

CHANGING DYNAMICS OF HR PRACTICES IN THE AGE OF CORONA PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the changing role of human resource practices and improving its effectiveness during crisis situation, especially because of Global lockdown due to Corona Pandemic. The aim of this study is to analyze the main indicators of organization, individual and environmental ecosystem which decides the effectiveness of HR or to be very precise Virtual HR as an Organisational unit based upon various fundamental functions of HR, which include employee performance, motivation and grievance handling, and evaluation.

All these parameters are being studied by citing through the published articles as references. The aim of this research paper is also to examine more closely, the implementations of Virtual human resource management (VHRM) practices in the contexts of high uncertainties. Workplace, both from office location and work from Home has noticed tremendous transformation in the recent years. With the advent of Technological and digital advancement. Challenges has increased all over the world due to various macro political, demographic, strategic and pandemic problems. It also tries to focus on the differences in HR practices when the employees are working from Office and work from Home.

During the Corona crisis, we have noticed how the applications of Human resource functions changed from actual HR to Virtual HR. This Paper is based on references drawn which are published in prominent Newspaper, Reading Articles, and based upon it some conclusive evidences

KEYWORDS: *Virtual Human Resource Management, Organisational Unit*

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INTRODUCTION

We are reaching to the uncertain world of remote work station, where Organisations are having gloomy picture of future, Managers are unclear able decisions, and employees are ignorant, a dilemma which has posed Challenges to the New world order. Corona virus has not only shaken the fundamentals of world order, but it has also forced all of us to think and redesign the existing systems. Be it our shopping behavior, Consumption pattern, lifestyle, or working pattern all are severely affected because of it. HR is not an exception, the basic core of HR needs are required to be readdressed from holistic view with a birds eye approach. There are many challenges and opportunities which are posed due to the new challenging, emerging situation of current pandemic but HR is the most crucial one as it deeply affects the core value of Organisation

The basic role of Human Resources management is to maximise Human potential in the Organisation, and resource optimization by which productivity can be enhanced in the Organisation. It is not a simple configuration of

People, but nurturing talent pool and optimize it according to Organisational requirement and developing work structure and work flows. This study examines the changing role of human resources management practices and improving its effectiveness during crisis situation. The aim of this study is to analyze the main indicators of organizational and individual ecosystem which decides the effectiveness of HR or to be very precise Virtual HR. The aim of this research paper is to examine more closely, the implementations of Virtual human resource management (VHRM) practices in the contexts of high uncertainties. Workplace, both from office location and work from Home has noticed tremendous transformation in the recent years. With the advent of Technological and digital advancement & Challenges has also increased all over the world due to various macro political, demographic, strategic and pandemic problems. During the Corona crisis, we have noticed how the applications of Human resource functions changed from actual HR to Virtual HR. This Paper is based on references drawn which are published in prominent Newspaper, Reading Articles, and based upon some conclusive evidences

Most of the Global IT majors, based in US, like Twitter, Google, Microsoft, Facebook, Accenture, Apple are facing a very challenging problem where on the one hand, their operational platform are giving base of virtual functioning to the World. Employees of these Companies are facing a typical problem, of Stranded Employee, Global IT Companies are providing some flexible work structure, Although these Companies are strongly urging them to work from home, but the popular perception among employees perceive that it may lead them calling sick and result in some punitive actions and diminishing career prospects because of lack of clarity in HR practices due to this uncertain situation. The unique dilemma among the employee, whether to continue work from home or in work station leading to looming of uncertainty. Even Organisations also are not having clear policy towards it.

Only 53% of American Employees are covered under Organised Labour, means these employees are entitled for work compensation and time off benefits, what about rest of work force in this crisis is still required to be answered, a very challenging situation from HR perspective. Companies having Global work force are facing a situation of uncertainty about the Employee whether or not these employees will come back to their base station after the end of pandemic. Roughly 70% of US economy is based on expatriates, For structural correction it will take a long time from HR perspective. These dynamics of employee repatriation due to pandemic is badly affecting the Transnational Companies managing the employees during Corona Virus. The world was never prepared for such atypical and asymmetrical covert challenge A typical dilemma was faced by Management as well as employee from the perspective of Global HRM. However, with the environment suddenly becoming much more precarious, MNEs may be likely to operate on a much more restricted budget towards their human resources, and move towards leaner staffing and relying more on Technology rather moving towards a-HRM (Virtual or Augmented HR Practices)

Crisis are basically marked by 2 conditions, unpredictability and uncertainty. "Managers should make the call on high-level priorities, so employees can focus on their best work." Some of the HR Practices which can be implemented by the Organisation, for the employees who are working from remote location during the Uncertain and highly volatile situation can be

Communication should be Very Specific and Decisive

Creating trust among the employees are also considered to be one such alarming issue. "While now is a time to foster trust and delegate, you don't want people debating about whether they should or shouldn't do a major project. All that time questioning what to do will impact productivity," Austin says. "Managers should make the call on high-level priorities, so employees can focus on their best work."

At times when Business leaders cannot staff their employees at one place, another challenge is to keep them running and motivated, Here Technology plays a pivotal role in integrating the staff with Management regular Conferencing, suggestion sharing, emotional support, Protecting the employees who are de-motivated and informal chats always helps the employees to get connected with their higher staff and in a process will also provide a environment of Team Cohesiveness.

They may not be able to completely reassure workers about what will happen tomorrow, but they can provide a glimpse of the big picture from their perspective

Leader Should Set High Standard

Managers should set example of how to efficiently from Home work station by creating high bench mark of their functioning. “Leaders underestimate how much what they do is mirrored by their employees. Employees want there managers should lead them from front. Employee wants that there manger should not only guide them but also exhibit them from what to do and what not to do. They should appreciate their performance and shy away from the question of Non-Performance.

Super Flexible in Terms of Profession and Personal

Remote work station are having its own advantages, it provides the breathing space to employees to devote time for the family as well do the essential task of Organisation by avoiding unnecessary cluttering of offices and also avoiding traffic snarls. It also posses tremendous challenge to the employees of addressing the office responsibilities by focusing on work apart from balancing the aspirations of family members. This has provided a unique window of opportunity, along with super flexibility, Managers should provide the flexible time table to its staff within 24 hrs deadline so that work can be accomplished with perfection within allotted Time frame

Managers should appreciate the expertise and knowledge and help them to decide the best way of work. For the project which are time critical, employees should be briefed about deadline, priorities and response time. Prioritize should be set , which can increase the efficiency of Work. “Employers should understand the fundamental shift in employees’ lives and recognize that they have to radically alter their work expectations.”

Understanding and Adjusting Work Criteria and Expectations

Business practices are changing going through metamorphic transition. Workstation are spatially located ,working from remote location resulting in overloading for some workers while others have less work to do. It is the role of manager to develop trust among employees and develop uniformity in work structure by identifying situational circumstances, work requirements various performance indicators, professional identities, work commitments and conflicts resolutions.

Employers should understand the fundamental shift in employees’ lives and recognize that they have to radically alter their work expectations until this crisis winds down An employee with young kids at home, or someone taking care of elder relatives, or a worker needing to focus on their own physical and mental health as a result of the situation will not be able to do a 40-hour workweek.

Work is not the only thing on people's minds right now. Their families, their bills, childcare and school closures, the economy all trying to manage a lot "It is unreasonable and unrealistic to expect someone to be fully present, eight hours a day, when they have a three-year-old with crayons drawing on the wall, or an elderly parent who needs help navigating the stairs."

HR has different dimension of Work Ethics, , During the Corona Crisis we have noticed some employees are putting more efforts than other still to provide a message that they are still on, and putting their excellence in Jobs. "If an employee is cranking at home because he's good at it, but his colleagues are struggling, don't start assigning all the work to him, "Managers should be patient and give people time to catch up, so you're not adding pressure to anyone's plate."

Rethink Meetings

"People are still spending too much time in meetings, even though our work and lives have changed significantly,"

Calling the Meetings only for decision making can be one of the productive approach. Instead of creating Meeting heavy culture through ZOOM or MS Teams, , writing based tools like e-mail, or other information based tools can be well used for information sharing and idea gatherings. Calling the employees informally always helps to create better interface with remote workers. Calling the employees informally at their personal level can fetch more result instead of going through formal setup. In the early days of adjustment in remote working environment initial meetings can be helpful, but this protocol may be relaxed in due course.

"it can be harder to pay attention to a long meeting online versus face-to-face."

Afterward, managers should articulate key outcomes of the meeting using other media like email. "It can be harder to pay attention to a long meeting online versus face-to-face, so some form of redundant communication would be helpful so things don't slip through the cracks.

Move to More Asynchronous Work

In remote location employees are at their advantage with the disruption in Timing from 9-to-5 workday, employees can devote timing according to their flexibility based upon the nature of Job. A shift has already being observed from synchronous work structures to asynchronous work structures. Employees using Google docs, Slack, or e-mail, to execute there performances

"The crisis accentuates what remote companies already understand—that work does not need to happen at the same time," "People can wake up in different time zones and cities, open documents, and get going."

Those who are new to remote work also need to change their mindset about how quickly to expect responses and learn to practice patience, he says.

"If you post a message in Slack, trust that people will be responsible and come to it when they can," he says. "It doesn't hurt to throw your question in the deep, dark water and wait a few hours. We will all learn that things don't have to happen right this instant. This is the new norming that needs to happen."

Accept the reality that productivity will probably suffer. It is often stated that productivity increases at remote workstation, but in the presence context contrasting result are emerging out. Employees are scrambled between work place productivity and household disturbances. Employees are concerned towards global health issues, economic uncertainty and Job security. This will also lead to a challenging situation for the employee.

Focus on Outcomes rather than Monitoring Activities

“The crisis accentuates when remote companies misunderstand—that work does not happen through remote locations. “Managers who don’t see the people they’re managing and struggling. They feel like they’re losing control, and their insecurities are creeping in. Strict monitoring of employees by managers through remote work station, by suggesting them to on their webcams all the day will be quite suicidal. Sending the mail in odd time to check whether employees are alert is also a challenge for the Managers as it may backfire also

Such type of micro management may have short term benefits but it may lead to long term losing of trust among the employees. Instead of it companies should develop some other system by empowering employees and creating trust among them, Instead of Micro-management, Companies should provide their employees free riding and focus more on productivity rather than strict monitoring.

Take Time to Empathize

Managers must acknowledge the fact that employees are facing terrible situation in terms of uncertainty looming over their future, worrying about the Business, Jobs, Personal finances, wellbeing of Family members and friends, and even the squeeze of day to day logistics and amenities , including gathering groceries in germ harrowing run , resulting in emotional turbulences. Managers needs to be more empathic instead of mechanistic in such type of Lock down situation where they need to talk to there employees, listen about the well being of their family members and support them which will in turn create a sense of respect and commitment on the part of employee towards Top management. Manager should acclaim that they all are suffering, current crisis is a real one which has impacted all of us and need to motivate the employees that these are the transformational moments of life which can change us. Managers should show their vulnerabilities by saying, ‘We’re all feeling this.’ Working in teams may bond over this current crisis.” and can bring most transformational moments of life.

Let Workers Blow off Steam

HR Practices are required to be re-thought, Companies can also initiate some online social events, games, online talent events, happy hour gatherings, Coffee break sessions, and even informal online gatherings as a social affinity approach to resolve the fatigues among the staff during lock down. Employees may also be encourage to take some nap hours or self care as it may reduce the screen fatigue. There is also flip side associated to it, remote work station are having its own silver lining , remote work stations are also creating flexibility of time hours, better work life balance, less requirement of office space, avoiding hassles during office commuting are some of the obvious advantages.

“Now as we have opened the door to adopting a remote work culture, it may be hard to go back,”. prediction are that there will be a higher demand for more remote-friendly software solutions, a lot of empty space in office parks, and more workers looking for remote roles.” although remote working has been around for decades, first Virtual team came in existence in the early 2000s, little has been written on the implications for leaders and managers If done well virtual teams are empowering, cost effective and produce amazing results.

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