

**PERFORMANCE VS MATERNITY LEAVE: WHO DOES ONE
BLAME?****Voice of Research**

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Abstract

This case speaks about the concept of Performance appraisal and succession planning promotion of a female employee that assesses an individual employee's job performance and productivity in relation to certain pre-established criteria and organizational objectives for almost five years Versus the concept of Maternity leave which is a period of approved absence time before and after the birth of a baby when a woman is allowed to be away from her job for a female employee for the purpose of giving birth and taking care of infant children.

Keywords: performance, maternity leave, blame

Vision Institute of Technology & Science, as a Technical Institute came into existence in 2008, under the leadership of Managing Director Mr. V.S Singh. This was in a fresh set up – a Technical Engineering & Management Institute wanted to promote a healthy, creative and encouraging environment for the growth of its students and launch them in a glittering professional career by providing well defined Infrastructure & ultra modern facility to students. The inceptor and owner wanted to enroll this institute as in the top institute of nation rendering best education in the field of Engineering & Technology. Mr. V.S Singh the Managing Director trying his best to meet the needs of this Educational business.

An Educational segment including various courses like Under Graduate Courses, Post Graduate Courses, Management Courses, Polytechnic Diploma courses, State Government and CBSE Affiliated schools also came in existence later on in the year 2010-12 on as a part of Vision Group of Institutions with a turnover of more than 500 Crores per annum. The Institute gives a lot of emphasis on Value and Performance based Culture. Policies and systems existed for motivating employees' good performance. Creativity, mutual trust, teamwork and fast completion of work are much talked about in the newly established set up.

The company moreover recruits freshers and few experienced persons were there to look after day to day activities of the institutes. A female Ms. Akshita Kumar joined in the second year of the Institute in 2009 from Mumbai. From the outset, She was technically and administratively sound and After a few meetings with the Management members and Principal and the grapevine of other colleagues in the office, she realized that internal communications was a problem, which existed in the Institute due to which people were unnecessarily stressed and not properly informed and updated about their roles and responsibility. They were not aware of the system changes, policy updates and other information from the authority of Hierarchy, due to scarcity of time and resources. Moreover, progress of the activities being done in the institute were either not known or properly

communicated. Being a new Institute, She decided to set a sound system on the parallel lines of those established reputed Institutes wherever she worked prior to join this Institute. She realized that a lot of hard work needs to be done in order to establish various systems and procedures within this newly launched Institute. She made a presentation of existing scenario and also what corrective measures has to be taken to make this institute more progressive and streamlined? With the consent and encouragement of the Managing Director, he had given her responsibility to start working on this new suggestive model. As he was having notion that subordinates should be treated as autonomous and responsible employees; these would then also be much more satisfied with their work and would perform better. At every setup, Ms.Akshita Kumar discussed her views with him, from planning to execution of ideas from root level to end level with the inculcation of changes if, any suggested by him. Apart from Teaching in Engineering and Management courses, she has started contributed in various domains of growing aspects of Institutes like in T & P Department, Editor Newsletter, Public Relation for External Communication, FM Commercials, Coordination of Co-Curricular & Extra Curricular activities, Guidance & Counseling of students, Event Management, Publication and Printing related Institute Brochure and leaflet work, Representative in Educational Fair, Mentoring in Cultural Programme, Research and Presentation related guidance to students for attending National & International Conferences etc. and rendered many administrative responsibilities assigned to her like Coordinator MOU with WIPRO and Scientech etc, Coordinator for Induction/ Orientation related activities of the Institute for both MBA and B.Tech., Affiliation and other Inspection related Visits of the Institute, Member of Selection Panel interview in Admission Process of GD/PI for intake of management Students in PGDBM and Tourism Courses, Invigilator and flying squad member in Examinations, Mentor for conferences, workshops, contests, Fests etc. She has also developed e-Language Lab and ERP system, innovations in the Website and regular updation in the prevailing



practices and activities for the branding of the Institute. Which gradually starts insecurity and jealousy among few staff members but despite being humiliated afterwards also a number of times with rest of the members and colleagues. She continued to work with the same enthusiasm as, she started getting apprehensive about her position as a senior in the system. But things did not improve with passage of time as fast as should it come. Later on in the year 2012-13 a CBSE affiliated school also came in existence as one of the segment of this educational group. It was a wonderful set up along with good infrastructure and other educational amenities of a near about investment of five crore. A Teaching Authority as "Principal" was recruited from the top notch school of India. Under his leadership with few admin staff members were recruited by him and they succeeded to enrol students near about 200+ in spite of being a new school. The session started little late due to some reasons. In the month of July Teaching staff were also recruited by him and session started by the school. Gradually, there were various sorts of mishaps started taking shapes in the area including Teaching and Admin related various activities. In spite of coming from a reputed school the concerned authority could not coordinated the day to day activities on the part of required command of instructions and the expectations of parents. Due to this a sort of resentment and aggression started taking shape on the part of Students, Staff members and parents and other stake holders. The reason may be as the committed commitments which he has done with the parents to enroll the admissions and when it could not fulfil by him this sort of environment started taking shape. And second reason may be due to non awareness of Board related educational updation and ideas make him handicapped in the front of academic and admin related arrangements. In spite of three months no changes observed by the members of Management. The better half of Managing Director Mr. V.S Singh, Mrs. Saraswati Singh was the Director here in this new setup. On the basis of this scenario they have decided to take the corrective measures in order to save the image of this newly set up of group.

A very sudden development took place with Ms. Akshita Kumar when Mr. V.S Singh discussed with her in the month of September that they are considering her candidature to be promoted in the course of Succession Planning as "Principal" in the newly launched segment of this CBSE affiliated School. This was the wish of his better half Ms. Saraswati Singh to assist her there in the development of this school as Ms. Akshita Kumar was also having the relevant qualification as prescribed by the norms of affiliated board. And secondly she was working in this group from almost four years. Ms. Akshita Kumar asked some time to think on this offer since she was not having

any idea about school education due to this she was little bit hesitant she openly discussed with them about all the limitations related to the demand of this post but they made her convinced that they are there to help her out related to any guidance as they were having other schools also. She could not say no to them and accepted this responsibility as a challenge and changed her career profile from college education to school education to meet out with success.

In the mid of September, 2012 she was introduced as "Principal" by the members of management to the staff members of the school. After joining this new set up she realized that it was not the easy task to wind up all this mishaps within very short of time as no documentation of proper records, written policies, academic calendar, accounts, books, uniforms, means of communication with stake holders etc were there. Apart from admin front the most challenging part was related to academics which requires utmost changes on the part of well trained teachers, academic schedule, a proper plan of action of planning and implementation of all scholastic and non-scholastic activities to ensure the academic success. She systematically divided all the planning portion and simultaneously executed the plan of action related to area of admin, academics, parents & other stake holders, ways of communication, HR policy for academic staff expected roles and assignment of new duties, academic calendar, new changes and written communication medias to parents, Transport management, examination department, events department, student support department, sports department, media department, audio-visual classes governed by LCD-projector and introduction of Digital computerized smart classes to make learning process as a fun, Recruitment of new staff members for the segregation of pre-primary, primary, TGT and PGT wing, inculcation and modification of school website, various social and ethical events for the branding of school and to enroll the presence in the city being a new school etc. She arranged a Parents Teachers meeting and interacted and updated all the changes she was about to start in this year to meet the expectations of stakeholders. Gradually all the planned actions started taking shape in a right direction to lead the school in a right track. Within a very short span of time all the documentation related to academic and admin started carried out on paper. The academics and non academics activities were also analyzed by various visiting officials of concerned board. A successful Annual Function also carried out by school followed by various sports activities and Inter school competitions like Debate, Dance, Ad-mad, G. K. Olympiad etc. All the staff members contributed well as per the directions for the conduction of successful ratio rate. All the parents and stakeholders were now on the



urge of satisfaction level as compare to previous complaints.

Suddenly a drastic development took place in the Month of March when there was the time of Final year examination for the end of the session was there Ms. Akshita Kumar came to know by Medical report that she has got pregnant. And she discussed all the things with Mr. and Mrs. Singh that now this is the scenario and she suggested them to hire a new Principal for the next session. They congratulated her and refused her suggestion and told her to continue rather than to keep new person. That session went successfully along with result declaration and new commencement of next year session of 2013-14 along with good number of admissions of new students till 31st April. After summer holidays session re- started in the end of the June and she requested again to Mr. and Ms.Singh number of times in between that it would be good if we should appoint any new Principal by giving Vacancy ad of Principal to appoint and who can look after the school for further course of action. But they did not agree on that. Later on some interested candidates contacted them for the post, they conducted few interviews also in the presence of her. But nothing worked out properly.

Later on one vice principal was kept and at the time of Interview it was told to this candidate that we cannot keep you as Principal as we do have we will give you an appointment of Vice –Principal rather than Principal in the presence of Ms. Akshita Kumar. Ms. Akshita Kumar was told to train her as per the requirement of school and the concerned board. She trained her almost for more than one and a half month as directed by them. After completion of seven moths and starting of eight months of her pregnancy when all the session formalities were over they granted her leave but for three months in the month of September. She was at home and within 15 days she came to know that In spite of having on paper sanctioned Maternity leave of three months, newly appointed her subordinate vice principal candidate was projected by Management as “Principal”. She also started using the designation along with official seal and communication to staff, students and other stake holders and media personnel as Authority inspite of having appointment letter of Vice –Principal dully signed by both Ms. Akshita Kumar and by Ms.Saraswati Singh.

And staff members were also threaten by her that if, you all want to further continue here then give in writing that all the staff members are comfortable and convenient with new Principal rather to recall previous one after maternity leave.

When all these things came into the knowledge of Ms.

Akshita Kumar she discussed with Mr. and Ms.Singh they took it very casual and suggested her to have patience and took it very lightly. She was very embarrassed and thought that in an Educational Institute where senior executives talk so much about the values and performance and ethics what exactly it is? She raised her voice, but when no concrete action was taken against her and they told her that now you will not in a position for few months to join the Institute so it should not be suffered and authority is required to deal and manage things on day to day basis and further they also rejected her for giving maternity compensation as per Maternity Act 1961 as this is not possible and we do not have any policy regarding this matter in spite of working with them from almost five years. And whenever you will back we will see.

She was shocked to hear this unexpected and unethical reply. Observing all situations she finally arrived on this decision that she was badly used by the Management members till she was physically fit to carry out her services and they used her to built their disturbed set up and when things starting on a smooth track because of this Maternity leave they ditched her. She was having full of regret that why did she trust on them? , She was having question in her mind that if ,it was like that only then why did not listen to her when she was insisting to relieve her why they did not relieve her respectfully rather than projecting that we will not appoint any person to replace you? And why she initiated various development programs, new ideas and invested and spent her time and energy with these thankless people to make their institute in a right workable situation. And in spite of so many request why they did not relieve her from the Institute. Any how she decided to not continue further with this group again and strictly requested them to give her five year of work ex- certificate and she switch to new organization after three months in the same city with a lesson for ever.

Questions

1. What do you think went wrong with the situation with Ms. Akshita Kumar? Kindly justify your claim.
2. What in your opinion should have been done to avoid this situation? Kindly present your views in detail.
3. Do the approach of Management was ethical with context to case of Ms.Akshita Kumar in spite of working for them from last five years?
4. Does gender differentiation makes a matter where in the various parts of world multinationals are headed by woman CEO along with various HR policies including, work from home and flexi work timing etc. to retain their women workforce?