

CHANGING WORK CULTURE AS PER DEMANDING WORKFORCE IN JUTE INDUSTRY –A CASE STUDY

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Abstract :

Department of Human Resource of Bally Jute Company Ltd. has been taken various measures for successful running of the unit during Covid 19 situation. The unit was closed during nationwide lockdown. After opening from 2nd week of May 2020,, the HR department taken various changes at work place . Distribution of Face masks, installation of sanitization unit at main gate for entry and exit of all employees, continuous eight shift working hours instead of traditional break shifts , social distancing norms, use of liquid soap at all drinking water points, distribution of face screen to seniors officers ,use of company car for receive and drop facilities of staff are the important decision taken by HR department that help the unit to be run successful and to meet the customer desired demand of finished goods in time. The HR department has taken lodging and fooding facility arrangement of all outstation trainees within the organization. As a result, productivity is achieved in desired level. Due to return of permanent labours to native states of Bihar, Odisha and UP, productivity of the unit was initially disturbed. With expert decision of HR officers now overcome such problem. The Bus services for labors of neighboring close mills are undertaken. This help the labors to entertain receive and drop facilities from their places. The continuous eight hours shifts, helps the productivity at desired level along with the benefit obtained of labors that lose their job due to closure of their own mill. Use of Digital technology, are now main communication system of various levels of staffs and stakeholders.

Key Words: Lockdown, productivity, Sensitization unit, Face Masks, Digital technology

INTRODUCTION:

It is crucial for HR to revamp the policies and processes in accordance with the new normal. With the current industry situation, traditional ways of working concept is now urgent to be changed as early as possible. The pandemic has given the Jute industry into critical position. It is believed that Covid-19 now significantly impacted the Indian Jute industry. The Jute industry is now gradually observing the rise in market opportunities, mainly in domestic market during the pandemic situation. The Jute industry is now prepared for the work from home in some department with better equipped to deal with the nationwide situation without any significant impact on productivity. The HR department of Jute industry has been in the frontline, leading the efforts to facilitate employees. In situations like these, HR, in addition to handling the business requirements, is also responsible for managing concerns and apprehensions of their employees. The present study is taken at a pioneer Jute industry , where a lot of decision has been taken from HR department with active participation of top Management .The given steps is now important under the pandemic situation .The accepted decision of HR department is now helped the jute industry to run the unit successfully .

OBJECTIVE OF STUDY:

The Objective of the present study is stated below.

- To observe the impact of Covid 19 towards the Jute industry.
- To find out the various decision accepted by the HR department under pandemic situation.
- To observe the benefit obtained from the implementation of the corrective measures for new normal

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Various research papers published, articles in websites are studied and collected on HR roles and responsibilities during pandemic and new normal activities of various organization. HR department is an important area of any organization for taking new initiatives and transformed the organization in challenging situation . Bally Jute Company Ltd. is a well-known organization in Kolkata. The unit is selected for observation of various activities during lock down , policies initiatives changing decisions at the Covid 19 situation. Regarding this all meeting, minutes, notices of HR department as well as top management are studied . The different initiatives of HR department are discussed with officers of all department and HR department for writing such case studies. Regarding present decision of various activities from HR department and future goal of the unit personal interview with HR officers were undertaken. Based on such studes, the concept is taken for report /manuscript preparation which may helpful for other Jute and Textile industry for selection of future success path.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The Covid-19 pandemic has created unprecedented circumstances for organizations around the world. The economy has taken a hit, forcing organizations to freeze hiring and cut the headcount budget in a bid to sustain revenues and margins. To deal with restrictions on physical collaboration, more & more organizations are adopting alternate ways of working. The author explained [1]in his research work that Blended workforce, Evolving Workforce Landscape, Liquid workforce, Changing critical roles and Transforming Hiring Strategies & Processes are the important steps are now urgent at this time.

As the pandemic resets major work trends, HR leaders need to rethink workforce and employee planning, management, performance and experience strategies. The coronavirus pandemic will have a lasting impact on the future of work in nine key ways. The imperative for HR leaders is to evaluate the impact each trend will have on their organization's operations and strategic goals[2], identify which require immediate action and assess to what degree these trends change pre-COVID-19 strategic goals and plans. The author suggested that Increase in remote working, Expanded data collection, Contingent worker expansion, Expanded employer role as social safety net, Separation of critical skills and roles are important steps for improvement in such time industrial activities

Twenty-eight representatives from FDI and local factories as well as global brands across Ethiopia attended the webinar series that took place on April 10, 2020. The meeting also served as a platform to share best practices performed by factories to educate workers about Corona virus and put in place preventive measures whilst still in operation [3]. Despite the efforts of Ministry of Health and IPDC on raising awareness for the workers at the industrial parks, majority of the managers emphasized that there is still work to be done in informing workers on the preventive measure to mitigate the spread of the virus. The need to set up testing facility and quarantine protocol in the case of COVID-19 suspected case with in the industrial parks was also highlighted by some factories. It is critical that random testing is done at factories. It will reduce the risk, motivate factories to continue operation. Otherwise we will be forced to close the factories. Workers have to feel safe and we employers have to feel safe.

Food Corporation of India and state procurement agencies require jute bags urgently in view of the arrival of food grains for RMS (Rabi marketing season) 2020-21. Non-availability of packing material at the time of food grains arrival can derail the procurement process and create law and order problem in various states, the IJMA stated this [4]. It also stated that the mills engaged in the manufacture of jute sacking bags, an important material under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, be exempted from the lockdown and allowed to resume production, the industry body said. Workers in jute mills are either living in quarters in the mill premises or staying nearby, and hence the need to avail public transport does not arise, the official of the association said.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Bally Jute Company Ltd. is a pioneer Jute industry in West Bengal, India. More than 3000 employees are now directly engaged with day to day work. Economy of Bally, Uttarpara are entirely dependent on such industry. The unit is closed due to Nationwide lockdown from March 22, 2020 and productivity was started slowly in the month of May 12, 2020. Gradually the productivity has been increasing due to high demand of Jute products in domestic market. This is a continuous process. A lot of people are engaged for day to day productivity of the Mill. HR department along with top management were taken various measures for peaceful running of the unit. The respective decision and corrective measures of the HR department of the unit during this pandemic situation are now discussed below. The given stapes are helping the unit to run successfully.

Clean Work place of the Industry: HR department takes special initiatives to clean the work place of each department along with official areas. Fumigation, social distancing, disinfecting, pest control, hand sanitizers, clean floors etc. are taken in time. Following measures are taken at work place.

- Regular cleaning at work place of each department.
- Disinfecting at main office, and other office of HODs
- Each working table is surrounded by plastic sheet covers which help the staffs to make safe distance with the staffs or people at the opposite side of the table.
- Liquid soap is given in plastic container at each basin of washing.
- Continuous monitoring of the workplace by CC TV camera.

Focus on Employee Wellness:

- Counseling of staffs and labor to maintain the covid 19 standards norms and procedure at work place,
- Hanging banner, display board relating to DO NOT SPIT, at strategic point of workplace.
- Display board of Do's and not to do's rules at pandemic.
- HR will need to put more focus on the mental health and overall wellness of the employees.
- Retired employees has been given full benefit and released from job. They are advised not to join at work place during pandemic situation. Better to stay at home. Employees above 60 are generally released from work at this new normal.
- Distribution of masks to all level of staffs and staffs has been deployed to monitor that every employees should follow the right way of face masks.
- Face screen has been given to all senior officers.
- Sanitization unit at main entry of the company gate, so that every employees should get entry through sanitization unit.
- Mill Main office is totally closed in special lock down days, no officers will attend on lock down days, while production staffs and labor are joining their work as usual way.
- Drop and receive facility of company car for staffs'. Senior officers already avail the company staffs quarters. A few staffs are given lodging facility during lockdown days.

- Most of the workmen are already taken the company's own labor colony for lodging facility which is adjacent with company's own area. Outstation workmen are given receive and drop facility by hiring bus service for three shifts .Labour shortage is the main problem during pandemic. Most of the regular workmen of the company had already returned to their native home at Bihar, Odisha and UP. As a result, company has to arrange outstation contact labor from closed Jute Mills. Labor from such closed mills is coming to this unit at various shifts. Such people are entertained the Bus service given by company.
- A large number of trainees of machine operator are now staying at company's own labor quarters. They are enjoying the lunch and dinner facilities freely.
- 24 Hrs opening of company's own dispensary and free consulting with medical officers. All employees are getting such benefits. HR officers believed that holistic benefits are a common way of introducing wellness to a company. These benefits address all aspects of well-being, including mental health and financial security. While these plans will differ in offerings, the idea is to provide employees with benefits that help improve their well-being beyond standard health coverage.
- Social distancing norms maintain at work place by all level of employees.
- Continuous shift of eight hours was started instead of break shifts.

Employees are more comfortable with Technology:

- Communication with various stake holders and Top management officers are now through whatsapp messaging, video conferencing etc. The employees are expanding their comfort, capability and confidence with such modern communication adds.
- Physical meeting with customers, external providers are now eliminated. Marketing department officers are now communicating with buyers and customers through on line mode.
- Lockdown was taught the employees of BJCL to figure out a way to deal with these challenges and they are now confident that most of the employees are enhancing their comfort, capability and confidence with digital technology .HR officers were taken leading role to achieve such generation of confidence within the employees.

HR Department of BJCL is trying for Work to Become More Flexible:

- BJCL has established greater technology systems and support in place to facilitate mobile working.
- Teams are setting to collaborate at a distance and leaders are improving their ability to manage based on outcomes and objectives rather than presence.
- Recruitment of staffs, workmen are going on online process. Interview process on video conference by HR professionals of BJCL.
- Training of trainers is going on at work place for improvement of skill and competency and knowledge.
- Assessment of training of trainees are taken by online mode.
- Monthly salary of staffs and workmen are on banking transaction .No cash payment.
- Reduction of hard copy report and enlarge of soft copy reporting by Email, whats app group for major information distribution.

Relationship with Teammates:

- Relationships with team mates are now undertaken by different online media .This gives well safety at pandemic situation and maintain social distancing. Jute industry is labour intensive industry. More people are required for production, maintenance day to day activity. All production people are coming to the regular work with continuous shift, instead of traditional break shift. As a result exposure at work place is reduced .The workmen are coming to their job with proper safety, e.g., face masks, hand gloves , hats etc. Peoples at workplace are working like family members.

- People at workplace have now new levels of connections with their colleagues.

Mental Health improvement through Counseling:

- Few office staffs are now doing job from home .HR officers doing counseling of those staffs, whenever they gets time. Constantly staying at home will take its toll on mental health. Counseling are helping such officers potential increase in mental health issues, These also helps an increasing appreciation for its importance and now organizations try to find out employment benefits and programming to help employees mental health.

HR Department is now trying to deal with the shift :

The department of HR of the unit is now concentrate of the following four areas .

- Physical health and wellbeing of the employees.
- Remote Work of employees except production and maintenance.
- Issues related to jobs and work continuity of employees at work place or from home .
- An urgent need for mental health, resilience, family support, and dealing with uncertainty.

Increase in remote working in some department:

- Shift to more remote work operations in Purchasing or Store consumable , Purchase raw material, Marketing , Customer communication departments.
- Engineering utilities, Production, Maintenance will directly related to work place activity, so no remote work in such areas and employees to the respective department.
- Goal setting of employees those who are in remote work.
- Enhancement of Contractual jobs and freelancers in different activities of the unit.
- Constantly upgrade the work force, capability enhancement to remain competitive.
- Focus on learning and development of the employees who are now under training and to make them future-ready.HR officer are now declared to all employees that the new normal will be challenges .

Employee up skilling at the Unit :

- HR officers of the unit is now concentrated on employees up skilling for future prospects
- Learning and development initiatives of employees. This not only help employees feel valued, but it also helps fill knowledge gaps within the company.
- Modification of recruitment practices, rewards and recognition policies, engagement initiatives.
- HR officers are now encouraging employees to develop critical skills that potentially open up multiple opportunities for their career development in this unit.

CONCLUSION:

To run the company successful the HR teams of BJCL are the functions of employees which are urgent for day to day activities at work place .HR executives are creating role categories is the first step in planning for uncertain times. It is found that three different categories are identified. Essential categories are those employees who must be available under all circumstances. Such candidates are mainly production, maintenance department .They are involved day wise activity at work place. Temporary suspension categories workers who can be suspended for a short period. Quality control staffs are such categories. HR officers already terminated a few staffs. Extended suspension category workers who may be suspended for an extended time or indefinitely. Group D, official staffs, security personnel are such category. HR professionals of this unit try to find out that their teams are making

significant efforts to maintain business continuity, drive transformation, and ensure the right people are in the right locations to help their company fulfill its mission, whether that location is at home working remotely or on the front lines delivering essential services. It is to be noted that remote working doesn't mean that employees are disconnected from the rest of the team. Senior officers of this unit are now using Email, video chat, instant messaging and virtual collaborative spaces are equally valuable to them.. Both employers and employees of this unit are now utilizing online communication. Officers of this unit are now stay attentive to email or messaging and establish best practices in order to easily collaborate with co-workers. Senior officers are now used of video conferencing for team meetings and applications (e.g. Zoom, Slack, WebEx, Skype and Microsoft Teams, etc.) to make instant chat and video calls quick and easy.

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