

ABSTRACT

In today's turbulent environment and intense competition, Sri Lankan firms are forced to seek ways to be more flexible, adaptive and competitive as they are faced with competitive pressures and rapidly changing markets. Conventional methods of managing people and the traditional processes of decision making may prove ineffective especially in a transforming society akin to the Sri Lankan society. Above all, firms are discovering that people really are the most important asset. Employees must be involved if they are to understand the need for creativity and employees must be involved if they are to be committed to changing their behaviours in work, in new and improved ways. Employee participation in decision making is one of the many current forms of employee involvement in the workplace decision making.

However, managerial techniques of obtaining employee's participation was initially originated in western organizations and found to be effective. The main factor for the success of such employee participative techniques was the western culture. In western organizations national cultures supplemented the necessary ingredients for the fructification of decision making through employee participation but one cannot accept that such managerial technique will work equally efficient in the Sri Lankan culture due to the cultural differences.

Western cultures are comparatively more individualistic, risk taking, feminine and power distances in the society are less. On the other hand believes, norms and traditions of the Sri Lankan society roots well into the ancient history. Power distances are believed to be high in the Sri Lankan society. Uncertainty avoiding nature and collectivistic behavior of our work force may encumber the successful participation in decision making.

Therefore, in this study it was endeavored to discover how the factors of success of the employee involvement in decision making and the salient features of Sri Lankan culture complement each other. In this regard, three hypotheses were formulated to test the relevance of the strongest three factors that perceived by western organization as mandatory requirements for the success of employee participation in decision making. Furthermore, interviews also were conducted from the selected sample which is consisted of the workforce of Holcim International and Unichela Intimate undergarment manufactures of Mass holdings.

Through the study it was found that contemporary Sri Lankan managers cannot implement employee involvement methods which are readily available in the western organizations due to cultural differences. In this regard recommendations were formulated to create a better system which is suitable to Sri Lankan culture.