A Comparative Analysis of Human Resource Management Policies of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Today’s Local Companies

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Abstract

Human Resource Management is gaining wider importance day by day in today’s corporate world. The Corporate practices had shown a major transformation with the advent of sophisticated HR Practices. Almost all the multinationals are achieving excellence by the effective use of different HR tools. But at the same time the Local organizations are still at the same platform from where they would have begun their journey, as far as HR practices are concerned. A lot of manpower exploitation is still going on in these local private organizations. These are probably the organizations where Boss is the only instructor and all others are only followers. This paper aims at throwing light on this aspect and comparing the policies of these local organizations with those of Chhatrapati Shivaji. This paper talks about Shivaji’s employee oriented policies, his vision, his leadership and planning abilities. The discussion related to Shivaji’s Training and Development policies, Retention policies and Reward policy needed to be studied in a new perspective. This paper is an attempt to compare the policies of Shivaji with those of today’s Local organizations.

FULL PAPER

Human Resource Management (HRM) is the function within an organization that focuses on recruitment and management of people, and providing direction for the people who work in the organization\textsuperscript{1}. Human Resource Management (HRM), a relatively new term, that emerged during the 1930s. It comprises of the functions and principles that are applied to retaining, training, developing, and compensating the employees in organization. All the activities of employee, from the time of his entry into an organization until he leaves, come under the horizon of HRM. The divisions included in HRM are Recruitment, Payroll, Performance Management, Training and Development, Retention, Industrial Relation, etc. Though HRM has gained a vital importance in last few decades, the scenario is not that motivating. The multinational organizations which have their wings spread in multiple countries, looks to be more tuned with the updated HR Practices. The technological and process related sophistication of these organizations is undoubtedly exceptional. The level and quality of production has been increased enormously in these decades. The world has witnessed power of HRM in all these organizations. But this scenario changes a little bit when we talk about National companies and the scenario becomes completely volte faced when we talk about local companies in B grade cities like Nagpur. In 21\textsuperscript{st} century also, the mantra of local industry is exploitation of employees. Especially in cities like Nagpur the HR
practices in majority of the local organizations are negligible. Today also the sole responsibility of HR department in these industries is to maintain attendance and leave record of employees. These organizations are not ready to accept the sophisticated HR practices which the growing organizations are following. The reasons might be mentality, might be financial expenses or some other. But the fact remains the same that such organizations never favor HR practices.

And automatically the inner self forces us to compare the practices of these local organizations with a kingdom which was in existence in west Maharashtra, close to 350 years back into the history. This was the kingdom of Chhatrapati Shivaji which has ruled west Maharashtra for almost 30 years with supreme policies. The Swarajya created by Shivaji was the best example of discipline, administration, people oriented policies, character, entrepreneurship, business and much more. After his inception of Swarajya with Torna fort he ended up with 300 forts in 1680 when he died. But during this tenure, he demonstrated the pinnacle of his administrative skills. The qualities of Shivaji made the contemporary writers to compare him (Shivaji) with Alexander the great, Julius Caesar, Hannibal and so on. If we compare Shivajian HR policies with the policies of today’s local companies, we will surprised to see that Shivajian policies were far better, creative and motivating than those of today’s. Historical evidences are there which shows that the policies of Shivaji were very supportive, innovative and transparent as compared to the other existing kingdoms like Bijapur and Mughals.

If we wish to compare the HR skills of Shivaji with those of today’s local companies, we may come to following analysis. Here 06 HR skills of Shivaji are compared with those of today’s local companies.

1. Leadership  
2. Flawless planning  
3. Policy making  
4. Training & Development  
5. Retention  
6. Rewards & Punishments

1. Leadership
Leadership is the most vital aspect in any organization. The leader has to plan, implement, guide, motivate and lead the whole organization. It is very rightly said that though you need 100s of people for rowing, but steering has to be in the hands of Captain only. Today we can see the level of leaders in local organizations; maximum leaders are there who do not even have that acumen to be a leader. The leadership itself has been dominated by weak decision making, faulty processes, favoritism, discrimination, politics and corruption. This has resulted into exploitation of employees. If we consider the Nagpur corporate sector, the average working hours a person works and the amount of compensation he receives against that has a remarkable difference. The qualities like team building, creating group effectiveness, involving subordinates into decision making are seems to be limited to text books only. The daring to step into new projects, new markets, and new decisions should be the competencies of Leaders. But unfortunately that aggressiveness also is lacking in most of the local corporate leaders. The most important quality of any leader is to face any worst case scenario first and then if needed let the other team come into exposure. But on this front also, it has been observed that the so called leaders put their secondary staff exposed to the crucial situation and they themselves get disappeared from the scene.
Couple of prominent incidences where this leadership has been showcased by Shivaji were Afzalkhan and Shayastakhan episodes. Afzalkhan, the sardar of Bijapur Adilshah, attacked Swarajya with a huge army of 22,000. And instructions were given to all Bijapur forts on the way that they have to merge their army with that of Afzalkhan. Ultimately, Afzal’s total strength became 36,000. Afzalkhan was superior in every aspect. But Shivaji decided to lead the whole battle from the front. He decided to meet khan in person. The meeting was fixed on 10th Nov 1659 at Pratapgad. Shivaji went alone to meet him and Afzal attacked Shivaji suddenly. But Shivaji was also alert; he hit Afzalkhan on Ash eel’s heel. Khan fell down and soon died. Shivaji has demonstrated supreme example of his leadership skills in this entire episode. Next to attack was Shayastakhan who had come with a cavalry of 77,000; the Treasury he was carrying was Rs 32 Crores and an army of 50,000 soldiers on Pune. Shivaji counterattacked with only 450 soldiers and threatened Khan. Shayastakhan was so afraid of him that he ran away from Pune within 03 days. He made all the toughest battles look so easy just because of his mind blowing leadership.

2. Flawless planning
It is said that planning has to be 75% and implementation should be 25%. But if we see today’s local organizations, we can easily make it out that the planning is 25% and the implementation part is negligible in accordance with the planning. Most of the managers are unable to anticipate future possible requirements and changes. And this is the reason why they fail to plan accordingly. And thus the entire implementation suffers.

Shivaji, on this front was again like a lighthouse for all of us. The crux of planning is information. Shivaji used to spend enormous money on salaries of his intelligence bureau. This bureau used to give him appropriate information in time. He used to prepare his plan on the basis of these inputs in the meetings with his counterparts. Everyone’s opinion was of superior importance. The best example was the time when he invaded South India after 1670. After coming back from Agra, Shivaji did SWOT Analysis. He shifted his capital to Raigadh, he increased his cavalry to 1,25,000 and adopted offensive warfare techniques. After continuous battles from 1644 to 1670 he had only 18 forts with him. But after doing the SWOT Analysis he won Sinhgadh, which was the 19th fort. And soon he invaded Southern India and won 300 forts within mere 08 years of time. This historic bravery of Shivaji was backed by his flawless planning. Even Afzalkhan episode was the masterpiece of his planning abilities. Shivaji forced Afzalkhan to come out of his home ground. Shivaji separated the 36,000 soldiers of Afzal into 2 parts. The power of Afzal got divided. Shivaji started propagating negative information about him so that Afzal should feel over-confident. He even designed separate signals for Afzal’s army and his own army to mislead them. He blocked all the surrounding roadways so that Afzal and his army should not run away and what not. Huge planning skills were involved. We should notice that everyone was involved in this planning & concern was given to everyone’s opinion.

3. Policy making
Many a times the small time private firms do not have any kind of written policies. Whatever the boss says becomes the policy here. The policy decisions related to late coming, half days, leaves, vacations, CLs, MLs, early going are not there on paper. To
show the discipline in office set up, full day salary is deducted for a mere late of 15-20 minutes. Policies related to termination, lay-offs and salary are ambiguous.

Era of Shivaji was exception to this. Policies were employee oriented, but at the same point of time, discipline was given utmost importance. In that phase the recruitment of soldiers used to be on contract basis in all the kingdoms. Shivaji was the first king who hired soldiers on permanent basis. Shivaji’s policies related farming was much more appreciated nationwide. He had the complete record of each and every farmer. The kind of soil available, the kind of crop one is cultivating, the type of irrigation one has and all. On the basis of these facts he used to collect the taxes. Three officers viz., Deshpande, Kulkarni and Patil of every village used to unanimously design the tax structure and collect the same. The specialty of Shivaji’s Taxation policy was its flexibility. Today’s Taxation policies are supported by many binding rules and laws. But Shivaji used to collect taxes looking at the need, financial condition and local traditions. Forceful and illegal collection of taxes was negligible.

4. Training & Development

Evidences had showed what miracle T&D had made in history of the Industry. Company like Ford is the best example of it. Regular, planned, focused training and development practices bring out the inner real potential of every employee. But again the local organizations looks isolated from the magic of T&D. 01 out of 10 companies conduct training programs. And probably 01 out of 20-25 companies does it on a regular basis with a proper training calendar. Maximum companies do it on ad-hoc basis.

Shivajian era witnessed the supreme level of training and development. Until then the only aim in Maratha community’s life was to leave till death. Saints like Samrtha Ramdas and Sant Tukaram had already initiated the process of enlightening people. Sant Tukaram awaken the Bhagwat Bhakti in the hearts of society where as Samarth Ramdas incorporated the need of achieving power. The only thing required was a king, and Shivaji fulfilled that. The entire Marathi society supported him. Shivaji started regular training related warfare techniques, arms, weapons and might be behavioral modules also. Shivaji’s Portuguese biographer Cosme-da-Guarda had written that Shivaji used to impart training. But unfortunately, history doesn’t know the type of training. But the way Shivaji’s soldiers and his society behaved in that era and after that, one can easily make out the enormous impact of training and Development.

5. Retention

Retention has become crucial factor in today’s world of information Technology. The software engineer getting a package of 5 Lakh in X organization uses the internet and system of that organization to fetch a package of 7-8 Lakh in Y organization. Almost all the sectors including telecom, automobile, and infrastructure are facing the problem of retention. IT is the most affected sector where the attrition rate has broken all records. On this background Shivaji's retention was amazing. In spite of life threatening difficulties, it has not been observed that Shivaji’s people had left him, few exceptions. The main reason behind this was again Shivaji’s retention policies. As said earlier, he used to give permanent appointment. The salary was good enough and Shivaji used to pay it on time. Advance salary was paid to the soldiers before war. If any soldier achieves martyr on battlefield, his post was
given to his children. And if the soldier does not have son, half of his salary used to be given to his widow for her entire life.\textsuperscript{14}

### 6. Rewards and Punishments

Rewards play a crucial role in any organization. Instant reward on the completion of a successful task motivates an employee. But delay in giving the reward may de-motivate him. Today we can see the local companies do not even bother to think about rewards. This results into de-motivated workforce. People take enormous efforts to accomplish a task, but it never gets appreciated. At the same point of time this type of management looks very happy impart punishment to the staff members. Punishment related to delayed reporting, late coming, absenteeism, irregularity, fail to achieve targets have became crime in today’s corporate.

Shivaji used to give immediate reward for a good job done\textsuperscript{15} and immediate penalty for a bad job. He understood this mantra very well. Shivaji called a special felicitation program after the Afzalkhan and Siddi Jouhar episodes were over. He appreciated the tasks done by everyone giving some or the other reward to them. Somebody received gold coins, someone received ornaments. Brave soldiers and officers used to get Horses and Elephants from Government\textsuperscript{16}. Shivaji even used to felicitate some people by exempting them from taxes He also gave the most precious award of that time “Manache Paan” equivalent to Param Veer Chakra to Kanhoji Naik Jedhe. But at the same time when anyone used to do corruption or used to get involved in sexual harassment, Shivaji used to give them death sentence. He had killed his spies also if they have given wrong information.

The Seventeenth century has witnessed this masterpiece of administration and Human Resource Management in the form of Shivaji Maharaj. Today’s corporate world has so much to learn and implement from his personality. The need of an hour is to identify our own lacunias and overcome them with help of inspiring biographies like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. The day is not that far when we will be able to see a phenomenal transformation in the working of local companies, if we implement these types of Pro- employee policies, aggressive leadership, Flawless planning. Retention policies, Training & development programs and Reward structure, as Shivaji implemented. This will require dedicated efforts towards study of Shivaji’s policy and its transparent implementation. Shivaji has designed his Swarajya to achieve Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram of his people. If we also think in the parallel way, we can also create the same corporate world which will be based on a true Win-Win Policy without any exploitation.

**References:**

[2] English Records on Shivaji Vol II, Pg no. 150
[3] English Records on Shivaji 272
[4] English Records on Shivaji 279
[5] English Records on Shivaji, Page no. 18
Note:- To understand the HR Practices in Local companies of Nagpur, an open one-to-one discussion was conducted with 05 officials from Industry. The inferences on the same were drawn from this discussion.

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