



A comparative study of Human Resource Strategies during Pre and Post Pandemic (Covid) Period with special reference to mid-size IT Sector. Systematic Literature Review

Faquir Ishtiaque, Vinayak Anil Bhat
Research Scholar, Associate Professor
Jain University

Abstract:

Covid 19 pandemic brings unprecedented changes to Human Resource strategies especially in Information technology industry in India. Employees have to work from home using remote access to company's intranet facilities and they have to work for longer hours. Special counselling and coaching activities are introduced to companies' employees to curb down stress, anxiety and depression while working from home and develop motivation and positivism to employees' morale to enhance job efficacy, productivity and creativity during pandemic period (Soga, 2022). Amendments are made to core HR strategies such as planning, recruitment, selection, performance appraisal, compensation, industry relationship and new labor laws implemented to better suite post pandemic situation and sustain competitiveness in the industry (Soga, 2022).

Introduction:

IT industry is lifeblood to India economy. IT companies played significant role in contributing GDP of India. There are numerous IT employees exists throughout India of various size in terms of annual turnover, number of employees work and are classified into small, mid and large size. IT industry is big sector, present throughout the country, and employ thousands of employees. IT sector faces challenging times during pandemic situation as employees had to work from home for longer hours including working in teams, individually and webinars are arranged for corporate meetings. Mental well-being of IT employees during and post pandemic period is paramount for self-efficacy and productive work (Soga, 2022). For accurate performance of works in digital platform from remote location is challenging to both employers and employees as work has to be performed smoothly without delay and disruption to meet deadlines. Employees have to work in digital platform from home for long hours and employees respond to this situation in positive manner by conducting training works for motivation, stamina to meet those requirements without feeling lethargic and bored (Asadzadeh et al., 2020). Employees learned new skills

to work in digital platform and to attend Webinar meetings with supervisor, team members and departmental heads to progress their operational tasks implementing mission and vision of the company during pandemic times (Azizi et al., 2021). Hence, new strategic plan has laid down by top management of IT companies in Bangalore to adjust with pandemic situation and its bindings.

During Pandemic Period:

During pandemic period, small IT companies were closed and employees laid off, terminated or retained without payment. These small IT companies do not have well established HR policies and have limited corporate customers. Mid-size IT companies work in digital platform such as virtual webinar to perform their tasks services for the company for long hours from home. They also attend group meetings and perform group tasks online on digital platform (Soga, 2022). Employees learned new skills pertaining to how to work on digital platform from remote locations and home that is unprecedented (Barrutia, 2021). Hence, employees work skills are enhanced manifold by working in digital platform that raises their work efficiency and instill job engagement, loyalty and commitment for IT companies (Benita, 2022). They are not lay off and receive payments and fringe benefits as they are working normally maintaining usual office hours from home or from remote locations. Large IT companies changed very little as they already possess well established HR and work policies and employees are highly skilled to work on digital platform both online and offline without facing much difficulty or hurdles. They are not laid off during pandemic times and receive their salaries and payments as per company policies, rules and regulations. IT employees in large companies' exhibit top-notch performance during Covid Times without facing much physical stress and mental shock. (Aleem, 2023). These are work and job activities of various size IT companies during pandemic times to get adjusted with working in digital platform with remote access location.

There was no hiring during the pandemic times but in post pandemic situation when situation becoming normal hiring takes place through online platform as well as physical presence. Training and skill development during pandemic times happens online in digital platform (Barrutia, 2021). After the pandemic situation is over, training and development activities occur in traditional ways such as on and off the job training under new normal condition. Compensation and reward policies are implemented depending on various criteria such as learning new skills, working on digital platform from remote locations, group work in company's intranet, job loyalty, work engagement and commitment and other related task activities (Sharma, 2022).

HR Activities in IT Companies:

HR managers are selected as they monitor and disseminate work information to all employees in the company irrespective of functional unit, size of organization and position. HR managers arranged counselling session for IT employees to enhance mental stability and emotional intelligence overcoming of fear while working from remote

locations and home, motivating them to work for longer hours that stimulate more work engagement and instill job loyalty in stress free work situation (Sharma.et. al 2022).

Pandemic situation creates unprecedented crisis and critical situation that employees have to learn and enhance digital work skills to work from home or remote areas (Sharma, et al. 2022). HR strategy is changed during and beyond pandemic times. Once the pandemic situation is over then employees switch to hybrid mode of work as compliance with strategy and policies of HR department (Benita et al. 2022). This implies that some days employees work from home (remotely) while in other days they are physically present in organization and do work without mental worries, anxiety, stress and panic situation. These bolster employees work efficacy, create job commitment, offer flexibility in working hours and are motivated to deliver their best work performances (Heidari, et. Al, 2022). Besides overhead costs are curb down as employees work from home without coming to office and they are well adopted to perform tasks for long hours without interruption, delay or stress (Hassan, 2023). Employees demonstrate patience during performing work in digital platform remotely for long period. Employees receive comprehensive training and counselling from mentor and supervisor of their respective companies to perform productive work without making critical errors or getting tired and feeling anxious or panic. Emotional stability is paramount to work remotely and acquiring new skills to work in digital platform for long hours without demonstrating any signs of fatigue or tiredness (Sharma, 2023). Once pandemic situation is over, employees' work in hybrid mode as integral part of post covid strategy termed as the "New Normal" (Aleem, 2023).

Pandemic and Post Covid Work Activities:

The study delves into how much IT companies care about motivating employees to work from remote locations and home, enhance learning new digital skills while working in Webinar and other digital platform such as Zoom, Moodle, Google Meeting and others to execute their tasks without getting demotivated, anxiety and worries. HR employees coach and council its employees to learn new digital skills to overcome bottlenecks and difficulties regarding working from remote locations for long hours for smooth development of stable mental well-being and hone skills for human capital development (Cardenas,2023). Training and skill development of employees during pandemic times happens online in digital platform. After the pandemic situation is over, training and development activities occur in traditional ways such as on and off the job training under new normal condition (Soga, 2023). Appropriate compensation and reward policies are implemented depending on various performance criteria such as learning new digital skills, working on digital platform from remote locations, team and group works in companies' intranet, job loyalty, work engagement and commitment and other related task activities (Cardenas, 2021). HR managers arranged counselling session for IT employees to enhance mental stability, overcoming of fear while working from home, motivate them to work for longer hours and stimulate more work engagement and instill job loyalty in stress free work situation (Cardenas, 2023).

Small IT companies opened their office in Post Covid Time Period termed as "new normal situation". They hire ex-employees or recruit new employees to perform operational works offering IT services to corporate clients in

digital platform, physically and in Webinars. All employees work from office and maintain normal office hours. In mid-size IT companies, employees adopt hybrid mode of work situation that brings immense benefits to both companies and employees. Hybrid approach work structure implies that IT employees work from home in some days and work from office in other days during new normal condition (Heidari, 2021). These enhances employees' self-efficacy and productivity generate streamlined operation procedures and maximize efficiency, work engagement and skill developments. Mental well-being is instill by coaching and intensive training sessions are organized to enhance digital skill capabilities to conduct innovative tasks culminating in new knowledge creation and talent enhancement of IT employees (Azizi, 2021). In large companies also, some employees return to office and do work physically while other employees adopt hybrid mode of work or work in shift to maximize productivity and enhance work performance that proved to be beneficial for both employees and IT companies. There is hardly any negative side effects of employees' performance (Barrutia, 2021). Working from home or remote places will continue in the future, as it proves to be effective and serve organization agenda by implementing mission and vision of the IT companies. Employees demonstrate patience during performing work in digital platform over long hours during and after Post Covid situation. Employees receive comprehensive training and counselling services from mentors and supervisors to perform productive work without making critical errors or getting tired and feeling anxious or panic (Asadzadeh, 2020). Emotional stability is paramount to work remotely and acquiring new skills to work in digital platform for long hours without showing any signs of fatigue, tiredness and trauma (Asadzadeh, et al, 2020).

Research Knowledge in HR Strategies:

Not too much journal research papers are published regarding hybrid mode of work approach in Post Covid Time Period and how much this benefits organizations such as IT Companies in Bangalore, India. In Post Covid Time Period, HR strategies such as planning, recruitment, selection, performance appraisal, compensation system, industrial relationship and labor laws are altered to adjust to new normal situation (Heidari, et al 2020). Not too many research papers have not discussed about what mental stress and shock that were generated among employees during pandemic times and had done extensive research into this area for in depth understanding about mental wellbeing while working in digital platform. Hence, there exists dearth of mental wellbeing information in research journal articles that highlight the situation to research scholars in this field. Some journal articles do not define how scholars measure employees' productivity level during and Post Covid world. There exists no statistical and mathematical analysis regarding how productivity are measured in the above-mentioned period (Sharma, 2022). A few number of research articles are written regarding HR strategies of IT companies beyond Post Covid period; lot of articles are written about entrepreneurship and SMEs about strategic HR beyond Post Covid level. Hence the research tasks is trying to obtain information about IT companies' strategies in Post Covid period and beyond to contribute more knowledge in this sector regarding its functioning and maintaining operation procedures to cultivate high productivity level (Asadzadeh, et.al,2021). This area of research tasks will be tremendous help for performing

complex tasks in this field in future especially in India as this sector contribute knowledge development of IT employees resulting in holistic development of Indian economy (Hassan,2021).

Post Pandemic Period Job Activities:

After the pandemic situation is over, training and development activities occur in traditional ways such as on and off the job training under new normal condition. Appropriate compensation and reward policies are implemented depending on various criteria such as learning new digital skills, doing work on digital platform from remote locations, teamwork in company's intranet, job loyalty, work engagement and commitment and other related task activities (Edward, 2022). HR managers arranged counselling session for IT employees to enhance mental stability, overcoming of fear, motivate them to work for longer hours and stimulate more work engagement and instill job loyalty in stress free work situation (Edward, 2022). Research tasks reveal how effective Post Covid work strategies are and how core competencies of IT employees are developed manifold by generating sharp learning curve for knowledge enhancement that benefits organizations holistically. This cultivates in sustain profitability and skill development of knowledge workers for enhanced productivity, creativity and innovativeness to expand their knowledge by implementing pragmatic HR strategies in Post Covid world on digital skills (Hassan, 2021). Employees receive comprehensive training and counselling from mentor and supervisor to perform productive work without making critical errors or getting tired and feeling anxious or panic (Aleem, 2023). Emotional stability is paramount to work on digital platform and acquiring new skills without showing any ill feelings, hesitation, and tiredness. Employees are guided to follow and implement best practices at workplace while working in digital platform (Heidari, 2022). Further coaching and counselling activities are organized in Post Covid Time Period to make necessary adjustments in working in new normal situation by adopting hybrid approach of work. Recruitment and selection strategies are changed radically in pre and post covid period. In pre covid period, hiring takes place by being physically present in IT company offices and answering interviewing questions by means of face-to-face communication with interview panel members (Benita, 2021). In post covid period, recruitment and selection of IT candidates occur virtually in digital platform or Webinar with face-to-face conversation with interview panel members (Benita, 2021). Reward and compensation strategy is based upon how well employees learn digital skills to conduct work through company intranet and server, ability to get adjusted to working in the new normal situation especially in hybrid mode, being innovative and performed creative work for long hours without any sign of mental discomfort (Barrutia, 2021). IT employees are rewarded based upon how effectively they perform jobs in digital platform, self-efficacy and show loyalty for more job engagement and commitment to work in fast-paced work environment and stress free situation from pandemic issues (Sharma, 2022). In pre covid world, employees' compensation are based on their work performance in office, maintaining office timetables and implement strategic agenda of the organization. HR manager's posture, gesture, emotional feelings and facial impression are monitored closely to assess resilience of IT employees by working over long hours and their loyalty and job commitment for the organization (Hassan, 2021). Pandemic situation is truly unexpected and dangerous and employees faced hardship to adjust towards tasks on digital platform for long duration. There exists paradigm shift the way IT

employees work during pandemic situation. Pandemic situation creates unprecedented crisis and critical situation that employees have to learn and enhance digital work skills to work from home or remote areas (Edward, 2022). Human resource strategies are altered during and beyond pandemic times. These bolster employees work efficacy, create job commitment, offer flexibility in office hours and motivated to deliver their best work performances at workplace physically and in digital platform. Besides overhead costs are curb down as employees work in hybrid mode or entirely from home without disruption, delay or stress (Cardenas, et al, 2021). There exists physical safety at workplace such that employees are not worried about pandemic circumstances and seamlessly work from remote areas with secured network and internet connectivity. These HR policy changes and implementations bring new benefits in work schedule for IT companies and are therefore being assessed positively (Barrutia, 2021). The research needs to explore and understand how productive employees become because of HR policy changes and what benefits these changes brings for the organization for long-term purpose for the organization. Once pandemic situation is over, employees' follow hybrid model of work approach as integral part of post covid strategy termed as the "New Normal" (Soga, 2022). Research works on mid size IT companies are beneficial, as there exists plenty of them in Bangalore, India that contribute to economic development and generate skilled employees. More accurate important information and future strategies will be predicted with logical reasoning geared for self-efficacy, human capital development and learning new digital skills to bolster core competencies in areas of service expertise to cater the need of advanced and modern digital services (Cardenas, 2021). In depth interview with HR managers of IT companies are paramount pertaining to understanding how much they care about motivating employees to work from remote locations, learn new digital skills while working in Webinar and other digital technology such as Zoom, Moodle, Google Meeting and others to execute their tasks without getting demotivated, anxiety and mental shock (Edward, 2022). HR employees coach and council their employees to learn new digital skills to overcome bottlenecks and constrain regarding working from remote locations for long hours resulting in development of stable mental well-being and hone skills for human capital competencies (Barrutia,2021).

Conclusion:

More and more companies are adopting automation technology in India and this sector becomes very crucial for economic development and instill advanced competencies of IT employees and to rest of the world. There will be more ramifications in work procedures of IT employees to implement new HR strategies in Post Covid Time Period. Employees learn and develop mental inertia to implement new post covid HR policies imperative for working in digital platform and possess stiff learning curve to understand work procedures in digital economy generating new skill development at workplace (Azizi, 2021). This sector contributes highest amount of GDP to India economy and will continue to play pivotal role in economic development of India in near future. Hence, by investigating research articles and economic data, it is ultimate privilege to research in this sector and how HR strategy was framed to deal with pandemic situation and beyond in IT companies in India (Saslzadeh, 2020). Ethical issues and corporate culture are taught to employees so that they possess high morale and motivate to serve the organization in difficult and challenging situation during pandemic time. Mental inertia of IT employees' is developed by

working in digital platform and stress level assessed to facilitate development of sharp learning curve in future for further self-efficacy. Research activities' role are being conducted regarding evolution of management and HR especially in Covid situation (Hassan, 2021). There exists paradigm shift the way HR and management works in Post Covid world compare to Pre- Covid level HR activities. The research highlights what changes happened during pandemic period and changes made in Post Covid Time Period (Sharma, 2022). Self-efficacy and productivity level have increased manifolds to IT employees in India since Post Covid Time Period.

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