

Reverse Mentoring – An Innovative Way to Encourage Cross-Generational Relationships in Indian Organizations

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ABSTRACT

"Mentoring is a long-term relationship that meets a development need, helps develop full potential, and benefits all partners, mentor, mentee and the organization" – Suzanne Faure. In today's time mentoring, has become an important tool for knowledge sharing and organizational development. Mentoring is a form of two way leaning. In this process, mentors as well mentees gain knowledge, experience, valuable inputs and thus they develop a strong relationship between them which sustain for long time. Mentees need mentors and their support at crucial phases of their career. The guidance and direction provided to mentees by mentors help them to do work and take decisions in a proper manner. This paper discusses about the concept of Reverse mentoring, its impact, benefits, and its presence in current Indian Organizations.

Keywords: Mentoring, Start-ups, Sustainability, Mentor, Mentees, Organization

I. INTRODUCTION

Reverse Mentoring is a new concept of knowledge sharing. In traditional mentoring, generally senior and experienced mentors share their knowledge and inputs with their juniors. In reverse mentoring, the situation is opposite. In this kind of mentoring, the senior people in the organizations are mentored by their juniors in the areas of – social media, new technologies, new digitals platforms, new IT tools etc. General Electric's former CEO, Jack Welch, is generally credited with introducing a formal reverse mentoring program in 1999 when he ordered 500 of his top managers to find young employees who could teach them about the Internet. Since then, reverse mentoring has become a "best practice" among several large corporations, including Dell, Procter & Gamble, Bharti Airtel, Hindustan Unileveretc.

In today's time, the technology is getting updated day by day. So, it becomes necessary for the organizations to train their senior executives in above mentioned areas and reverse mentoring is indeed a feasible solution to that problem. Companies with large numbers of boomers and millennials see reverse mentoring as a way to bridge the generation gap and create a two-way exchange of knowledge which is very helpful for the organizations to increase their growth and become sustainable.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Dr. Parul Deshwal (2015) has discussed about reverse mentoring and its applications in this paper. According to the author, reverse mentoring has brought a paradigm shift in the area of mentoring in the organizations and it has increased the performance of workforce. Dr. K. Chandrasekar et al. (2015) have discussed about of the benefits and needs of mentoring in India. The authors believed that modern India needs strong Mentoring for healthy nation build up. Dr. Ruchi Tewari et al. (2014) have discussed about the structure and process of mentoring when formalized in an organization. They have also tried to measure the impact of formalized mentoring in creating a positive work force. Suruchi Pandey et al. (2014) have done a study based on the trends in mentoring relationships existing in the Indian IT industry. Kimberly Nicole Rowland (2012) has discussed about the benefits and applications of e-mentoring in this paper. The author has also compared and contrast traditional mentoring with e-mentoring.

III. OBJECTIVES

- 1) To study about the benefits of reverse mentoring.
- 2) To study some of the reverse mentoring programs prevailing in Indian organizations.

- 3) To study the methods of making Reverse mentoring more effective.
- 4) To frame a conceptual reverse mentoring framework for Indian organizations.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is purely based on secondary data. Data were collected through extensive review of literature like previous journal, articles, various organization websites, magazines, newspapers, periodicals, review papers etc.

V. DISCUSSION

Objective 1: Benefits of Reverse Mentoring –

- 1) Reverse Mentoring will help in bridging the generation and knowledge gap.
- 2) It will help senior executives in the organization to enhance their skills and knowledge in the areas of technology, social media, digital and cloud-based technologies.
- 3) Reverse mentoring will help junior members of the organizations to hone their leadership and communication skills.
- 4) Reverse Mentoring will dissolve the barriers of status, power and position.
- 5) Senior executives can share their valuable experiences with their junior counterparts. This will help to strengthen their bond of trust with them.
- 6) In reverse mentoring, the satisfaction of mentees (junior executives) towards their job will increase to a larger extent.
- 7) It helps organizations to maintain diversity at the workplace.
- 8) Reverse mentoring leads to innovation and creativity.

Objective 2: Some of the reverse mentoring programs prevailing in Indian organizations -

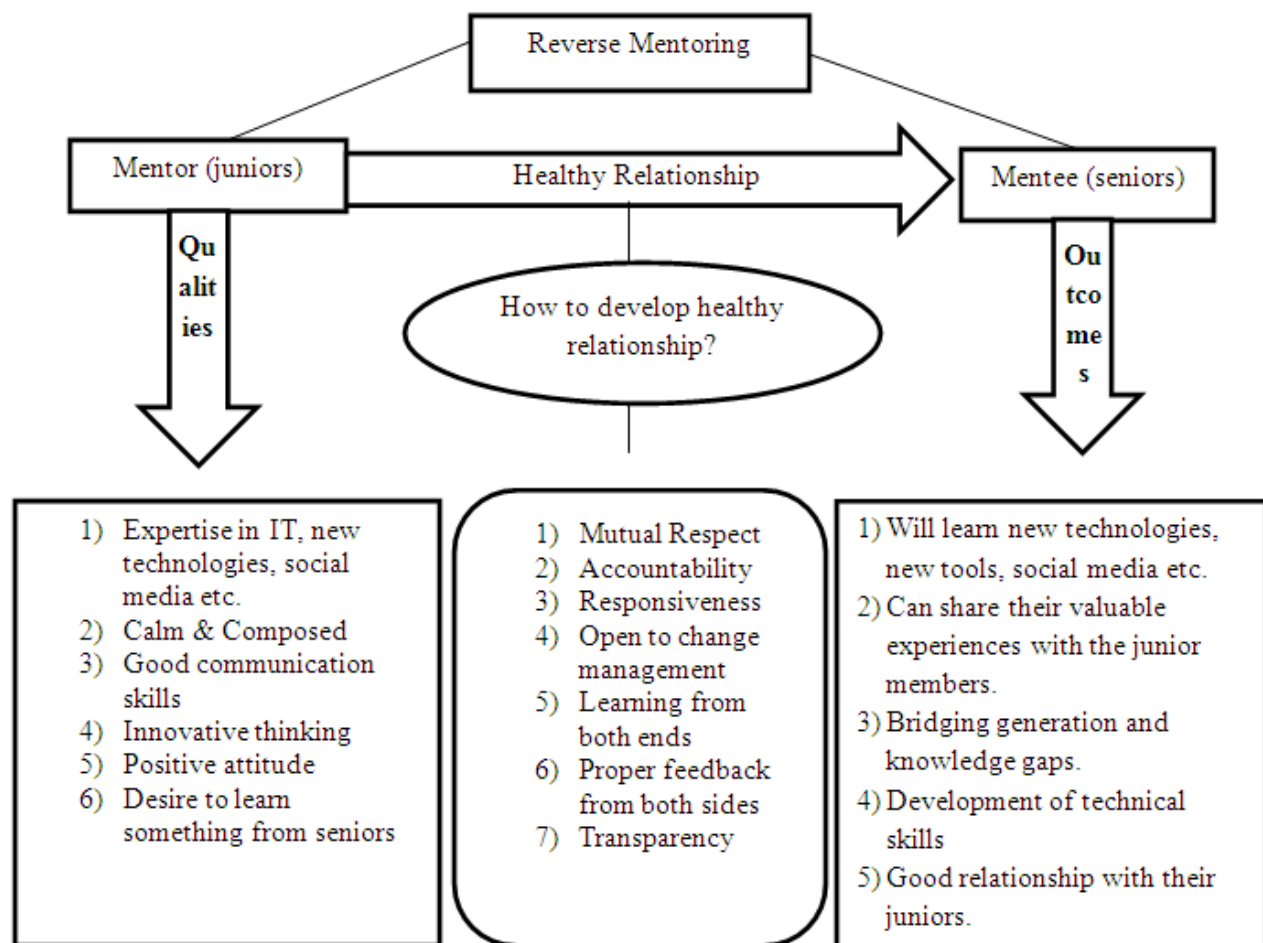
Organization	Description
Nokia	In Nokia, the senior executives have been mentored by their juniors in the domains of social media, value-added services, the youth consumer segment etc. and it was indeed a great success.
Bharti Airtel	In Airtel, many senior level executives are coached by their juniors in the areas of telecom, mobile technology and other applications.
TCS	TCS organize reverse mentoring sessions in the form of knowledge transfer for their senior brigade on a regular basis. The senior brigade is mentored in the areas of IoT, Digital technologies, Virtualization, Cloud computing, Analytics, Artificial Intelligence etc.
Essar Group	In Essar group also, the juniors provide mentoring support to their seniors. This will help juniors to share their knowledge, enhance skills and strengthen their bond.
Lenskart	In Lenskart also, veterans are taking the help of youngsters to understand the latest concepts and trends in technology, social media and fast changing market place. According to Cavin Lyngdoh CHRO Lenskart, "Reverse mentoring creates a much more caring and informal work culture and leads to better ideation."
PwC	In PwC, 80% of the senior leaders are in favour of reverse mentoring and they are ready to get trained by their junior counterparts.

Objective 3: Methods to make Reverse Mentoring more effective –

To make this process more effective we can implement the below ideas –

- 1) **Create Success Stories** – Creating Success stories of Reverse mentoring will surely help to strengthen the bond between mentor & mentee. Such stories will inculcate the culture of reverse in the organizations.
- 2) **Rewards & Recognition** – Rewards and timely recognition of the mentors and mentees will surely bring good results and it can be established as a great engagement tool also.
- 3) **Corporate Philosophy** – Every company has its own set of core values, ethics, morals and culture. By linking Reverse mentoring as a subset of any of these, the drive down becomes easier.
- 4) **Mentor-Mentee Day celebrations** – In such celebration the best teams of the reverse mentoring process can be awarded and given a chance to share their success stories. Such celebrations will help to create a healthy environment within the organizations, teams, and culture. HR Team can conduct such special days once in 6 months.

Objective 4: Conceptual reverse mentoring framework for Indian organizations –



CONCLUSION

Today Technology has played an important role in the development of most of the organizations. That is that reason most of the organizations now a days are putting a lot of emphasis on reverse mentoring which is indeed the need of the hour for organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Stress should be laid on the proper implementation of mentoring programs in India and across the globe. A successful mentoring program is one that is planned, organized, supported and managed so that it meets the needs of the people who are involved in it and the organization that runs it. Mentoring programs not only support bunch of mentees but it supports big organizations, communities, government, NGO's, Start-ups etc. So, mentoring is in itself being diverse in nature. Due to digital India initiative taken by government of India, time has come that the organizations must shift focus towards reverse mentoring and its proper implementation.

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