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“CHANGING PRACTICES OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN PRIVATE COMMERCIAL BANKS IN THE POST COVID ERA – FEW CONCEPTUAL REFLECTIONS”

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ABSTRACT:

Human Resource Management is very important aspect of every organization. The recent hit of Covid-19 brought unexpected wreckages in the lives of people. Human resources are undoubtedly one of the main victims of Covid-19 pandemic that forced many changes to occur within organizations which were necessary to keep the continuance of organization's operations. Therefore management of Human Resource, management of risks and incorporating the changes in the system has become the fundamental need in HRM practices for commercial banks after pandemic.

The Commercial banking system, needed to be rejuvenated in post COVID Era. This conceptual holistic paper aims to study the post COVID HRM practices being adopted by Commercial Banks in Hiring, Well-being management, Empowerment, Crisis Management, Performance management, Work-life balance, Technology Training & Re-skilling, Workplace changes and raising employees' belongingness, etc. Banks have to restructure their HR practices to cope up with pandemic crisis to survive in this complex tenure.

Key words: Human Resource Management, Pandemic, Survive, Empowerment, Re-skilling etc.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Human resource management (HRM) is orientation, motivation and retention of personnel in an organisation. It is a powerful tool for any organisation to succeed. It is a continuous and never-ending process. Byars & Rue, (2006) Human resource management is defined as a system of activities and strategies that focuses on successful management of employees at all levels of an organization to achieve organizational goals

Human resource management can be defined as a process of procuring, developing & maintaining competent human resource in the organization so that goals of an organization are achieved in an effective and efficient manner. The process of employing people,

developing their resources, utilising, maintaining & compensating their service in tune with the job & organisational requirements with a view to contribute to the goals of the organisation, individual & the society. Human resource management is defined as a system of activities and strategies that focus on successfully managing employees at all levels of an organization to achieve organizational goals.

The role of human resource management is that of a partnership between the human resources (HR) department and management regardless of the organizational type.



Source: <https://bohatala.com/human-resource-management-introduction-report/>

By: Jim Cox Nov, 8 2015

One of the greatest lessons of COVID-19 to the commercial world was a ‘mind-set change’ fuelled by absolute necessity. It is always known that flexible working from home (WFH) using digital technology was possible.

The role of HR becomes vital here to enable flexible change management. In an environment where digital communication is a prime factor and consistent customer-centric performance after pandemic are priorities for HR professionals as change agents.

Human resources are undoubtedly one of the main victims of Covid-19 pandemic that forced many changes to occur within organizations which were necessary to keep the continuance of organization’s operations. Every organization is evolving in nature and change is inevitable for improving performance and productivity. The planet is suffering due to

global pandemic and learnt to make relevant changes in the life style which is need of the hour. As the organization mainly depends on the people, it has been affected by the changes of purpose, principles, process, and performance of the organization.

The change management of HRM during the pandemic situation is more rigorous and challenging. The COVID-19 pandemic threw employers and employees into chaos and uncertainty, with no clear end in sight. Brian Kropp, group vice president and chief of research in the HR practice at **Gartner** says, “One of the lessons of the pandemic is that we have to put the ‘human’ back into human resources. HR needs to “understand the life experiences employees are going through, to support them not just in their experience as workers but in their lives,” he explains.

Human Resource holds a key position for the sustainable development of an organization. Hence, it is an utmost obligation of an organization to ensure the development of human capital. The covid-19 pandemic has created severe impact on many financial and non-financial institutions. Many banks and financial institutions have cut off their numbers of employees and operated with limited numbers of employees. Many commercial banks have used work from home policy during covid-19 pandemic.. The effective and efficient application and practice of human resource management will ensure a dynamic, competent, and talented staff that can achieve an organization's ultimate goal.

Therefore HRM practices being adopted by Commercial Banks in Hiring, Well-being management, Empowerment, Employment relationship, Crisis Management, Performance management, Work-life balance, Employees health and safety, Technology training & Re-skilling, Workplace changes etc. Banks have to restructure their HR practices to cope up with pandemic crisis to survive in this complex tenure. Workplaces have already started revamping their interiors in a way to ensure social distancing, even when physical interaction with the public is part of the job. Thus, ensuring employee safety and health security must be of utmost priority.

2. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS LITERATURE:

The spread of COVID-19 creates disruption, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity in all organizations. People are the primary asset of any organization and help achieve their goals. Accordingly, to manage human resources sustainably, the organizational strategy review is an appropriate retort.

HRM practices in the companies have been experiencing significant changes over the last few decades. HRM is that part of management which is concerned with the human dimensions of the organization especially the matters followed by HR planning, job analysis, recruitment, selection, orientation, compensation, performance appraisal, training and development and labour relations. Job Satisfaction (JS), on the other hand, is a function of the perceived relationship between what one expects and obtains from one's job; and how much importance or value he attributes to it.

Post the COVID-19 pandemic; there will be a great extent of uncertainty around the external environment, people's minds, and the future of businesses. It will not become easy to keep the business running smoothly after the pandemic, and the massive transformation caused by the pandemic will change the career path of employees uncertainly. In this phase of social change, employees are doubtful about their future and the HR teams are struggling to align everything back in the position.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world drastically. Anjum et al.(2020); Rahman et al., (2021)¹ in "Challenges for HR Professionals in the Post Covid -19 Era" mention that it has adversely affected almost all businesses around the globe and these unexpected changes have created extraordinary difficulties for the companies Anjum et al. (2022),in " Journal of Business Strategy Finance and Management" opined that the COVID-19 pandemic has redesigned the work trends, so the HR leaders need to re-plan the workforce maintenance, performance management and other workplace policies. Therefore, it is essential for every commercial organization has to prepare themselves for upcoming changes and challenges. COVID-19 forced organizations to change or modify their traditional work method and reinforced online activities.

Organizations allowed work from-home, minimized work hours, cancelled or postponed business tours, arranged online workshops or trainings etc. The pandemic has increased the employers' involvement in different aspects of their employees' life.

HR professionals have long tended to employees' physical and mental health, but now they're being more proactive about it, says Bryan Hancock², a partner and the global leader of **McKinsey & Co.**'s talent management practice. That means noting how employees feel as well as developing skills to detect problems early and to help.

Doing so requires HR to demonstrate more emotional intelligence, notes Holly Maurer-Klein³, SHRM-SCP, a vice president at HR/Advantage Advisory in Pittsburgh. “I think it’s going to change what companies look for in HR professionals,” she says.

Wise (2020)⁴ states that with the threat of subsequent COVID-19 waves and other pandemic outbreaks, social distancing and lockdown measures are likely to be an on-going feature in our lives for the foreseeable future. The COVID-19 pandemic, which occurred during late 2019 without any prior intimation shuffled the globe unexpectedly. Over the night, organizations were compelled to re-design their structure and process to continue the work with new arrangements. Individuals were intimated to work from home wherever possible. This transforms their personal space into a combination of personal and professional settings (Zhang & Varma, 2020)⁵.

3. DATA COLLECTION:

The researcher has applied for this article is purely secondary sources of data which was collected from various sources, including published articles, reports, and websites.

3.1.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To know the hiring procedure, training practices, performance management practices, of banking sector after COVID-19.
- To know how organizations motivate to maintain the well-being of each individual & employees Work-life balance to carry on good health and safety to incorporate refined behavioural management to enhance employees’ empowerment.
- To know HR practices with respect to development of sense of organizational belongingness.

3.2.SCOPE AND LIMITATION:

The study is limited to secondary data which is quite conveniently accessible and affordable to the researcher. This paper is covering post pandemic HR practices only i.e.2020 onwards. The same study can be made through Empirical method covering HR practices in the tenure of pre-COVID and post-COVID.

3.3.COMPILATION OF DATA:

The data collected through secondary source have been compiled with detailed explanation for deriving appropriate inferences and conclusions. The interpretation is made by using comparison of HR practices to highlight significant trends.

3.4. RESEARCH GAP AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

There has been a significant progress in several aspects that are related to the HR practices in commercial banks after COVID. Therefore researcher tries to search the present scenario of HR Practices such as Hiring, Well-being management, Empowerment, Crisis Management, Performance management, Employees health and safety, Work-life balance, Technology training & Re-skilling, Workplace changes and raising employees' sense of belongingness etc.. This paper can create awareness among the people. Hence the title is **“Changing practices of human resources management in private commercial banks in the post COVID era – few conceptual reflections”**

4. POST COVID HR PRACTICES IN PRIVATE COMMERCIAL BANKS– AN ANALYSIS

Covid-19 has drastically changed the operations of Human resource management. Periodically HRM practices took different turn from hiring procedure to till the retirement from the organization It is important to analysis few aspects of HRM which can became evident of change in banking sector in post pandemic..

4.1. HIRING PROCEDURE:

Recruitment to provide seamless candidate experiences and create a global pool of talent. Banks have begun hiring virtually. 100% of HR team is operating from home and right from recruitment to on-boarding everything is happening online. In fact, most of the HR teams are operating from home and right from payroll to recruitment to on-boarding.

HR team has been using video formats of the interview from WhatsApp to other formats and from the assessment point, they are doing e-assessment which is either some question based, a written online exam or psychometric test of Thomas, etc.

It is completely happening online, the work has not stopped, in fact, it has become a lot more efficient because of cost-saving as the person would have made arrangements, paid travel expenses and done all of that and virtually it is not costing you anything. So it is useful, faster and is very efficient HR practice that has taken place after COVID.

4.2.PLACEMENT, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT:

In increasing competitiveness and rapid change in technology, banks require new training and development methodologies for their healthy survival. Live Virtual Classroom (LVC) & Learning Management System (LMS) through dashboard has become the latest trend in training and development. Learners gain the most from social interaction, such as an online forum.

Microsoft teams, Zoom, Skype and the likes have been used for years to conduct virtual meetings. The emergence of HR technologies has become inevitable. Organisations are leveraging in the virtual-dominated era to experiment in various fields. According to a leading global media publication, investments in HR tech have increased by 57% since last year. Learning and development is to ensure growth, capability building, and up skilling of the workforce in a hybrid work environment

E-learning eliminates the need to wait until you have enough employees together to make classroom training cost-effective. Whether local or remote, employees can start training as soon as they're hired or when they or their managers desire them to learn a new skill. Nowadays outsourcing has become the latest phenomenon in training and development program in these days.

4.3.PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT:

Performance management is the process of identifying, measuring, managing, and developing the performance of the employees in the organization. With the pandemic all norms have changed, where managers have realized that the only way to measure employees are now to purely depend on the results that they produce and the impact that it has on the business. The current scenario calls for a complete overhauling of the traditional system, and to design processes that focus on metrics that drive business impact

4.4.WELL-BEING OF EMPLOYEES:

The first step toward promoting employees' well-being would be to create a congenial workplace environment that gives the feel of security, free from worry and fear. Encourage employees to live a balanced life and support it with HR practices that motivate them to exhibit more productivity. Conservation of Resources Theory or COR suggests that people “seek to obtain, retain, and protect resources and that stress occurs when resources are threatened with loss or are lost or when individuals fail to gain resources after substantive resource investment” (Hobfoll, 2002, p. 312)

The World Health Organisation defines health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The COVID-19 pandemic has left an impact not only on the physical but also on the mental well-being of people. Globally, an estimated 264 million people suffer from depression and anxiety. The economic downturn and the job uncertainty caused by the pandemic added to the woes of the global pool of professionals, causing an increase in mental health issues that already existed in this section due to work stress and burnout. The physical and mental well-being of employees, managers, and leaders is essential for uninterrupted service delivery, effective project management, and thoughtful decision-making. The implementation of wellness programs reduced healthcare costs for 72% of employers, according to a career discovery platform.



Source: Gartner

2023 will also witness the continuation of initiatives designed for employee engagement and retention and HR will have to devise creative strategies to engage and retain employees even during the recession. The strategy will include factors beyond compensation, such as enabling

meaningful contributions to the ecosystem, aligning with the broader organisational purpose, and providing a flexible, motivating work environment.

4.5.EMPLOYEES' EMPOWERMENT:

Employees' Empowerment is the ways in which organizations provide their employees with a certain degree of autonomy and control in their day-to-day activities. The undesirable change resulting from the pandemic is uncertainty. As industries have suffered the fallout from COVID-19, empowering employees has become more crucial than ever before. An empowered employee will positively impact not just his own performance, but that of others too. Therefore, investing and developing power teams can be a winning strategy, especially in these uncertain and challenging times.

Building a workforce that is aligned to company's vision and equally excited about it too, might be challenging especially in this time of instability. It requires a strong value proposition for the talent population to feel motivated and exceed expectations. It is important to create an empowered and supportive environment inspiring people to think of why they do what they do, both at work as well as for people when they are working from home

4.6.WORK LIFE BALANCE:

Work life balance is defined as allocation of time and psychological energy in a balanced way in work and nonwork life while deriving much satisfaction from both work and non-work life (Greenhaus et al. 2003) Work-life balance is an essential part of why employees stay where they are, so knowing how to give them a good work-life balance is crucial today. The pandemic resulted in a large majority of employees working from home for an extended period of time. This change in location gave many people a work-life balance they didn't know was possible before, making it much harder for some to come back to the same old office routine.

As a higher authority, it's crucial to be approachable to the employees. But whenever possible, promote from within the company. Talk to employees and see who is interested in moving up, and then work with them to make it happen when opportunities arise. Creating a soothing work environment keeps the employees positive and enjoy their work happily to balance their work-life is the best way to get them to stick around for the long haul.

4.7.DEVELOPING SENSE OF ORGANIZATIONAL BELONGINGNESS:

When employees do not feel like they belong, they will disengage or look for the exits, as many employers are discovering. “People spend so much of time at work. When they are in a space that doesn’t acknowledge that what is happening in the world impacts them, it becomes harder for them to contribute,” says **Tonya Ladipo, founder of The Ladipo GroupLadipo.**

The Covid-19 pandemic changed our day-to-day lives so dramatically that the line between employees’ personal and professional lives became blurred. Personal values changed, along with the expectations of employers and workplaces. There is a new emphasis on employee well-being in the workplace, bringing with it a holistic approach that strives to recognize the different life experiences each person brings to work and to create an environment where all employees feel like they belong.

4.8.BEHAVIOURAL MANAGEMENT:

Crisis management that is described as an intervention with an effective organization created to manage crisis situations. All crises have the roots of failure as well as the seeds of success for companies. Identifying, developing remedies and handling Crisis and finalizing potential success in times is the basis of crisis management. Greek thinkers Hippocrates and Thucydides defined the crisis as "the turning point between life and death, victory and defeat."

The fast and astonishing upspring of the crisis caused by the COVID-19 was created the need for a complete crisis management of healthcare facilities, the performance of employees, their feeling of satisfaction, with respect to safe conditions for work and the salary. This affects smooth operation of the banking system. Therefore it is very sensitively perceived by the people which affects them directly, introduces not only healthcare impacts, including deaths, but also economic, social and mental consequences.

The banks are working on the crisis. “*Doing What Matters in Times of Stress*” this Guide illustrates how to equip people with practical, knowledge, skills to help cope with stressful situation. There are few important ways to handle crisis at home.

1. Communicate the crisis with all those involved, even if there isn’t a solution yet.
2. Create congenial atmosphere to when there an important conversation.
3. Communicate the potential resolution.
4. Consult and Coordinate.

5. Have a flexibility, growth, positive mind set.
6. Follow up for Actions.
7. Evaluate the situation.

5. CONCLUSION:

At the outset it can be concluded that the appropriate human resource management practices would increase employees' mental well-being, satisfaction, productivity, motivation, and health safety at the workplace.

The Banking sector has to restructure their HR practices to cope up with pandemic crisis to survive in this complex tenure. Workplaces have already started revamping their interiors in a way to ensure social distancing, even when physical interaction with the public is part of the job. Thus, ensuring employee safety and health security is the utmost priority. Banking being a service industry, productivity and commitment of the staff have a significant effect on the overall performance of banks.

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