Chapter 2

Review of the literature

2.1 Introduction

The review of the related literature in the area of recreation and employee productivity in the changed societal paradigm and its impact on quality of work as well as family life studied in this research has provided the researcher an insight into many factors influencing employee contribution or employee productivity. It has provided the inspiration in designing and undertaking the present study. After study of the related body of literature, the researcher felt the need to embark on the present inquiry.

2.2 Studies of recreational facilities and employee contribution

Among the important literatures, study by Sabarirajan, Meharajan & Arun. (2010) titled “Positive correlation between welfare activities and employee attitude in textile mills”, remains prominent beacon of welfare studies on Indian organizations. In this exploratory research the authors have established the positive influence of various welfare activities practiced in Indian organizations on employee attitudes including employee productivity. The study has concluded that generally, welfare measures are recreational, medical, educational, housing, sanitation and so on. Every organization provides the statutory welfare measures but some organization provides some more welfare facilities to the employees so that they may retain the employees and their quality of work life. By the result of improved quality of work life among the employees their involvement in job gets increased and results in increased productivity of the organization. The organizations maintaining smooth relationship between workers and management, which leads to attainment of organization efforts.

Landsbergis. (1955) in his review work on analyzing older experiments from 1924-1932 “Hawthorne Effect” has shed a new light on organizational behaviour of employees. The studies have shown that the relations that supervisors develop with workers tend to influence the manner in which the workers carry out directives. The Hawthorne researchers came to view of the workplace as a social system that was made up of interdependent parts. Series of experiments conducted from 1924 to 1933, and famously analyzed by Professor Elton Mayo from 1927 to 1932 is known as Hawthorne effects .The term was coined in 1955 by Henry A. Landsbergis when analyzing older experiments from 1924-1932 at the Western Electric
Hawthorne Work (outside Chicago). These experiments were a series of studies on the productivity of workers, wherein various conditions were manipulated (pay, light levels, humidity, rest breaks, etc.). Surprisingly, each change resulted in a productivity rising, including eventually a return to the original conditions. This was true of each of the individual workers as well as of the group mean. Clearly the variables the experimenters manipulated were not the only dominant causes of productivity changes. One interpretation, mainly due to Professor Elton Mayo and associates F.J. Roethlisberger and William J. Dickson, was that essentially, it was the workers’ feeling they were being closely attended to which was the cause of the improvements in performance.

A scholarly article published at www.activelivingresearch.org (2010) is one of the very few literatures connecting recreational facilities and with its positive desirable outcomes. The article iterates that “Living close to parks and other recreation facilities is consistently related to higher physical activity and better health levels for both adults and youth”. Concurrent with these trends, the emerging work force is developing very different attitudes about their role the workplace. Today's employees place a high priority on the following:

- Family orientation
- Sense of community
- Quality of life issues
- Volunteerism
- Autonomy
- Flexibility and nonconformity

To hold onto the employees organizations need to work counter to prevailing trends causing the job churning. Smart employers make it a strategic initiative to understand what their people want and need. Retaining employees and developing a stable work force involves a two-step process -- understanding why employees leave in the first place, and developing and implementing strategies to get them to stay. (http://www.tecoline.com/www/bestpractices_retention.asp, June 2010).

2.3 Studies of Recreational Facilities

Berta, (2010), underscores the importance of recreational facilities in a published article "Companies harness fun, games to train employees". Recreation enabled employees can cope better with stressful work situations. Absenteeism, work accidents and injuries can be reduced. Improved physical capacity may improve work productivity. In some cases, improved employee self-confidence and self-esteem if the activities are perceived as fun and enhancing social contacts, employee morale may improve. Some activities and services may help to improve retention if they increase stickiness with the employer. However, none of the ideas discussed here are ‘cures’ for productivity, absenteeism, stress problems. Those issues
will require a comprehensive approach – for example to remove or reduce underlying causes of absenteeism or stress rather than treat the symptoms. Similarly, aerobics classes or fresh fruit deliveries will be fairly irrelevant if company management has a bad reputation and the organization has a chronic turnover problem – organisations need to address those problems separately. To put it another way, tokens are not valued by employees who are treated poorly or ignored the rest of the time. Instead, the article discusses small initiatives that are easily implemented and can make a small but useful difference. Unlike, an on-site gymnasium, they do not require large-scale investment and administration by the employer. Sport event or recreational facilities such as picnics, Family day, festive celebrations, providing information on nutrition, relaxation, are some of the ways to engage employees effectively. A good doctor not only prescribes medicines but also counsels his patients to a state of wellness. Many ailments like back pains, etc. which go unattended till the time they don’t start disrupting the day to day work (and hence work output) can be resolved at the very start. Health club facilities/ Gym not only help a person keep fit, but also serve as a de-stressing factor. In addition, right infrastructure, ergonomics of the furniture, user-friendly computers, right air-conditioning and amount of light, height of roof, space around the work area, are all factors that affect the health and therefore the productivity of an individual.

James, & Gary (1981), have vividly elucidated the American scene in recreational facilities context- Perhaps most surprisingly, the number of hours most Americans spent on recreation began to shrink in the 1970s for the first time in a century. As more women entered the paid workforce, the continuing need to do housework cut into time available for leisure activities. Clogged freeways and the growth of suburbs lengthened commuting times, while telephone answering machines, pagers, cell phones, and portable computers made it easier to take work home. With the growth of the leisure industry, Americans needed more money to spend on recreation; thus, the average workweek climbed as Americans increasingly shifted from "time intensive" to "goods intensive" recreation. One group bucked this overall trend: retired Americans were generally healthier and more affluent than their predecessors had been. Moving away from their families, many spent long hours on the golf course, in shopping malls and recreation centres, or as seasonal visitors to warm areas like Florida and Arizona. Today’s paradigm of new Information Revolution may present different challenges from those of the Industrial Revolution. Over the past century men and women have been guiding others in the wise use of free time. Since the pioneering efforts of people like Joseph Lee, Jane Addams, Lebert Weir, Stephen Mather, and Juliette Low, a great deal of volunteer, salaried time, expertise, and energy has been devoted to the provision of recreation leadership (Ruth V. Russell, 2006).
Recreational Facilities includes businesses that provide recreational and amusement services (http://www.ibisworld.com/industry/default.aspx, October, 2010). Utilisation of recreational facilities is done through a recreational activity in addition to many more possibilities with recreation activities including many recreational and educational team building games.

Geoffrey, & et al. (2010), have iterated the need of recreation and leisure. The authors assert that among scholars, numerous theories and concepts have been examined in parks, recreation, and leisure studies that connect with active living and health. Humans are motivated by the ability to self-regulate their actions and construct meaningful experiences. Humans are also motivated by social interaction and personal competence. Movement may be divided by function as follows:

1. Physical activity necessary to fulfil obligations of paid work, household work, personal care and childcare.
2. Physical activity undertaken as a specific means to improve health or to escape negative health consequences.
3. Physical activity that is inherently part of pleasurable leisure experience.

In the next few decades, the greatest potential to increase movement in daily life will be by increasing participation in physical activity which has meaning aside from exercise—leisure, play, recreation, sport, and contact with nature. Leisure studies are centrally involved in the study of such behaviour. While leisure theory draws heavily from other disciplines, their application to leisure reflects its uniqueness. Leisure is often social and primarily characterized by feelings of enjoyment, relative freedom, and intrinsic motivation. It is best understood from an ecologic systems approach. Foremost are leisure theories that address human autonomy and agency. Self-determination theory is helpful in understanding intrinsic motivation, as well as how and why external rewards (e.g., incentives) become internalized to produce behaviour that is more intrinsic. The theory also helps explain how leisure behaviours are initiated and maintained over time, despite constraints.

Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow assumes that behaviour is performed and maintained because there are clear salient goals, feedback on performance is easily self-assessed, and one’s skill level is adequate to meet the challenge of the activity. When flow is achieved, one experiences intense enjoyment and satisfaction, thus facilitating continued participation. This theory helps to understand both boredom and anxiety in a leisure context.

Recreation values and Natural areas symposium, Centre for Recreation Research School of Business University of Otago, New Zealand, 18 – 19 March 2O1O Proceedings have
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summarised the research trends and directions in the world. Natural outdoor environments offer unique opportunities for people of all ages to become physically active, psychologically engaged and socially networked. There are well documented health and lifestyle benefits of physical activity for the elderly including the prevention/delay of common chronic illnesses, improved functional ability, reduced possibility of falling, and longer independent lifestyles. Cognitive benefits also accrue such as higher cognitive performance, better memory and a positive effect on negative emotions such as depression. In addition, opportunities for social interaction are enhanced. The natural environment has benefits of its own such as: influencing longevity, restorative effects, stress recovery, feelings of satisfaction and wellbeing, health benefits from exposure to natural sunlight, the improvement of sleep quality, and higher attention performance. This presentation examines the experiences of the participants in the Third Age Adventures Programme based in Timaru, New Zealand. The programme provides a challenging opportunity for people over 50 to immerse themselves in outdoor physical activities in the wilderness areas of the South Island. The regular trips range from day walks and bike rides to multiday backpacking journeys on the great walks. Firstly, the general benefits of involvement in exercise, the environment and a social group were sought from the wider body of literature. This information was structured into a survey and the survey results will be presented and discussed. Interviews were also conducted to provide in-depth information on individual perceptions and experiences in the programme. Both data sources provide very positive evidence of successful engagement.

2.4 Studies on Employee Contribution

Most enterprises in today's competitive world need to constantly improve to remain profitable or effective. The experience and insights of the workforce are a valuable source for those improvements. Demands and the resources to meet them change rapidly and are often out of balance. Equipment may have to be adjusted or replaced and processes may have to be revamped to keep up with these variations or shortfalls. While managers are paid to stay on top of these developments, staff members have specialized knowledge and a vantage point on the firing line that can spot problems early and formulate practical solutions. Hornestay, (2010) iterates that employees are sometimes targeted as the source and sole intervention to elevate employee engagement. When the organization and leadership also contribute to engagement initiatives it can facilitate even higher levels of engagement. Individual is ultimately responsible for own engagement while the organization and leadership is accountable for employee engagement. Engagement is not a limited resource and research would suggest that higher levels of employee engagement at work translate to higher levels of engagement at home and in the community.
Employees need to learn to master their energy at work, increase levels of mental, emotional, physical and spiritual energy while also ensuring to take time for energy recovery. One paradox of employee engagement is that management must also find times to disengage from work to recharge and revitalize employees for the work ahead. People who know their strengths, use their strengths on a daily basis, and use their strengths in the service of others report higher levels of authentic happiness at work.

The recent study by the IABC Research Foundation and Right Management Consultants, Best Practices in Employee Communication, reported that 83 percent of companies ranked "motivating employees to align with business strategy" as the first or second on their list of communication priorities. Only 37 percent believed their companies were managing this effectively. Globalization has created a cultural and business diversity in most large corporations that demands a new level of sophistication from current communication functions. It highlights the urgency and importance of using communication to help employees understand and actively participate in the execution of a company’s strategic direction. At the same time, technology has driven unprecedented speed and access. Customers are demanding action faster than ever before. To cope, companies have no choice but to allow all levels in the organizations to share in decision making. As a result, senior management is realizing that engagement of employees to understand and act on the direction of the company is an urgent necessity fundamental to aligned execution of business strategy. Most important, the dialogues resulted in a 40 percent improvement in employees' understanding of their connection and contribution to the strategy. Leaders worked with employees to develop a communication program that they now view as an essential component of their organization-wide strategy development program. They saw the value of collaborating with employees to reach their goals. The dialogues were very important to building commitment and engagement.

Top Eight Rules for Communicating Business Strategy to Employees are:

1. Create "line-of-sight" between strategy, team implementation and personal contribution.
2. Focus on relevance—build a consistent but customized focus.
3. Create opportunity for dialogue as a fundamental component of communication.

4. Solicit employee input about content and process before implementation.
5. Build coaching and training of managers into the process.
6. Focus on eliminating layers of information from the strategy process.
7. Lead with face-to-face communication, and reinforce with formal communication, such as intranets, magazines, newsletters, etc.

8. Spend time with leaders to ensure alignment of daily signals to the strategic direction.

Brown, Doug K. (2009) has dwelled upon some behavioural and psychological principles to obtain competitive advantage. The author asserts that the majority of training and development investment resources spent by organizations and companies are focused on giving people the necessary skills, abilities, knowledge, etc to perform at high levels and this training is important. The second component receives far less investment. In fact research shows that less than 20% of the companies in business ever conduct formal training in this area. Research shows the second component has equally important impact or performance results. "Emotions control behaviour and behaviour controls results." It has now been well documented in several research and case study analysis that engaged and motivated employees have a major impact on bottom line results and the financial success of the organization. This is true due to increased productivity (from more discretionary effort), higher commitment to improve and create new ideas and innovations, reduced absenteeism and turnover.

Brown, (2009), has reported effective and quintessential HR’s Role in the organisation’s productivity. Findings of the research assert HR to be the key in driving the process and selecting the tools needed to achieve alignment. In the research question of HR rating in driving process of productivity, A McKinsey study iterated both HR and line of business (LOB) executives capabilities to develop relevant talent strategies Only one-quarter of the HR participants in the research study, agreed with the research statement, while the majority (58%) of line managers concurred. There was a gap of 33 percent. Clearly LOB managers did not see HR as being up to the task. Successful HR executives agree that aligning talent to business, defining roles, recruiting, developing, and measuring performance creates an environment where people’s passion for the business can grow and drive overall business performance. Alignment, nonetheless, is not just an HR issue. Although HR may facilitate the
process and implement the systems to help ensure a talent strategy aligns to the business, HR cannot execute this strategy without the commitment of the line managers.

Review of the literature draws attention to the trend that in the Western countries a large amount of time and energy is being spent on research in recreation, which is treated as a separate discipline by itself. Most of the effort is dedicated towards outdoor recreation including preservation of environment. In the sphere of organisational life too much effort has been devoted on people ‘downshift movement’- employees prepared to earn less for more leisure for recreation and its value to human resources. However, barring a couple of research studies included here, recreational facilities formally organised as a productivity multiplier in Indian organisations, has apparently not met adequate treatment.

2.5 Conclusion

Review of the related literature revealed the amount of effort, expertise and energy that has been applied to the field of study of recreation and its impact on employee contribution or productivity. Larger percentage of the body of literature surveyed pertains to the Western countries or the USA wherein recreation study is a discipline taught, researched and applied wide and deep. Indian scenario in this area has been generous Although some studies have been undertaken, for example, by scholars like Sabarirajan, Meharajan & Arun., (2010) titled “Positive correlation between welfare activities and employee attitude in textile mills”, there is a gap in the literature in the study of organisational recreational facilities and its impact on employee productivity, in the changed societal reference framework. This study therefore is an initiative in that direction. The research to that extent is exploratory.