CHAPTER 4

HR Benchmarking Models
### CHAPTER 4

**HR Benchmarking Models**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.1</th>
<th>PricewaterhouseCoopers</th>
<th>133</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>MIT</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Saratoga Institute Workforce Diagnostic System</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>ASDU, Queensland University</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>ASTD</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>CUPA- HR</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>HR Benchmarker</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>BNA and SHRM</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>HRM consultancy Limited</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>IPMA - HR</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>HRM Consulting</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>Human Resource Learning Centre</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>ISMTL</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>OFM and DOP</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>Arvind Mills Limited</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>AIMA</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>Business Times</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>IIT, Mumbai</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information about Benchmarking Reports under Study</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pictorial Presentation of Benchmarking Reports under Study</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 4

HR BENCHMARKING MODELS

Comparative Study and Suitability

A summary of HR benchmarking reports is given in this chapter. The reports of different benchmarking agencies are studied with a view to understanding the benchmarking technique used by them. Different indicators used in the benchmarking process are also analysed in the present chapter. This study attempts to identify a benchmarking method best suited for the HR Activity of companies and other organisations in Pune.

Eighteen reports on the Benchmarking of HR activity, published during the period 1995 - 2004 are analysed with a view to studying the following:

- The methodology and the type of benchmarking used by the benchmarking agencies;
- Instruments and tools used for the benchmarking; and
- Criteria and ratios used for benchmarking.
The benchmarking of HR activity is undertaken by different organisations operating in different sectors. The benchmarking is done for a group of organisations by forming a membership club and by creating a large database of HR Activity of the member organisations. The benchmarking agencies are either private agencies or government institutions engaged in academics, management, and accounting consultancy. They use modern tools and techniques for data collection, analysis, and presentation. They also make effective use of internet and websites for data collection.

The common tool used for data collection is a standardised questionnaire to be filled in by the member organisations. Sometimes, along with the questionnaire, field visits to the member organisations are arranged and interviews of employees and staff members are conducted. The quantitative analysis of the large data so collected is useful for setting the benchmarks. The member organisations make use of these benchmarks as performance improvement tool. Every member organisation gets annual report of benchmarking survey. In addition, any member may hire the services of these agencies for undertaking individual benchmarking project. Even in India, a few institutions like
All India Management Association (AIMA), and companies like Arvind Mills Ltd. have undertaken benchmarking projects.

Based on the study of these benchmarking reports, the present research aims at developing a suitable HR benchmarking model for companies and organisations in Pune.

4.1 PricewaterhouseCoopers

- PricewaterhouseCoopers publishes annual benchmarking report for the members. It makes use of both the quantitative and qualitative indicators for benchmarking. It has prepared a database of more than 1000 companies, which is used for preparing benchmarking reports. This database is updated annually by collecting information from the member-institutions with the help of a standardised questionnaire. The member-institutions get annual benchmarking report free of charge. They can also get tailor made individual set of benchmarks suitable for their own size, scale, and sector.

1. Quantitative indicators used: staff inflow, staff outflow, time spent on recruitment and selection, time spent on administrative activities, out sourcing of HR activities, investment in training, and training days.
2. Method and instrument used for data collection: annual survey with the help of a questionnaire.

3. Coverage of the benchmarking study: the survey questionnaires distributed in 47 countries in the years 2000 to 2003; the firm received 1,056 acceptable responses globally (covering over 6 million employees); mostly HR professionals responded to the questionnaires.

4.2 MIT

- MIT undertook re-engineering of its key administrative processes in an effort to improve services provided to members of the community and to reduce costs. In this process, it became evident that MIT must also re-engineer its processes for dealing with human resource issues. It tried to learn through benchmarking what best practices were in both academic organisations and non-profit organisations, which share some common characteristics with MIT, in that, both are research-based and decentralised.

1. HR functions considered for benchmarking: planning and appraisal, individual and team development, career planning,
hiring, career pathing (sic), succession planning, Job design, classification, and compensation/recognition/other rewards.

2. Method and instrument used for data collection: questionnaire and field visits.

3. Coverage of the benchmarking study: Through benchmarking, the Human Resource Practices Development Team set out to learn what comprises best practice in both academic and non-profit entities, which share some common characteristics with MIT. The team, with the assistance of MIT faculty and Hay/McBer, identified several appropriate organisations with outstanding human resource practices. After screening interviews, six organisations were selected: AT&T/Universal Card, Genzyme, Lucent Technologies, University of Pennsylvania, John Hopkins University, and Johnson & Johnson. The agenda for the benchmarking interviews was based on the above-mentioned nine human resource practices. The Team tried to understand how the organisations' best practices had evolved.
4.3 Saratoga Institute Workforce Diagnostic System

- Saratoga’s Benchmarking Services enables participants to benchmark performance, develop holistic performance indicators for organisational productivity, and provide a basis to evaluate the HR function to develop an improvement-focused culture, set standards and targets, reveal internal strategic incongruencies and divergencies (sic), identify potential problems, establish a basis to compete for resources, make decisions regarding outsourcing, restructuring, and re-engineering, discover the bottom-line value of human process improvements.

1. Quantitative indicators used: world-wide benchmarking programme covering such 65 employee-related diagnostics, namely, normative productivity, time, cost, and volume, etc.

2. Method and instrument used for data collection: Participants are positioned to evaluate their comparative performance of human value management via an effectiveness score-card detailing performance vis-à-vis local and international industry results, and the results from all other national-level participating organisations. A customised executive report on the human value
management profile of the organisation using the benchmarking results coupled with in-depth analysis of the organisation's critical success factors is produced.

3. Coverage of the benchmarking study: over 2,000 participating organisations across 17 countries.

4.4 Academic Staff Development Unit, Queensland University

- Academic Staff Development Unit, Queensland University of Technology, Australia, undertook a project to prepare university teachers in Australia by benchmarking best practices. It had adopted a functional approach to benchmarking, which involved learning from others, no matter in what industry they operated. The project was improvement driven, the purpose was improvement, and the focus was on process. Understanding practices, processes, and methods was given more importance.

1. Quantitative indicators used: no quantitative indicators were used. The project was process focused and, hence, had been oriented to improvement in practices as opposed to quantitative measures and comparisons.
2. Method and instrument used for data collection: an initial survey was conducted in order to identify the benchmarking partnership with ASDU. A number of measures were used to narrow the field of potential benchmarking partners, which included the pre-existing reputations of the programmes conducted by potential partner institutions, partners' level of interest and commitment to the project, and advice received through existing academic staff development networks. The data were collected with the help of a questionnaire. Field visits and interviews were organised with the benchmarking partners.

3. Coverage of the benchmarking study: the survey covered all academic staff development units in Australia.

4.5 American Society for Training and Development

- American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) was established in 1991. The ASTD Benchmarking Forum is made up of 55 large, multinational companies. Its aim is to provide opportunities to trainers from leading organisations to work with ASTD's experts to conduct comparative analyses and to identify the most successful practices in training and performance improvement. The forum
assists members to establish their companies as leaders in training, learning, and performance improvement. To emerge and remain strong competitors in the world economy, the members commit themselves to benchmarking by identifying best practices and networking. The forum's global representation and structure allow the members to learn from some of the best training organisations and professionals, and gain a better understanding of international issues and their impact on employee development.

1. Quantitative indicators used: percentages and ratios about performance practices, work practices, management practices, and human performance management practices.

2. Method and instrument used for data collection: annual survey with the help of a questionnaire.

3. Coverage of the benchmarking study: the longitudinal data incorporated into the 1997 Comparative Data Report came from a pooled dataset of 52 reporting entities. By creating a pooled dataset, the limitations of using only the training organisations that reported data in each of the three years from 1994-1996 were overcome. The pooled dataset includes 31 reporting units, which
provided data for all the three years, 12 reporting units, which responded only in 1994 and 1995, and nine, which reported only in 1995 and 1996. The data thus collected depict the formal training and performance improvement activities for approximately 2.5 million employees in 45 companies worldwide.

4.6 CUPA-HR

- College and University Professionals' Association for Human Resources, Australia, conducted a benchmarking survey of HR practices in Higher Education in the year 2001. CUPA-HR, with the support of a consortium of higher education institutions and corporate members, conducted the benchmarking survey, which queried higher education HR heads about their departments' responsibilities / functions, and performance measures. The CUPA-HR presented the results of this survey in a report form, and then compiled the information in a database, which allowed HR departments to compare their functions and performance with those of HR departments in peer institutions. The participants in the
benchmarking survey were able to obtain analysis of the survey data, which were most useful to them.

1. Method and instrument used for data collection: The benchmarking survey was a password-protected and web-based questionnaire. The participants in the benchmarking survey were able to perform analysis of their performance themselves in real time through access to data miner.

2. Coverage of the benchmarking study: It was a web-based, biennial survey.

4.7 HR Benchmarker

- HR Benchmarker provides a cost effective approach to first-level benchmarking and helps to reinforce budgets, develop service-level agreements, and identify efficiencies.

1. Quantitative indicators used: staff ratios and costs, training, absence and turnover, recruitment, trends across HR, employee relations, and HR-time analysis.

2. Method and instrument used for data collection: report covers over 200 updated benchmarking statistics for the use of HR or Personnel professionals, which provide current, reliable, and
robust evaluation of efficiency metrics across the private and public sectors in the UK.

3. Coverage of the benchmarking study: over 400 organisations from banking to utilities contributed to the survey to enable the HR benchmarkers to arrive at the strategic assessment of the performance of HR or Personnel professionals.

4.8 BNA and Society for Human Resource Management


1. Quantitative indicators used: HR staffing pattern, outsourcing of HR functions, HR budget, administrative jobs in HR.

2. Method and instrument used for data collection: annual survey with the help of a questionnaire.

4.9 HRM Consultancy Limited

- HRM consultancy Limited, Australia, conducted a national benchmarking project. Besides giving the trend data for the period
between 1996 and 1999, it presented the results for a range of performance indicators, in terms of positive outcomes, points of interest, and negatives trends.

1. Quantitative indicators used: average and median for employee-initiated separation rate, unscheduled absence per employee, career path ratio, payroll expense per employee, recruitment cost factor, recruitment response ratio, time to fill vacancies, HR staffing mix, HR expense per employee, training investment per employee.

2. Method and instrument used for data collection: annual survey with the help of a questionnaire.


4.10 IPMA - HR

- International Public Management Association for Human Resource (IPMA-HR), Alexandria VA, Benchmarking Results 2003.

1. Quantitative indicators used: HR staffing ratio, turnover, centralisation and decentralisation of HR Activity, and HR reporting structure.
2. Method and instrument used for data collection: annual survey with the help of a standardised questionnaire.


4.11 HRM Consulting

- HRM Consulting and the HayGroup conducted a national HR benchmarking study. They calculated the “All Industry” benchmark, which was an aggregation of the performance of Australian Public Sector organisations (APS) and non-APS organisations contained in the HRM consulting database. These data provide comprehensive information, with which they compare the quantitative data collected under this study.

1. Quantitative indicators used: HR effectiveness, resources dedicated to the HR function, recruitment, training, development, and occupational health and safety. Most of these factors were then analysed further into breakdowns such as percentage of HR resources dedicated to particular HR activities, investment in formal course-based training and informal coaching of staff, etc.
The study collected qualitative as well as quantitative data. The qualitative assessment included an analysis of current and desired workplace cultures. The major qualitative information was drawn from agency responses to questionnaires that inquired into seven key focus areas for HR services: workforce planning; recruitment and selection; performance management; learning and development; reward and recognition; career management; and workplace diversity.

2. Method and instrument used for data collection: a set of tools was developed in order to accord input to the study from a broad range of stakeholders. Input was sought from agency heads and executives, regional directors, managers, HR managers, and HR people. This was done through interviews, surveys, focus groups, and an exercise related to corporate culture. Each participating agency received a workbook, detailing their individual results on each of the tools administered during the study. Aggregate data of APS organisations from the study was incorporated, together with benchmarks for private and public sector organisations to help the agencies engage in comparative analysis.
3. Coverage of the benchmarking study: HRM Consulting collects data quarterly from Australian organisations, and groups the data in the following categories: Government Business Enterprises (GBEs), private sectors, and other sectors. The quantitative data were gathered from 31 participating agencies about their HR staffing and costs, agency demographics, and other general HR issues, such as, recruitment, training, development, and occupational health and safety. The benchmark data of the 1994-95 ACEPS Study was also used in the current Study.

4.12 Human Resource Learning Centre

- ProSci, co-sponsored by Vanguard Communications, conducted a benchmarking survey in the year 2000.

1. Quantitative indicators used: internet/intranet employee services, HRIS systems, centralised HR, call centres, recreating the HR function, staffing and selection, performance measures and rewards, and training and leadership development.

2. Method and instrument used for data collection: annual survey with the help of a standardised questionnaire.
3. Coverage of the benchmarking study: the research included findings from more than 65 companies and incorporated the results of ProSci's 1998 Benchmarking Study.

4.13 ISMTL

- The Industrial Society on Managing Training and Learning carries out regular research projects of benchmarking for the member and non-member organisations.

1. Quantitative indicators used: strategy on training and development, training plan for the next six months, identification of training needs by senior management team, training relating to people development, training opportunities available to employees, evaluation of training programmes.

2. Methods and instrument used for data collection: survey with the help of a questionnaire, and case-study method.

3. Coverage of the benchmarking study: a survey of 402 human resource and personnel specialists was conducted with the help of a questionnaire in April 1999; respondents drawn from The Industrial Society’s database, including member and non-
member organisations, across the whole economy, all regions of the UK, and different sizes of site and organisation.

4.14 OFM and DOP

- OFM and DOP launched a project to prepare for the implementation of the HR information system needed to support the Personnel Services Reforms Act 2002, and to adopt best practices in order to reduce the cost of state government's back offices.

1. Quantitative indicators used: allocation of HR staff resources by function, HR activities by total staff hours, allocation of HR staff time by role, payroll, staffing, training, etc.

2. Method and instrument used for data collection: the project relying upon a combination of quantitative and qualitative assessments, along with benchmarks and best practices of the other organisations, to establish baseline measures of the state HR processes, and to identify and prioritise opportunities of improvement. They have scheduled a follow-up measurement in 2006 to quantify process improvements and cost reductions anticipated from the implementation of the new HR system.
3. Coverage of the benchmarking study: state agencies participating in the study included: Attorney General's Office (AGO), Dept. of Information Services (DIS), Dept. of Corrections (DOC), Dept. of Licensing (DOL), Dept. of Personnel (DOP), Dept. of Revenue (DOR), Employment Security (ESD), General Administration (GA), Labor and Industries (L&I), Office of Financial Management (OFM), Dept. of Printing (PRT), Washington State Patrol (WSP)

4.15 Arvind Mills Limited

- The Arvind Mills Limited conducted a benchmarking study in the year 2003. A study of fourteen companies was done in order to benchmark the best of their functions and activities.

1. Quantitative indicators used: no quantitative indicators used; qualitative analysis of the functions of benchmarked companies done and presented in the form of a report; Motorola benchmarked for its best HR practices, such as HR programme, career planning information, HR training structure.
2. Method and instrument used for data collection: case-study method was used for data collection; historical data and published information used for comparison and analysis.

3. Coverage of the benchmarking study: fourteen multi-national and Indian companies were covered.

4.16 AIMA

- *Business Times* and All India Management Association (AIMA) conducted a country-wide survey, covering 160 companies. Seven vital dimensions covered under the survey were strategy, marketing, operations, value-chain management, information technology, finance, and human resource management.

1. Quantitative indicators used: none. Collected Data about formal HR strategy, formal systems, structures, and plans to recruit, train, retain, and get the best out of the employees, keeping in mind the link between training and business strategy, and impact of training on productivity.

2. Method and instrument used for data collection: survey with the help of a standardised questionnaire.
3. Coverage of the benchmarking study: 160 companies all over India were covered.

4.17 Business Times

- *Business Times* conducted Best Employers in India Survey in the year 2001. This study gave information on HR best practices in the Indian context. The purpose of the study was to explore some of the finest organisations in the country with the cutting edge, HR systems, and philosophies. *Business Times* short-listed the top employers in the country, and provided insights into what HR practices differentiated Best Employers in India, and depicted how people practices in these organisations were aligned to drive business results and meet employee needs; also, identified emerging workplace trends for the future.

1. Quantitative indicators used: None. The survey collected information about the degree of employee satisfaction, commitment, morale, depth, breadth, and prevalence of HR practices, uniqueness of HR practices, effectiveness of HR practices in meeting employee needs, alignment of HR practices to business context.
2. Method and instrument used for data collection: survey with the help of a questionnaire.

3. Coverage of the benchmarking study: the scope of the study was limited to white-collar employees.

4.18 IIT, Mumbai

- IIT, Mumbai conducted CAMPEADOR - Excellence in HRM Contest in the year 2004. Campeador is Latin for champion. The future of an organisation hinges upon effective HR practices. This contest provided a platform where organisations could reveal and dissect specific HR practices in their pioneering efforts to transcend boundaries.

1. Quantitative indicators used: None. Survey considered HR initiatives that company had adopted to attract new talent and to improve the satisfaction of the company's stakeholders.

2. Method and instrument used for data collection: a synopsis not exceeding 1500 words was to be submitted, which was to have the following framework: problem definition, alternatives generated, actions undertaken, and success validation and fallouts. The initiative was not be older than 3 years.
3. Coverage of the benchmarking study: free contest for the participants from all industries.

**INFORMATION ABOUT BENCHMARKING REPORTS UNDER STUDY**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Benchmarking Agency</th>
<th>Type of Benchmarking</th>
<th>Year of Benchmarking Report</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>PricewaterhouseCoopers</td>
<td>Consortium Benchmarking for Best Practices</td>
<td>2002-2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Saratoga Institute Workforce Diagnostic System</td>
<td>Consortium Benchmarking for Best Practices</td>
<td>2002-2003</td>
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<td>Sr. No.</td>
<td>Benchmarking Agency</td>
<td>Type of Benchmarking</td>
<td>Year of Benchmarking Report</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Academic Staff Development Unit, Queensland University of Technology, Australia</td>
<td>Process Benchmarking for Best Practices</td>
<td>1996-1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>College and University Professionals’ Association for Human Resources</td>
<td>Consortium Benchmarking for Best Practices</td>
<td>2001-2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Year of Benchmarking Report</td>
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<td>Year of Benchmarking Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>OFM and DOP, USA</td>
<td>Consortium Benchmarking for Best Practices</td>
<td>2002-2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The Arvind Mills Ltd</td>
<td>Processes Benchmarking</td>
<td>2003-2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>BT and All India Management Association (AIMA)</td>
<td>Survey of Seven Business Dimensions</td>
<td>2000-2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Business Times</td>
<td>“Best Employers in India” Survey</td>
<td>2001-2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>IIT, Mumbai</td>
<td>“CAMPEADOR - Excellence in HRM” Contest</td>
<td>2004-2005</td>
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4.19 Conclusions

Out of eighteen benchmarking projects, the reports of which have been analysed above, the Indian agencies had undertaken four, and the
international agencies had undertaken the rest of them. The following section discusses highlights of this analysis, and points out major differences in the benchmarking projects undertaken by the Indian agencies and by the other agencies:

- Almost all the benchmarking projects are for identification of best practices that become benchmarks for the institutions involved in such projects.
- The benchmarking projects are undertaken not only for private companies but also for government departments and universities.
- Fifteen benchmarking projects are third-party projects undertaken by independent benchmarking agencies. Only three are process-benchmarking projects undertaken by the individual organisations concerned.
- A majority of these projects are consortium-benchmarking projects undertaken at regular intervals for the members. Generally, the information for benchmarking is collected annually. These efforts generate a large database that can be used for deriving industry-wide benchmarks.
• With the exception of a few benchmarking projects, all the others make use of quantitative techniques of data analysis, and, the data are collected systematically with the help of one or the other data collection tool. Questionnaire is most commonly used tool. The data collection techniques are interviews and site visits. Case-study method is also used in a few benchmarking projects.

• In addition to the benchmarking report, a majority of these projects generate a benchmarking score-card for the member organisations.

• Common HR functions covered under these benchmarking projects are planning and appraisal, training and team development, career planning, recruitment, succession planning, as well as compensation and rewards.

• The HR indicators used for benchmarking are staff inflow, staff outflow, time spent on recruitment and selection, time spent on administrative activities, outsourcing of HR activities, investment in training, training days, staff ratios and costs, absence and turnover, HR staffing pattern, HR budget, HR expense per employee, training investment per employee, centralisation of HR Activity,
decentralisation of HR Activity, internet/intranet employee services, HRIS, recreating the HR function, training plan, etc.

- Out of four benchmarking projects undertaken by the Indian organisations, only one can be technically called a benchmarking project. All the others are either in the form of competitions or contests. The benchmarking project undertaken by the Arvind Mills Limited is a general-purpose benchmarking project, covering different functions ranging from strategy and diversification to HR and customer relations. No quantitative indicators were used in this project. This benchmarking was based on historically published data. Benchmarking projects specifically for HR Activity are not undertaken by Indian organisations on regular basis.

The year-wise distribution of benchmarking reports under the present study and their distribution on the basis of the type of benchmarking used are pictorially presented on the next page.
PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION OF BENCHMARKING REPORTS UNDER STUDY

Year-Wise Distribution of Benchmarking Reports

Distribution of Reports as per Type of Benchmarking

- 1995-1997
- 1998-2000
- 2001-2003
- 2004-2006

Number

0 2 4 6 8 10 12

Best Practices Process

Type of Benchmarking

- Individual
- Consortium

160
From the analysis above, it is more than clear that benchmarking of HR Activity of any type of business concern or of even non-profit organisations like universities is not only possible but also desirable. The next chapter deals with the analysis and findings of the survey and the case studies undertaken with a view to understanding the nature of HR Activity in Pune and to assessing the need for a model of HR Benchmarking. The model developed for benchmarking of HR Activity, called *HR Benchpro*, will also be discussed in detail.

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12. http://www.fissing.co.uk
17. http://som.iitb.ac.in