



HR INTERVENTIONS DURING COVID AND POST COVID ERA IN MISSILE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY IN TELANGANA STATE

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Abstract

Outbreak of the covid 19 pandemic has made the manufacturing organizations to introduce various new initiatives, adaptations, innovative process to make them sustainable. In line with many organizations Work from Home for their employees in the lockdown period is adopted to possible extent, Changes were effected in shift timings to maintain covid protocols which was created both difficulties and benefits to Employees and Management.

Main purpose of this study is to investigate some new policies/ procedures introduced and implement by a DPSU during Covid 19 pandemic and its effect on Human Resources front. It is interesting and investigative, how DPSUs are coping with this sea change from normal policies. The study reveals, various new policies/procedures, steps taken to overcome its impact on production in turn performance of the Company to possible extent.

Index Terms:

Corona virus disease (Covid-19), Defence Public Sector Undertaking (DPSU), Human Resources (HR)

1. Introduction

Defence Public Sectors are continuously striving towards keeping their employees safe in the first and second covid wave while dealing with increased uncertainties for keeping productivity increments at its best possible. The pandemic has made sea change in the manufacturing industry function for better productivity. Even after COVID-19, the DPSUs priority must be improving automation across its value chain taking digital initiatives to the next level, and promoting work from home, exclusively for the support functions like HR and finance to make the DPSUs ready if the future wave arrives. It also need to augment production after the corona virus pandemic leaves. All the DPSUs shall develop local suppliers for the raw materials and reduce complexity in manufacturing through standardization by developing Vendors under Make in India and Aatma Nirbhar Bharat.

It is known that DPSUs were affected in several ways due to the pandemic with low productivity due to hamper of production operations as per planned schedules and volumes. Therefore, during this period, turnover and revenue are adversely affected and faced set backs in the first and second wave of covid, by low rate of turnover over the set targets. This is during lockdown times by untimely deliveries of raw material, disturbances in the supply chain affecting the delivery schedules to the customers, under capacity utilization due to special regulatory mechanisms imposed by Government of India and the State Governments.

Hence, every manufacturing sector has impact on its production schedules and performance of the DPSUs due to pandemic besides the health of the employees

2. Need for the study

On declaration of Corona virus as pandemic by “World Health Organization” and its nature to spread rapidly, world has faced a catastrophic situation hence to combat this challenge coordinated joint efforts of all sections of society are required.

Covid 19 has made the manufacturing Industries to introduce various new initiatives, adaptations, innovative process to make them sustainable. During this, HR has faced a lot of difficulties in maintaining the morale of the employees high and to address issues of the employees besides company goals in achieving the targets. Hence, COVID-19 creates an environment to think differently in a new ways or create innovative ways in working environment. Since change is unavoidable, HR initiatives/ measures taken by the DPSU, has lead the manufacturing industries to improve their performance and productivity. Industries have made changes in shift timings to maintain covid protocols without hampering the production process besides process improvements in HR using technology.

Key challenges faced by HR in upkeeping the morale and maintaining health, safety of the employees. Hence, this study provides a review of various process, challenges faced in treating the employees and their eligible dependents during Pre and post COVID-19 period. Besides the effort put in by the Organization for the benefits of the society by initiating various steps under their CSR activities of the Company/

Its biggest problems is disturbances in its supply chain. Still there is a hope for meeting these challenges. The responses to this issue include the introduction of protection procedures, sanitation and sanitization methods, updated policies, incorporation of new vendors for streamlining of their product portfolio, a more responsive evaluation of supply chain resilience, an analysis of emergency management plans. In this way manufacturing sector can cope with the corona virus pandemic

DPSUs dealt the situation in overcoming the shortfall due to lock downs & curfew in the states in meeting the production schedules by HR initiatives during the COVID-19 epidemic and various measures taken up facilitated the welfare and health of their employees for long term sustainability to alleviate the Productivity effect on Performance of the Company.

3. Research Gap

There are scanty of literature on the subject, different organizations have adopted and practiced various HR process in dealing with employees in during and after covid pandemic. The Interventions taken up in Manufacturing Industries are varied for keeping the morale of their HR for running the industry and improving the productivity are sparse especially industry like the select one. Therefore, there is a gap for study on the subject in DPSUs

4. Objectives of the Study

- i) To study the various measures/Steps taken by the BDL in managing of their employees during and post covid era.
- ii) To study the New HR Interventions implemented.
- iii) To suggest any improvements.

5. Research Methodology

The study is basically descriptive in nature This gives an idea followed by the researcher in an organized way to resolve the research problem to meet the set objectives. Scheduled interviews were conducted with 20 HR Managers in different capacities and obtained the data of measures taken and new interventions taken up. The same has been recorded to meet the objectives.

6. Literature Review:

Nicola and his co-authors(2020) articulated “ the impact of socio-economic aspects of the economy covid-19 on the. Travel ban, implementation of covid protocols like Self-isolation, social distance and leading to decline in the employment opportunities in several jobs. The demand for medical supplies and facilities has raised considerably. It created panic for buying and stockpiling of food grains growing demand in the food industry”.

Dr D Yogesh Mahajan (2020) “ in the study found that the manufacturing sector is highly affected by coronavirus pandemic. Due to this pandemic contractual labour have lost their livelihood through contractual employment and made them moved to their native places. Even the companies’ made their efforts to retain them by introduction of protection procedures, sanitation and sanitization methods, a updated recruitment policies, Identification of new vendors, the streamlining of their product portfolio, a more responsive evaluation of supply chain resilience, an analysis of disaster or emergency management plans. In this way manufacturing sector can cope with the corona virus pandemic”.

Mahajan described (2017) “factors which drives the Indian millennial to online retailers in India and their perception towards online retailers, found that they are more or less satisfied with the services provided by selected online retailers during covid. It was found that four factors are statistically significant while selecting a particular online retailer (Mahajan, 2017; Mahajan,2011).

Vashisht,2018 in his study of “examine the impact of technology on employment and skill demand within Indian manufacturing sector. Estimating a dynamic labour demand equation, we find that despite reducing the required labour per unit of output, technology has not reduced the aggregate employment in Indian manufacturing sector”

7. Profile of the Organization

The select organization is a Public Sector Under Ministry of Defence established in the year 1970 at Hyderabad under the. It has Miniratna status in its rating in Defence PSUs. It is one amongst the few strategic industries in the world manufacturing strategic missiles. The original name of the organization is avoided due to sensitivity.

The Organization was incorporated with the prime objective of manufacturing guided missiles, pioneering with license production of SS11 B1, a first generation Anti-Tank-Guided Missile¹⁷. Today, it is producing second-plus generation missiles and allied equipment, in addition to long range strategic missiles. It has also taken up refurbishment and life extension of missiles held by Defence Services. To expand its customer base, has forayed into the fields of Under Water Weapons and Decoys¹⁸. Efforts are also on to penetrate into international market by participating in International Defence Exhibitions and through Joint Venture business partners¹⁸. With its Corporate Office located at Hyderabad, and having three manufacturing Units, one at Hyderabad and other at Medak District of Telangana State and one unit at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh to cater to the requirements of the Indian Navy is on the anvil¹⁹. It is also planned to set up new Units one at Ibrahimpatnam, Ranga Reddy district, T.S. and other one at Amravathi, Maharashtra²⁰. Most of divisions of the industry have been accredited with ISO: 14001 – 2004 certification in appreciation of its Environmental Management System (EMS) practices.

8. HR INTERVENTIONS

Formation of Community Service Group (CSG):

To mitigate spreading and fighting against Corona virus and to protect the community at large, the astonishing efforts from all sections of society are required. As a part of Individual Social Responsibility, besides manufacturing Missiles, it has become paramount BDL to extend helping hand to the society/community in dire need in such a disastrous situation.

BDL has come out with a novel idea of forming **Community Service Groups (CSG) Unit wise in their vicinity to bring togetherness in diversity in disastrous situation** to make them unite and ready to serve the community, particularly BDL at large for extending helping hand to any **BDL Family Member** in dire need during this Lockdown Situation for containing spread of **Pandemic Corona Virus in the community**. This is a unique opportunity created for everyone of BDL fraternity to be a part with an objective to serve the man-kind against a nation's call and to fight against a Pandemic menace.

Internal Response Teams :

In the 1st and 2nd wave of Covid 19 more number of employees and their dependents were affected. It is necessitated to control the spread of virus in their vicinity, as a responsible citizen, it is everyone responsibility to keep a vigil over contacts and to identify those contacted personnel to manage and respond to suspect cases.

To overcome this scenario, Response Teams were constituted to deal the covid 19 affected employees to ensure that they are under quarantine with proper Medical care till Covid test reports are received. Information and history of the primary and secondary contacts of the covid 19 affected person are collected. They were isolated and self-quarantined in few cases for observation on development of symptoms for 17 days

These teams ensured the covid -19 positive patients for better medical treatment immediately. Necessary assistance/care including basic needs haven been arranged for isolated/quarantine cases and their families. CMOs of Units shall regularly monitor isolated/quarantine cases and appropriate medical care shall be provided to them. To have close liaison with the State Health authorities on covid-19 cases and ensure that proper medical treatment is given for speedy recovery referred to Intensive Medical Care in Empanelled Hospitals.

Establishment of Quarantine Centres:

To contain the spread of Covid 19 virus, quarantine centres were established for effected employees and their dependents. Free food supply and medical needs were provided till they are normal and required medical help is provided

Identification of Exclusive Hospitals for Covid 19 Effected employees and dependents:

BDL has identified various hospitals exclusively to treat the covid effected employees and their dependents and lot of strain has been taken up by BDL Management in dealing with covid 19 patients and spent lot for better treatment.

Community Assistance Team(CAT):

It is an **Initiative to Serve the Community** through Distribution of food as a part of Community Social Responsibility. On announcement of lockdown, many Daily Wage Earners living out of work in constructions projects, taxi services, house keeping and other informal sector employment came to a sudden halt. Due to this situation, many Daily Wage Workers and Migrant workers are not able to meet their basic food needs and reported few hunger deaths. BDL as a part of its Social Responsibility has come up with a noble initiative to serve the food to the needy people residing in the vicinity of Kanchanbagh unit who have lost their earnings due to lockdown.

The Community Assistance Team(CAT) at KBU has identified distributed food in four identified areas nearby the factory for distribution of food to the needy people during this lockdown scenario for 500 persons every day till lockdown is lifted. Around 30 employees through the Community Assistance Team, KBU have volunteered to distribute food.

Measures taken up in the Company Premises:

Entry and Exit:

Employees are liable to be pass through stringent security checks Biometric Access control Systems at Entry and exit gates. Due to covid 19, the same has been Dispensed with biometric system as a preventive Measures

Covid Protocols:

Created awareness across all Units to the employees, contract labour and apprentices through announcements, displaying posters and banners. Regular Sanitization of workplace and employee commuting vehicles, Thermal Screening and Sanitisation at entry point, Medical declaration taken from all after lockdown .

A direction to all employees to use Aarogyasetu App mandatorily and Social distancing is maintained at every stage of movements in the Company. Employees with co-morbidities, pregnant women are being allowed to work from home, on case to case basis. There are restriction on travelling, tours and training to contain the spread of virus. Religious places were closed and reopened on 08.06.2020 ensuring social distancing

Additional hired vehicles are engaged to commute employees to ensure social distancing. Restriction on gatherings and unnecessary movement of employees in the premises. Shop keepers are advised to wear masks and gloves. Employees travelling from other states are quarantined Cloth masks given to all and made compulsory at workplace

Modification in Working Procedure

- a. E-Office File Life Cycle Management a new software is introduced to reduce physical handling of files
- b. Physical Meetings are minimized and conducted meetings through virtual medium are encouraged to avoid physical contacts
- c. Visit between units / offices are minimized
- d. Staggered lunch break is introduced
- e. Staggered shift timings introduced in Units

Actions for Employee Well- Being

- i) An amount of R 4000/- is reimbursed to all employees for purchase of Oximeter, Thermometer, BP apparatus, Face Shield etc
- ii) Isolation rooms / areas arranged for immediate separation of suspected cases before sending to Hospitals.
- iii) Conducting tests as per Govt. guidelines for High Risk contacts and isolating low risk contacts.
- iv) Reputed hospitals are empanelled for treatment of employees
- v) Closing of building / workplace and conducting sanitization before resuming work as per guidelines/
- vi) Ensured Vaccination for all employees and contractual employees (2 doses)

Challenges

- 1) Preserving Human Resource to maintain continuity of work and ensuring that sufficient manpower is available at all times
- 2) Up-skilling, re-skilling of employees through virtual media
- 3) Maintaining employee motivation

Contribution to Society through CSR:

- a) Production of alcohol based sanitizers
- b) Providing meals to migrant labourers during lockdown
- c) Contribution to PMCARES fund
- d) Contribution for Covid hospital
- e) Procured 96 Deep Freezers and handed over to State Government for vaccination Programs.
- f) Supported Govt Hospitals for supply of Oxygen Cylinders.
- g) Commissioning of Oxygen Plants at 4 Govt Hospitals.

9. Findings:

1. BDL has dealt Covid 19 outbreak very efficiently and effectively in overcoming the shortfall due to lock downs, curfew etc in meeting the production schedules to a possible extent.
2. The HR initiatives during the COVID-19 epidemic facilitated the welfare and health of their employees for long term sustainability.
3. Online File management systems in place of physical handling of Files are institutionalized. Work from Home is encouraged for covid effected employees.
4. Virtual meetings are institutionalized in place of regular face to face meetings which reduces the travel time and travel cost.
5. Additional facilities for covid effected employees were provided. , Establishment of Isolation centers, Employees were nominated for online mode of training.
6. Corporate Social Responsibility Measures have been taken by BDL during the covid towards society like food distribution during lockdowns etc and funding to PMCARES, Contribution for Covid hospital, procurement and supply of Deep Freezers to State Government for vaccination Programs and Oxygen Cylinders besides Commissioning of Oxygen Plants at 4 Govt Hospitals.
7. It demonstrates the possible efficacy of employee –oriented systems leads to achievement of performance of the Company.

10. Research limitations

This study is pertains only to a DPSU based at Hyderabad and providing factual information about Covid impact. There will be possible direction to work out with other organization on covid 19 impact to address the issues post covid era.

11. Conclusion

The study concludes that, whenever possible, Management should explore remote working opportunities in all its Units to lessen uncertainty and improve employee psychological well-being by addressing problems of the employees for their well being. It helps us understand various HR interventions to upkeep the morale and measures to enhance efficiency without compromising their employee's quality of life quality, Health and their safety during the covid time.

12. Originality

This research study is original in nature. This is purely based on HR interventions taken during and post covid time by the select organization. In depth studies at various stages of pandemic definitely gives us valued knowledge.

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