CHAPTER IX
SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS
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9.1 SUMMARY

The success of an organization depends on the decisions its employees make and the behaviours in which they engage. Therefore, appropriate HR systems and policies for attracting, motivating and retaining the organization’s human resources is regarded as a critical function that will provide a sustainable competitive advantage for an organization.

Human resource refers to the productive power of the people who work in an organization. The term seeks to communicate the belief that employees of an organization are not just people, but valuable resources that help an organization to achieve its stated objectives. According to Leon C. Magginson, the term ‘human resources’ refers to “the total knowledge, skills, creative abilities, talents and aptitudes of an organization’s workforce, as well as the values, attitudes and beliefs of the individuals involved”. The commitment, involvement and flexibility of the workforce are, therefore, increasingly recognized as a key to an organization’s success and growth. Throughout the 20th century and in the beginning of 21st century, new models and theories of organization and management have emerged which reflect the accelerated pace of change in the business environment, the diversity and expectations of workers and increasing sophistication of work psychology.

Today, business climate has become more complex, more volatile and more inter-connected than ever before. In the face of significant business challenges such as global competition, emerging skill shortages and the need for product and process innovation, companies are looking for novel ways to enhance workforce effectiveness through utilization of their innate potential. People are more than ever a source of critical skill and knowledge as well as creativity and innovative thinking. They want to invest their skills and
knowledge on behalf of the organization provided the organization can fully tap that source and achieve the results that come through full engagement and involvement of the workforce.

9.1.1 Concept of Employee Engagement

The aforesaid scenario paved the way for severe competition for talent in the corporate world. Consequently, employee attrition has become very common and employee retention has become a challenge. As committed and fully involved human resource form the backbone of any organization, a novel concept has emerged internationally viz., Employee Engagement which is generally understood as the level of commitment and involvement an employee has towards his/her organization and its values. ‘Engaged employees’ are those who are fully involved in and enthusiastic about their work, and thus will act in a way that further their organization’s interests.

Notwithstanding the fact that the concept of employee engagement has been in vogue for about two decades, relatively little research has been done in academic circles. Employee engagement has a very wide scope such that there are potentiality thousands of different individual actions, attitudes, and processes that affect engagement.

9.1.2 Importance of Employee Engagement and Involvement

In a world that is changing both in terms of the nature of work and the diversity of the workforce, engaged employees may be the key to competitive advantage. Employee engagement is a consistent predictor of individual performance and organizational results. The greater the level of an employee’s engagement and involvement, the more likely the employee will go above and beyond the minimum required and expends discretionary effort to provide excellent performance when employees work in an environment in which they can focus their attention on their best, organizations experience
higher levels of productivity and profitability. Engaged employees look for better ways to do their work, spend less time in wasteful activities, and make effective use of resources. As a result, companies deliver better products or services and have more resources left to invest in further improvements. Finally, higher employee engagement translates into higher and faster revenue growth because engaged employee are more innovative and place more emphasis on meeting customer needs.

9.1.3 Models of Employee Engagement

Various models of employee engagement have become popular which have considerable variations in the variables. The CIPD (2006) Employee Engagement model is an important one. Further, Robinson et. al. (2004) model of the drivers of employee engagement and Penna (2007) model of hierarchy of engagement are also important models. In addition, Schmidt (2004) model of organizational dynamics in the public sector, RBC’s new model of employee communication, Heintzman and Marson’s (2006) public sector value chain etc., are among the worthy contributions to the literatures.

The present study followed Robinson et. al. (2004) model of the drivers of employee engagement and carried out the analysis on the basis of the perceptions of the respondents against each of these drivers.

9.1.4 Drivers of Employee Engagement

While it is possible to measure engagement itself through employee surveys, this does not assist in identifying areas for improvement within organizations. There are a range of factors known as Drivers of Engagement that contribute to increase overall engagement and involvement. By managing the drivers, an organization can effectively manage engagement levels of its employees. Career advancement and improvement opportunities, employee clarity of job expectations, quality of working relationships, supervision and support, job
involvement, teamwork/collaboration, empowerment, job satisfaction, quality of leadership, etc., are generally some of the popular drivers that are used to assess engagement and involvement levels in an organization.

After reviewing the literature on employee engagement and also based on the results of the pilot study, the following drivers have been identified by the researcher to assess the engagement levels of the employees of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. Although engagement levels differ from industry to industry and also from organization to organization, some drivers appear to be central to the concept of employee engagement.

9.2 NEED FOR THE STUDY

In recent years, there has been a great deal of interest in ‘Employee Engagement’. This is because many have claimed that employee engagement predicts employee outcomes such as organizational success and financial performance. Similarly, employee ‘disengagement’ will affect the performance of the organization, its productivity and profitability.

Unfortunately, much of what has been written about employee engagement comes from the practitioner literature and consulting firms. There is a surprising dearth of academic research on employee engagement in the literature. Moreover, the review of literature clearly highlighted the fact that most of the studies are conducted abroad and very few doctoral research studies are available focusing on the Indian business environment in general and public sector in particular.

Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, a ‘Navaratna’ company, a colossal integrated steel plant in public sector located in the port-city of Visakhapatnam in the state of Andhra Pradesh in India. Visakhapatnam is known as the ‘City of Destiny’ and also one of the preferred destinations for investment in India, has been selected for the present study.
Steel is indispensable to modern civilization. It is the backbone of all industrial and commercial activities. The iron and steel sector incorporates the characteristics of leading industry in the country’s economy and in the process of industrialization. The success in steel industry depends on its technology and the people. The commitment and involvement of employees contributes a great deal for success of a steel plant.

There is a dearth of reported research on employee engagement and involvement in a large business enterprise in the State of Andhra Pradesh, although such businesses from the backbone of the economy of the State. Thus, there is a research gap and felt-need to study the levels of employee engagement and involvement among different categories of employees and analyze the drivers of engagement to suggest appropriate measures for the successful operation of the ‘Navaratna’ company.

9.3 OBJECTIVES

The following are the specific objectives set for the study:

1. To examine the interface of respondents’ demographic variables (age, qualifications, service, etc.) and employee engagement in the Steel Plant.

2. To know the impact of the various drivers of employee engagement on employee engagement in the Steel Plant

3. To assess the difference in the levels of employee engagement among Executives, Supervisors and Workers of the Steel Plant using discriminate analysis specifically ad hoc Tukey analysis.

4. To identify the most influencing drivers in terms of their influence on the employee engagement in the Steel Plant by factorizing the drivers.

5. To offer appropriate suggestions wherever necessary, to improve the levels of employee engagement in the organization.
9.4 HYPOTHESES

Based on the empirical studies reviewed in the previous chapter, the following null hypotheses are formulated to study employee engagement and involvement in the Steel Plant.

Hypothesis-(H$_1$) : Demographic-variables such as income, experience and marital status have no significant impact on engagement levels of employees of the Steel Plant.

Hypothesis-(H$_2$) : Drivers of engagement such as nature of job, work environment, opportunities for growth and development, avenues for learning at work, etc., have no significant relationship with employee engagement in the Steel Plant.

Hypothesis-(H$_3$) : There is no significant difference in the employee engagement levels among Executives, Supervisors and Workers in the Steel Plant.

9.5 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

In general terms, the design of the study can be classified as descriptive research design. Descriptive studies can involve a one-time interaction with groups of people (cross-sectional study) or a study might follow individuals overtime. The present study has been carried out focusing on the Executives, Supervisors and Workers working in various departments of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, which is one of the largest steel plants in public sector located in Visakhapatnam. The study is based on both primary data and secondary data.
9.5.1 Sources of Primary Data

*Primary Data:* The primary data was collected by interview method through a structured schedule after necessary pilot study. Careful consideration was given to the wording of each question in relation to its development and appropriateness. The interview schedule contains 225 questions (Appendix-1). In addition to this, informal discussions were held with knowledgeable persons in the field, viz., functional directors, General Managers and other experts in respective functional areas of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant.

*Secondary Data:* The study is also based on the secondary data obtained from different sources. For analytical purpose, both official sources of data from the organization and various other databases are used. Secondary data in respect of HR wing of the company. Reports of SAIL and RINL and various journals both in hard and soft form are taken as the source of data for preparation of the research report. In addition, desk research undertaken at the libraries of GITAM University, Visakhapatnam, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, Osmania University, Hyderabad, Indian School of Business, Hyderabad and Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI), Hyderabad, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad were also referred to.

9.5.2 Sample Design

The respondents have been selected using Simple Random Sampling Technique. At present, there are 18,371 employees working in Visakhapatnam Steel Plant out of which 5,263 are Executives, 4,541 are Supervisors and 8,567 are workers. For the purpose of the present study, around 3 per cent of the Executives (150), about 4 per cent of the Supervisors (150) and nearly 2 per cent of the workers population (150) has been taken as sample for the study. Thus, the total size of the sample comes to 450.
9.5.3 Questionnaire

A Questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire is based on fifteen drivers of Employee Engagement, viz.

1. Nature of job
2. Supervision and support
3. Work-life balance
4. Working environment
5. Opportunities for growth and development
6. Job involvement
7. Working relations
8. Teamwork/collaboration
9. Empowerment
10. Recognition and rewards
11. Opportunities for learning at work
12. Health, safety and welfare
13. Job satisfaction
14. Trust and respect
15. Quality of leadership

These drivers of employee engagement and involvement have been selected after conducting exhaustive review of literature and different EE models in vogue.

9.5.4 Analysis of Data

For analysis of data, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) has been used. The 5-point Likert scale has been used and the mean scores arrived at for each Driver have been utilized to assess the levels of Employee Engagement at Executive, Supervisory and Worker levels across the 15 drivers of Engagement. The statistical tool of Factor Analysis has been used to remove redundancy or duplication from a set of correlated variables. With the help of other statistical tools such as Cronbach’s Alpha, KMO and Bartlett’s Test, Rotated Component Matrix and Correlation analysis, the validity and reliability of the factors of each driver, has been determined so that they reflect the employee engagement levels in the Steel Plant. Later, Chi square test statistics are used to test the dependence of the employee engagement levels on income, experience and marital status. Also, the
statistical method of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) has been used to test the differences in engagement levels among Executives, Supervisors and Workers. In addition, Tukey HSD analysis was also undertaken to know the direction of the differences as the ANOVA results showed significant differences in all the 15 drivers tested.

9.5.5 Scoring Methodology

To measure the extent of Employee Engagement and Involvement, 15 questions are given under each driver. This allows us to determine to what extent the different categories of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant employees is ‘Highly engaged’, ‘Partly Engaged’ or ‘Disengaged’.

To assess the levels of Employee Engagement and Involvement, a 5-point Scale has been used in the following manner: Strongly Disagree-1, Disagree-2, Either Agree/Nor Disagree-3, Agree-4 and Strongly agree-5.

Based on the total scores obtained by the respondents, employees who scored 900 points and above are categorized as ‘highly engaged’, employees who secured a total score of 675 but below 900 are categorized as ‘partly engaged’ and employees who secured a score of less than 675 are categorized as ‘disengaged’.

9.5.6 Presentation of the Study

The study has been presented in nine chapters. Chapter-I deals with Introduction, Chapter-II presents Review of Literature, Chapter-III focuses on the need for the study, specific objectives, hypothesis, research methodology, sampling and limitations. Chapter-IV is devoted to an overview of the steel industry and profile of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, Chapter-V delineates the HR Policy and Practices of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, Chapter-VI presents an analysis of demographic profile and engagement levels of employees, Chapter-VII presents an analysis of drivers of engagement followed by factor analysis; Chapter-VIII presents overall employee engagement levels of
Executives, Supervisors and Workers followed by ANOVA and Tukey HSD analysis and Chapter-IX deals with summary and suggestions.

9.6 MAJOR FINDINGS

This study confirms some positive influences of 15 dimensions relating to nature of job, working environment, trust and respect, collaboration and teamwork, etc., on employee engagement. Additionally, this study is an important bridge between the drivers of engagement and employee engagement, because many previous studies mostly link employee engagement to certain positive outcomes related to customers or financial profits.

A unique finding that has not been found in any previous research is that perceived empowerment and working environment adversely affects employee engagement directly and indirectly via the mediation of organizational trust and respect. The findings of this study make a unique contribution to the literature by showing a new direction for further research to explore more potential mediators (such as work-life balance, working relations, recognition and rewards, etc.) to better understand their impacts on employee engagement.

The present study identifies the drivers of engagement through the eyes of employees. It measures employees’ rational, emotional and motivational commitment to their jobs and the organization to calculate their level of engagement and better understand how engagement affects behavior and performance. This study has also explored employees’ views about a broad array of workplace factors, including nature of work, supervision and support, empowerment, involvement, communication and various employee-related constructs.

One of the objectives of the study is to examine the interface of respondents’ demographic variables (age, qualifications, service, etc.) and employee
engagement in the Steel Plant. The data relating to the demographic variables has been collected and analyzed in Chapter-VI. Another objective is to know the impact of various drivers on employee engagement and involvement in the Steel Plant and the influence of important drivers on employee engagement has been presented and analyzed with statistical tools in Chapter-VII. Similarly, the differences in the levels of employee engagement among Executives, Supervisors and Workers of the Steel Plant has been examined by using discriminate analysis especially adhoc Tukey analysis and presented in Chapter-VIII. Chapter-IX presents the summary of the whole study focusing on major findings and suggestions together with managerial implications and scope for future study. The major findings of the study are summarized below:

1. The study reveals that of the total sample (n=450), 48.68 per cent of the respondents of the Steel Plant are highly engaged while 27.38 per cent are partly engaged and 23.94 per cent are disengaged. An insight into the data further reveals that about two-thirds of the Executives (65.14 per cent), nearly two-thirds of Supervisors (62.91 per cent) and one-sixth of Workers (18 per cent) are ‘highly engaged’, whereas one-fifth of the Executives (20.11 per cent), one-fourth of the Supervisors (25.50 per cent) and more than one-third of the Workers (36.52 per cent) are ‘partly engaged’.

2. It is interesting to note that the share of disengaged employees, which is supposed to be very insignificant, is as much as 23.94 per cent of the total workforce, which indicates that nearly one-fourth of the employees of the Steel Plant are disengaged. The study reveals that 14.75 per cent of the Executives, 11.59 per cent of the Supervisors and 45.48 per cent of the Workers are ‘disengaged’. When it comes to Workers category, the percentage of disengaged Workers presents a negative picture as nearly 50 per cent of Workers are disengaged which needs to be addressed by the organization on a priority basis. Based on the analysis
of percentages also, there is wide variation among different categories of employees of the Steel Plant.

3. The mean scores of the respondents specific to the 15 select drivers of employee engagement on a five point Likert scale reveal that highest score has been registered by driver No. 8 i.e. Team Work/Collaboration (3.36 out of 5) followed by driver No.1 i.e. Nature of Job (3.35 out of 5), driver No. 11 i.e. Opportunities for Learning at Work (3.34 out of 5), driver No. 15 i.e. Quality of Leadership (3.33 out of 5) and driver No. 3 i.e. Work Life Balance (3.31 out of 5). The respondents seem to have a highly positive opinion about these drivers.

4. The study further reveals that the lowest score has been registered by driver No. 4 i.e. Working Environment (3.18 out of 5) followed by driver No. 9 i.e. Empowerment (3.20 out of 5), driver No.7 i.e. Working Relations (3.20 out of 5) and driver No.10 i.e. Recognition and Rewards (3.20 out of 5). The respondents seem to have very poor opinion about these drivers.

5. The above analysis shows that though the employees working in the Steel Plant are relatively satisfied with team work/collaboration, nature of job, opportunities for learning at work, quality of leadership and work-life balance, yet they are not that satisfied with working environment, empowerment, working relations and recognition and rewards. The organization may do well to study the reasons for the dissatisfaction of the workforce in respect of working environment, empowerment, etc., and ascertain their expectations in the aforesaid drivers for improvement.

6. The mean based analysis of individual drivers clearly brings out the areas that need improvement to enhance employee engagement levels in the Steel Plant. The analysis of driver of nature of job with an average mean score of 3.35 shows that the employees are well satisfied with the nature of job and the availability of required support systems for work.
The Steel Plant is seen to be in a positive light as the employees are significantly satisfied with the job and the support systems provided for effective and efficient fulfillment of the job. The factor analysis identified superior support, positive work environment, role satisfaction and role perception as the major factors of this driver. All these factors are vital for enhancing employee engagement. This driver does not display high internal correlation but can be used as an indicator to understand the need for superior support for positive work environment.

7. The mean based analysis of the driver of supervision and support has an average mean score of 3.26 which very clearly indicates that the relations between the supervisors and the workers in the organization on the whole are positive. The Steel Plant has been successful in providing interpersonal communication friendly environment. The positive response to areas like approachability and access to reach out to the boss shows that despite being a public sector the hierarchical blocks have been avoided and a proactive environment has been established. The factor analysis identifies superiors’ motivation, supervisor coaching and supervisor support vital for employee engagement. These are required by an employee for effective performance in his job and are considered. All these factors are related to supervisory support for the employees.

8. As regards work-life balance, which is a key driver of employee engagement, the responses show a positive pattern with an average score of 3.31. The factor analysis identified work-home interface, home support, spouse support, and organizational support as the major factors of this driver. The correlation analysis in relation to this driver shows a combination of positive and negative correlations. And a specific negative trend is identified in relation to support systems like crèche and day care. The Steel Plant being a public sector organization need to provide more non-statutory welfare measures to create a healthy work
life balance and thereby increase the engagement levels in the organization.

9. The area of working environment has an overall score of 3.18. It is found that the low scores for area of work allotment is a cause of concern. Factors identified are positive work environment, positive work relations and positive superior relations. Correlation analysis undertaken is comparatively positive and shows employee awareness of the various activities undertaken in the department.

10. The driver of opportunities for growth and development has an overall mean score of 3.28. Employee development and employee engagement may be said to be directly proportional to each other. The responses are primarily positive suggesting employee satisfaction with the career growth and employee development systems of the Steel Plant. Factors identified are career growth, organizational career development systems and career policy. The driver shows comparatively high association of different items used to study employee opinion on opportunities for growth and development and its impact on employee engagement. Thus, the Steel Plant can use this driver to hone its career development policy further and gain higher employee engagement.

11. The driver of job involvement with an average mean score of 3.25 shows strong relationship with employee engagement. But there is a non-committal response to items like holding of meetings in the departments to review progress, measures to be taken to achieve targets, opportunity to solve work related problems and provision of technical support at work place. The factors identified are employee participation, meetings, employee autonomy, knowledge support and training support. The above analysis shows that these areas require focused attention of the Steel Plant.
12. The driver of working relations has an average mean score of 3.20. It is found that there is good teamwork and collaboration among employees in the organization. The driver after having been factorised through EFA has been condensed to three identified components called Supportive work environment, Gender Positive environment and superior equitable treatment. The correlation analysis indicates that the organization has helped in developing healthy and positive relations. Working relations form the crux of work environment in any organization and are heavily dependent upon the nature of relations between the employees and supervisors in an organization. It is, therefore, suggested that the Steel Plant may pay special attention to this area and improve working relations in the organization.

13. The driver of team work/collaboration has an average mean score of 3.36, which is the highest mean score obtained by any driver. The high mean score very clearly indicates that there is good teamwork and collaboration among employees in the organization. The components identified for the driver through factor analysis are Team work, work ready training and work efficacy. A deeper insight into the correlation analysis suggests that the organization has been successful in creating good confidence levels in the employees by ensuring competent systems.

14. The driver of empowerment has an average mean score of 3.20. Low mean scores are observed in alignment of personal beliefs with the organizational goals (2.89) and importance of tasks of employees to the department (2.93). The driver has been factorised into four components called positive work systems, decision making, employee autonomy and organizational leadership. The correlation analysis for the driver shows the existence of an above average strength of association for all the items. driver holds a high influence over the employee engagement. The above analysis shows that the organization should take appropriate
measures to improve the feeling of empowerment among employees by delegating powers.

15. The driver of recognition and rewards has a mean score of 3.20. The mean scores as displayed for the various items in the driver show that the employees on an average are satisfied with the recognition and rewards in the organization. The driver identified by components called career development of employee, organizational career development systems and rewards and motivation. Public recognition of employees and their achievements plays a major role in motivating employees towards higher levels of engagement. As a part of this, the Steel Plant may take initiatives to felicitate outstanding performers and reward them adequately by organizing functions on special occasions.

16. The driver of opportunities for learning at work has a good average mean score of 3.34. The driver has gained positive response from the respondents of all cadres. The components factorized are labeled as organizational training effort, training opportunity, organization’s knowledge orientation and training facility. The correlation analysis for this driver shows some negative responses regarding the training department and its training as an important activity to be passed to the employees.

17. The driver of health, safety and welfare has also obtained a good mean score of 3.24. The driver has gained positive response from the respondents of all cadres. The driver has been factorised into four components named as employee maintenance factors, safety measures, safety assurance systems and safety management. The correlation analysis shows a relatively positive association between the various items of the driver.

18. The weighted average score of job satisfaction is 3.25. This shows that the respondents are fairly satisfied with their jobs. A comparatively higher level of satisfaction is found in relation to job security in the organization,
working with colleagues, appreciation of the work done by employees, reasonably fair allocation of work by the supervisor, clarity about the goals and tasks given to the employees and general satisfaction about the job. This indicates a healthy employee engagement environment. The driver was categorized as three components namely work satisfaction, organizational commitment and pride in work. The correlation analysis shows strong association between work accomplishment and satisfaction with work.

19. The driver of trust and respect has an average mean score of 3.24. The mean scores very clearly indicate that the employees are trusted and respected in a fair and equitable manner. Findings indicate that top management and senior managers of the organization provide an appropriate leadership which creates a positive work environment that leads to productive performance. The driver divided into three components which have been duly named as trust in employee, organizational citizenship and organizational loyalty. The correlation analysis of the retained items shows strong correlation between employee perceptions of value at work.

20. The driver of quality of leadership has an average mean score of 3.33. The driver has been factorized to compress into three components called Communication, support and involvement have been identified as the primary components that cause employee engagement. The correlation analysis is relatively positive.

21. In addition to the study of mean scores of the drivers with the help of factor analysis and correlation analysis, the researcher has been able to use the statistical tools of Reliability Statistics, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). As may be seen from the reliability statistics, the Cronbach’s Alpha has been greater than 0.6 for almost all drivers which shows internal consistency for majority of items in each driver. Similarly, as may be seen from the
sample adequacy statistics, for almost all the drivers, sampling adequacy is significant as indicated by Bartlett’s test of sphericity. In respect of all drivers, factors were identified based on the items grouped as a result of the factor analysis and labeled accordingly. All the factors have good loadings and, therefore, have been taken as valid factors to reflect the employee engagement environment in the organization. Hence, the null Hypothesis ($H_2$) is rejected and the alternative is accepted. The Steel Plant, therefore, needs to focus more on the drivers that need to be further improved to enhance the levels of employee engagement in the organization.

22. The analysis of engagement and involvement levels of the respondents based on their demographic variables reveals that women employees are more engaged than their “men” counterparts. The scenario can be attributed to many reasons but the most influencing reason being that women in fact are more satisfied with their jobs and are, therefore, more engaged and involved in their jobs. This is due to the possibility that men and women may use different criteria to assess their work. It is revealed in the interactions with the senior managers of the Steel Plant that women employees are more satisfied with intrinsic factors like support and supervision, good relations this superiors and positive working environment whereas male employees are more satisfied with extrinsic rewards like pay, facilities, benefits, etc.

23. A majority of respondents of the Steel Plant, i.e. nearly 72 per cent are in the age group of 25-45 years. It is inferred that this group are more engaged as compared to other groups. This finding is in conformity with earlier studies which clearly established that new entrants are more engaged than the rest of the workforce. Moreover, the disengagement levels in this particular age group are very low. An interaction with the senior officers of the Steel Plant reveals that those who have just joined have reasonably better engagement levels. Quite interestingly, those who are in the last lap of their career with more than 20 years service
have low engagement levels. This scenario can be attributed to the fact that the youngsters having joined the organization with great enthusiasm and vigour and also having contributed their best in the initial years, are observed to be highly motivated particularly in respect of recognition and rewards. However, during interaction of the researcher with this group revealed that they later get disenchanted with their jobs, and hence the drastic fall in the engagement levels in later age-groups.

24. Family type has an undeniable impact on engagement and involvement levels of employees as family structure affects work life balance as it may increase the responsibilities of the employees, especially those of the working women. On the other hand, family types may also provide support systems to the employees. It is found that nearly 75 per cent of the total respondents come from nuclear families while the remaining 25 per cent are from joint families. It is generally believed that joint families provide the necessary family support to the employees while nuclear families allow them more freedom in managing the family affairs but require the employees to search for alternate support systems.

25. The demographic variable of income is found to be highly independent of all the drivers of employee engagement. Income invariably is considered as an important influencing variable leading to certain dependant results. But in this case income is seen as independent with a p value of 0.00 indicating no impact whatsoever on the drivers of employee engagement and therefore on the employee engagement as a whole. This may be due to the fact that the VSP being a public sector pays highly competitive wages and salaries and also makes the revisions as per the pay commissions without delay. The trend here seems to suggest that the employees are comparatively happy and satisfied with the pay structure and wages and salaries policy of the steel plant.
26. In comparison, it is found that the demographic variables of experience and marital status are highly related to the various drivers of employee engagement except in few cases. The p values of 0.035 and 0.00 respectively showed that the variable of experience has no relation to employee involvement and opportunities of learning. This may suggest that without any reference to experience the employees are involved in learning and engaged within their jobs.

27. Similarly, in respect of the variable of marital status the null Hypothesis \( (H_1) \) stands rejected in all the drivers of employee engagement except the drivers of opportunities of growth and development and trust and respect with p values of 0.017 and 0.05 respectively. These values show that the variable of marital status has no relation whatsoever with opportunities of growth and development and trust. This may suggest that employees irrespective of their marital status aim for opportunities of growth and development and trust within the organization and it’s the duty of an organization to provide them to keep the employee highly engaged. In view of the above, the null Hypothesis \( (H_1) \) is accepted in respect of the dependence of employee engagement levels on income only and rejected in respect of experience and marital status.

28. It is found that most of the employees are in company quarters or rehabilitation colonies around the plant, and only a few percentage of employees come from the city in contract buses. Most of the employees are relieved from tension on account of travel for long distances, which also affects employee engagement and involvement levels in the Steel Plant.

29. The statistical analysis of the drivers of engagement has shown that nature of job, work environment, opportunities for growth and development, avenues for learning at work, and such other drivers have significant relationship with employee engagement and involvement in the Steel Plant. Further, the statistical analysis has shown that there is
significant difference in the employee engagement and involvement levels among Executives, Supervisors and Workers in the Steel Plant. Hence, the null Hypothesis ($H_3$) is rejected and the alternative is accepted as there is significant variation in involvement and engagement levels of Executives, Supervisors and Workers in the Steel Plant.

30. As may be seen from the findings, half of the top 15 drivers of employee engagement take shape at the organizational level, rather than at the team, department or individual level. In many respects, these factors define the battleground in today’s intensifying war for talent. This reflects the specific areas in which the organization needs to differentiate its value proposition if it has to compete for the most talented workers and future leaders.

31. The Tukey HSD analysis is made to identify the differences between the various groups to understand the results of the ANOVA analysis. The results of the Tukey analysis indicate that high level of significance exits between the responses of executives and supervisors in most of the drivers like nature if job, work life balance, job involvement, working relations and recognition and rewards. This indicates that both the Executives and Supervisors have similar opinions on these areas which have made higher impact on the employee engagement levels of the Steel Plant. However, in respect of all other drivers, Executives, Supervisors and Workers have different views on several areas which impact the employee engagement levels in the organization.

32. It is specifically found that the drivers of work environment and job satisfaction have significance in all cadres of employees. This is again indicative of the fact that strong differences of opinion exists between all the cadres with regard to these drivers. Further studies may be taken up by the Steel Plant to explore into each one of these drivers to gain complete understanding of employee response to them so as to be able to design proactive employee engagement initiatives.
9.7 SUGGESTIONS

1. As revealed by the study the employee engagement levels of the Steel Plant are to be improved further, especially among Workers. The Steel Plant authorities need to take a serious note of this important revelation and may put in all-out efforts towards enhancing employee engagement levels among all categories of employees particularly in the context of the Steel Plant achieving the prestigious ‘NAVARATNA’ status. It is evident that engagement levels across the company need to be higher to meet the future challenges of international competition and of providing excellent customer services with constrained resources. There is a need to organize a company-wide awareness campaign to expose the widest range of employees to the potential benefits of employee engagement.

2. The study revealed that majority of the employee of the Steel Plant are not satisfied with working environment, empowerment, working relations and recognition and reward schemes of the organization. As such, it is suggested that the Steel Plant may initiate suitable measures to bring about a marked improvement in the lacking areas for achieving a healthy employee engagement environment in the organization.

3. There is an imminent need for the Steel Plant to bring about a marked improvement in working environment as identified in the mean analysis so that employees feel positive emotions towards their work, find their work to be personally meaningful, consider their workload to be manageable, and have hope about the future of their work. The Steel Plant needs to customize and shape the working environment and culture to match their unique basis for competitive advantage, tangibly aligning workforce strategies with business priorities. The Steel Plant needs to design appropriate workforce strategies and allocate their finite supplies of time, management attention and financial resource to improve the working environment in the Steel Plant.
4. The Steel Plant may take appropriate measures to improve the feeling of empowerment among employees by delegating powers. It is necessary for the Steel Plant to understand the importance of empowerment in an organization and focus their attention on this driver and take concrete measures to improve the feeling of empowerment in the organization. It is necessary to understand the importance of empowerment in an organization and the Steel Plant is advised to focus their attention on this driver and strengthen participative management and decentralization of powers to improve the feeling of empowerment in the organization.

5. The drivers of trust and respect and quality of leadership also need improvement in the Steel Plant. The top management and senior managers of the organization need to provide an appropriate leadership which builds a positive work environment that leads to productive performance.

6. The study revealed that the new entrants are more engaged and their engagement levels are high, particularly among executives. It is suggested that the Steel Plant authorities may focus on the young executives who would be the pillars and future builders of the organization and provide necessary career development opportunities to them.

7. The demographic analysis shows the impact of dependents on employee engagement levels. Interaction with senior officials of the Steel Plant show lower levels of engagement when the dependents are more. It is found that employees with more dependents need to cope with the negative impact of home on work which in turn affects their engagement levels in the organization. It is, therefore, suggested that the Steel Plant may appoint experienced executives and workers who can provide emotional reprieve to the employees under stress.
8. The impact of nuclear families can also be found on engagement levels in the organization. The engagement levels of employees belonging to nuclear families are comparatively lower and employees belonging to joint families have higher engagement levels. The organization needs to focus more on the research and learning in this area and introduce measures to reduce stress of the employees belonging to nuclear families and increase engagement levels.

9. The Steel Plant must have effective and highly engaged managers in senior positions. Closing the gap between the traditional leadership model of the last century and the characteristics required for engaging leadership has implications for management selection and training as well as leadership succession and development. The Steel Plant needs to review the leadership programmes offered by HRD to ensure that managers understand the enormous positive impact they can have on employee engagement, retention and performance.

10. The Steel Plant needs to understand employees’ needs, issues and values by undertaking frequent employee engagement surveys as they do in the case of their customers. This facilitates in achieving a competitive edge in attracting, retaining and engaging employees, as well as in channeling employees’ energy and brain power most effectively for achieving organization goals.

11. It is suggested that the Steel Plant may organize informal activities like picnics, family get-togethers, and encourage employees to participate. This is helpful in creating a relaxed environment leading to better interpersonal relations at work. Sensitivity training, inter-group workshops, etc., may be undertaken to improve interpersonal relationships.

12. The employees may be liberally sponsored to HRD and training programmes organized in-house as well as outside organizations to improve their technical and professional competence. This suggestion is
primarily made to enhance the engagement levels of employees as indicated by the responses of the employees. In addition to generic management skills, HRD programmes need to be devoted to improve soft skills which are vital to effective leadership and management which lie at the heart of engagement. The soft skills include the ability to consult, engage, communicate effectively and interpersonal skills. It is vital that these soft skills are incorporated into the existing HRD programmes.

13. Giving employees the opportunity to give vent to their feelings is a key driver of employee engagement. Further, employees want to be kept informed about what exactly is happening in the organization, especially in the areas in which they are concerned. People want a sense of involvement and identification with their organizations. The Steel Plant can increase employee engagement by going beyond downward communication and ensuring that people are not just cogs in a machine and they must be treated with trust and respect as valued individuals.

14. The Steel Plant’s culture and HR practices must actively drive the employee behaviours needed to deliver on its strategy and reflect its competitive focus. The culture that the Steel Plant shapes and sustains and the investments it makes in practices and programmes to nurture that culture – need to emphasize high-performance environment and its competitive priorities. Data from our study demonstrates the power of this alignment dramatically. The implication is that the Steel Plant needs to build the “right” culture and related workplace practices. The employees need to see and applaud the effectiveness of programmes specifically designed to help them.

15. It is found that younger employees in the Steel Plant place less emphasis on senior management’s interest in them, but care a great deal about their own skill building and advancement. Such employees place more value on such elements as stretch assignments, coaching
opportunities, special skill training or a chance to participate in a high-performance team than on additional benefits or other more traditional kinds of rewards. It is suggested that the Steel Plant may design and implement special programmes for young employees to motivate them for higher levels of performance and greater engagement and involvement. The Steel Plant needs to plan for career growth of the younger executives and supervisors so as to maintain their levels of engagement and if possible enhance them.

16. Without engaged leadership, the engaged workforce is virtually impossible. Senior management and line managers need to be actively involved and committed to going the extra mile for their employees. Ultimately, engagement is a two-way process and there are no shortcuts. But the journey can be critical to overall business performance as any other sphere of corporate activity.

17. Working relations form the crux of work environment in any organization and are heavily dependent upon the nature of relations between the employees and supervisors in an organization. It is, therefore, suggested that the Steel Plant may pay special attention to this area and improve working relations in the organization.

9.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGERS

The results of this study have some practical implications for managers. In the context of this study, it would appear that the caring and concern on the part of the senior managers creates a sense of obligation on the part of employees who reciprocate with greater levels of engagement. Thus, senior managers who wish to improve employee engagement should focus on employees’ perceptions of the supervision and support they receive from their superiors. Organizational programmes that address employees’ needs and concerns (e.g. flexible work arrangements, suggestion schemes, etc.) which
demonstrate caring and support might cause employees to reciprocate with higher levels of engagement.

Secondly, an important practical implication for managers is the need to provide employees with resources and benefits that will oblige them to reciprocate in kind with higher levels engagement. An important practical implication for managers in this regard is the need for them to understand the importance of social exchange for employee engagement. In particular, Managers need to provide employees with resources and benefits that will oblige them to reciprocate in kind with higher levels of engagement. Although the results of this study highlight the importance of job characteristics and social support, there might be other factors that are more important for different employees. Thus, a “one size fits all” approach to employee engagement might not be the most effective. Managers should find out what resources and benefits are most desired by employees and most likely to create a sense of obligation that is returned with greater levels of engagement.

Thirdly, managers should understand that employee engagement is a long-term and on-going process that requires continued efforts over a period of time to generate a state of reciprocal interdependence. In addition, employee engagement needs to be viewed as a broad organizational strategy that involves all levels of employees and a series of actions and steps that require the input and involvement of all organizational members.

Last but not the least, the Steel Plant needs to realize that engaged workers are not born – they are made. The senior managers are uniquely positioned to make a significant difference in the employee’s discretionary effort. The vast majority of employees of the Steel Plant, especially Workers, are looking to work with maximum engagement levels. The managers of the Steel Plant should take maximum advantage of this attitude, and take concrete steps to enhance engagement levels in the organization, especially among the Workers.
9.9 SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study mainly aims at assessing the employee engagement levels of managers, supervisors and workers based on select 15 drivers in a public sector organization in the steel industry. The results of this study suggest that employee engagement is a meaningful concept that is worthy of future research. There is scope for further research in several areas. One area would be to investigate other potential drivers of job and organizational engagement. The present study included a number of factors associated with Kahn’s (1990), Maslach et al’s (2001) and a few related engagement models. However, there are other models and variables that might also be important for employee engagement. For example, such variables as flexible work arrangements, incentive and compensation plans, etc., might also be important drivers for engagement that need to be assessed.

Future research might also consider individual difference variables that might predict employee engagement. Several personality variables including hardiness, self-esteem, and locus of control are related to burnout and might also be important for engagement (Maslach et al., 2001). Self-efficacy has also been recognized as an important factor in burnout and engagement (Maslach et al., 2001). There is also some evidence that individuals with a strong exchange ideology are more likely to feel obliged to reciprocate a benefit (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Thus, the relationship between various antecedents and engagement might be stronger for individuals with a strong exchange ideology. Future research might test the moderating effects of exchange ideology for the relationship between antecedents and engagement.
Further, job design interventions that provide employees with more autonomy and variety in their work as well as career management interventions might also be effective. This is likely to be a fruitful area for future research given the increasing interest on the part of organizations to improve employee engagement and address the so-called “engagement-gap”.

A further consideration is that employee surveys should be supported by interviews and contextual analysis in order to gain a more holistic view on engagement and how it is being managed within different organizational settings. This will be an interesting area for future research.