If these students could got an opportunity to obtain equivalent quality education in India, they might have stayed back. Thus, the quality of tertiary education in India definitely needs to be increased to match global standards.
Being a service, the quality of education is anchored to its service provider.

In the higher education sector, the massive exodus of India’s best and brightest science and engineering students to the seemingly greener pastures calls for enthusiasm of academicians to mend the flaws in the prevailing education system. Yadav and Yadav (2010) emphasized upon the role of universities in national development by highlighting the facts that the celebrated Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) graduates alone originated technologies that have generated worldwide revenues nearing US$ 2 trillion. United States houses half of the top 20 universities in engineering and technology, which leaves no doubt regarding why the country dominates the global order. For India to attain this position, it is imperative to reconstitute India’s innovation systems on the lines prescribed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who sowed the seeds of the Indian Institutes of Technology (Yadav and Yadav, 2010). Department of Higher Education, Ministry of HRD, Government of India launched Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS), in 2013 with the aim of providing strategic funding to eligible state higher educational institutions. The funding to states would be based on a critical appraisal of State Higher Education Plans, as to how do they address issues of equity, access and excellence in higher education. Juluri (2014) commended Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s idea of investing in making good teachers expressed in his Teacher’s Day address on September 5, 2014. He emphasized on making the right social investment, to make India a nation of teachers with a global presence, a “Jagat Guru”, so to speak. In order to achieve this vision every higher education institution needs to emulate the world’s most celebrated universities. One of the key factors driving the quality of education is teacher’s engagement in their work. It highlights the vital need for investigation of work engagement of teachers or faculty members in the higher education sector. Hence, there is a strong rationale for empirical studies on work engagement of faculty members in the higher education sector, so as to understand the dynamics of this vital phenomena and measures for enhancing it. As Barkhuizen and Rothmann (2006) on the basis of their study of academic staff in South African Higher Education Institutions, aptly concluded that higher education institutions should measure the engagement of their academic staff and provide feedback to the individuals. There should be interventions to promote work engagement of academic staff at all levels.
1.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter introduces the concept of employee work engagement and its significance in the contemporary work arena. It throws light on its evolution, definitions, theoretical frameworks, classification of employees according to engagement and finally the rationale and significance of the study.

With the onset of 21st century, the paradigm shift in psychological contract between the employer and the employee has been examined. In this light, the need to take special measures for work engagement of the 21st century employees has been brought out. The characteristics of engaged and disengaged employees have been identified. The evolution of the construct has been traced from 1990s to 2015. The relevance of work engagement has been brought out in the context of globalization giving rise to boundary less organizations. Success of global workforce is keyed in their capacity to engage physically, mentally and emotionally in their work roles. The various definitions of employee work engagement proposed by academic authors and authors from consulting firms have been given. Four theoretical frameworks for the construct have been explained in this chapter. These are (1) The Needs – Satisfying Approach (2) Job Demands and Resources Model (3) The Affective Shift Model (4) Social Exchange Theory. The classification of employees into the ‘engaged’, ‘not-engaged’ and ‘disengaged’ as conceived by Gallup (2006) has been explained. Another interesting and relevant classification cited is by Blessing White and HR Annexi (2008) which classifies employees into 5 categories namely the ‘engaged’, ‘almost engaged’, ‘honeymooners and hamsters’, ‘crash and burn’ and ‘the disengaged’ has been reported along with the proposed engagement strategy for each segment.

Towards its culmination, this chapter builds a rationale for the study. It compares the current size of Indian Higher Education Sector with scenario at the time of independence. The total Foreign Direct Investment into education sector from 2000 to 2015 has been mentioned and potential for future growth has been discussed. Government of India’s steps for addressing issues of equity, access and excellence in higher education like the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), launched in 2013 have been mentioned. Despite its size and growth potential, the challenges faced by Indian higher education sector have been
discussed. A major one being the massive exodus of India’s best and brightest students to the seemingly greener pastures costing India a revenue loss of $6-7 billion per annum according to ASSOCHAM (2014). This calls for enthusiasm of academicians to mend the flaws in the prevailing education system. Given the issue of below expected quality of teaching and learning, lack of quality assurance and poor accountability of teaching staff in higher education institutions, it is vital to investigate the status of work engagement amongst faculty members, explore the factors associated with it and identify measures for its enhancement. The significance of a study on employee work engagement of teachers in the higher education sector can be estimated from Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s idea of making the right social investment in making India a nation of teachers with a global presence, a “Jagat Guru”. Thus, a strong rationale was found for an empirical study on work engagement of faculty members in the higher education sector, so as to understand the dynamics of this vital phenomena and measures for enhancing it.

**********