



# Employees' Perspective of Performance Appraisal System in I.T. Sector during COVID- 19 Pandemic

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## Abstract

The Novel Corona Virus or more commonly known as COVID-19 pandemic is a worldwide phenomenon that has affected the lives of billions of individuals on this planet for the past 2-2½ years. Just like all other sectors, the I.T. sector employees also experienced variety of hardships maintaining their job stability and performing their best even during such critical times. The research mainly focuses on the satisfaction of employees working from home during the lockdown caused by this pandemic.

Keywords: Performance Appraisal, Work from Home, COVID-19 Pandemic, Lockdown.

## Introduction

“Performance management, when handled skillfully in an organization today, can increase job satisfaction, employee retention, loyalty, and overall performance of the organization.”

– Soumyasanto Sen, Co-Founder & Partner, People Conscience

Performance appraisal in basic words can be described as the regular annual review of an employee's work and overall contribution. Organizations use appraisals to give an employee the big-picture regarding their growth in their skills and work and to justify pay increases and bonuses, as well as termination decisions.

But one can see the shift in this definition due to the rapidly changing and digitalization of work environment to cater the vast number of barriers created due to COVID-19 pandemic and numerous

restrictions created from it globally. What was once considered standard process of evaluating an individual's performance is now considered as outdated.

To address this critical change brought to the working environment due to the survival instinct one needs to focus on factors that are important in development of a fair and just appraisal system that will enable the balance between satisfaction of the 'survival of the fittest' employee fighting in this stiff competition and the organization's aim for achieving the profits and keep it afloat in times of crisis,

### **Review of Literature**

Awan Sajid Hussain et al (2020) implied that organizations can adopt a participative approach towards designing effective PMS, so that the identification of issues and limitations can be done on time. This can help to develop a comprehensive and more effective and practical PMS that can ensure employee-related benefits. The research conducted found a positive significance between comprehensive appraisal system and employee satisfaction.

Priyanto Hanif et al (2020) concluded that management system supported PMS is required to improve the digitally improving workforce in this COVID-19 pandemic where 9 to 5 work performance is suddenly changed to WFH which is an essential requirement. With the new normal era the main features have shifted to focus mainly on performance based results and evaluation that has created a do or die situation for the employees working in such firms, where they have to give their absolute best in order to survive the crisis.

Darwish Saad et al (2020) attempted to empirically test and study how Medical Representative (MR) maintained their psychological balance at work even during the critical time of the pandemic. The main findings of the study is that supervisor's support, co-workers support, appreciation of the work done positively influenced and helped employees to enhance their work engagement in turn bringing out profitable results.

Prasad K.D.V. (2021) emphasizes that the 21<sup>st</sup> century PMS and evaluation of employee performance is no more considered to be a routine activity that was performed as a yearly tradition. It also confirms the fact that in the age of the new normal after the occurrence of COVID-19 pandemic the idea of measuring the employee work plan with their achievements/ outcomes is now obsolete as these new-age employees are no longer viewing these outdated PMS as pay v/s work.

## Objectives

The following are the objectives of the research conducted:

1. To find out the pattern of existing system of performance appraisal in the I.T. sector.
2. To analyse the satisfaction level of employees towards performance appraisal during the time they worked from home.
3. To study employees' suggestions/ recommendations to enhance performance appraisal system existing in their respective organisation.

## Hypothesis

H<sub>1</sub> : Employees are satisfied with their performance appraisal system implemented during pandemic lockdown.

H<sub>2</sub> : Change in the current appraisal system used to evaluate work from home is recommended by the employees of I.T. sector.

## Research Design

### Data Collection

The research data was collected via google form from those service sector employees were allotted work from home during the COVID-19 Pandemic i.e. April, 2020 to March, 2021. A total of 50 respondents participated in the data collection via a randomly sampling method.

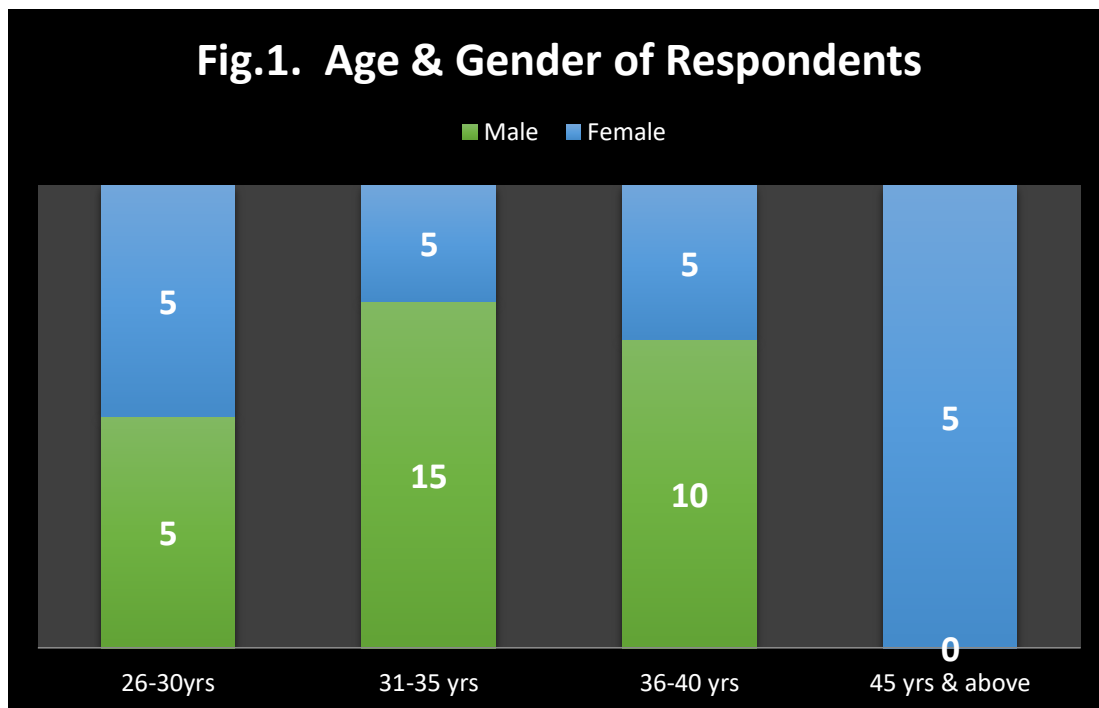
### Time Period

The research focuses on the time period when lockdown was observed in Mumbai i.e. April, 2020 to March, 2021.

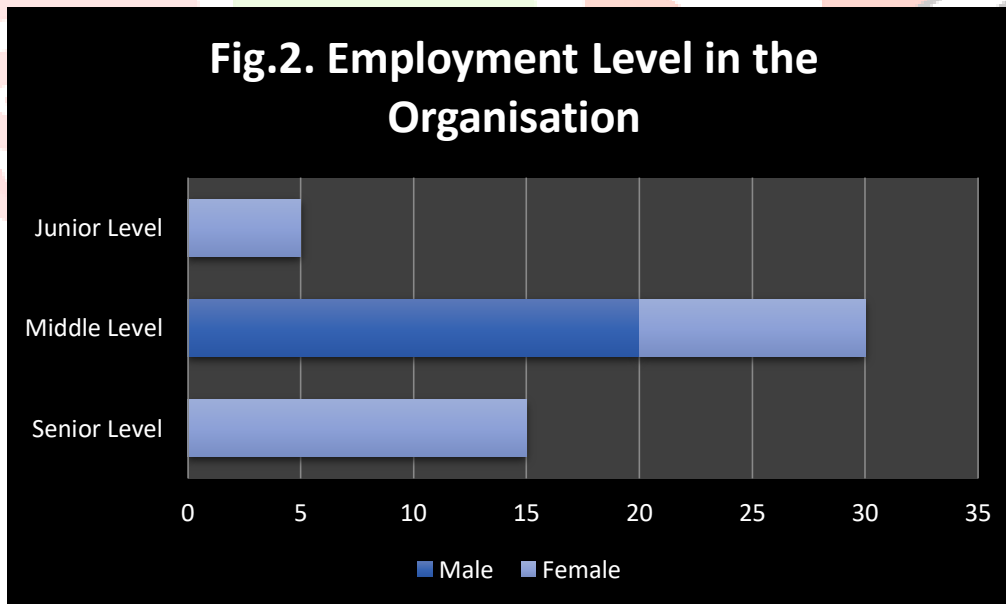
### Limitation of the study

The data collected is from a limited number of respondents, hence it cannot be applied to all the employees working in similar organizations.

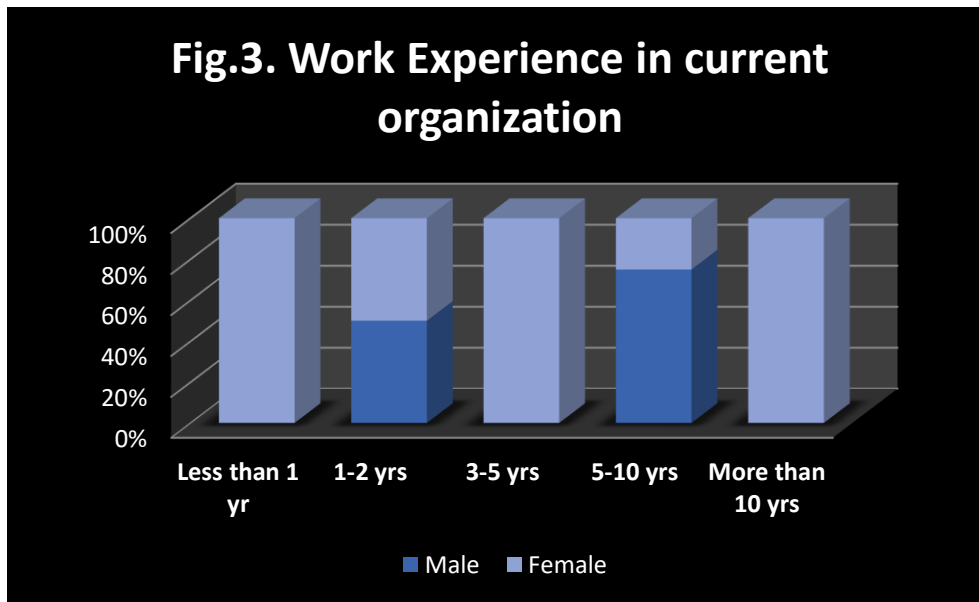
Data Analysis



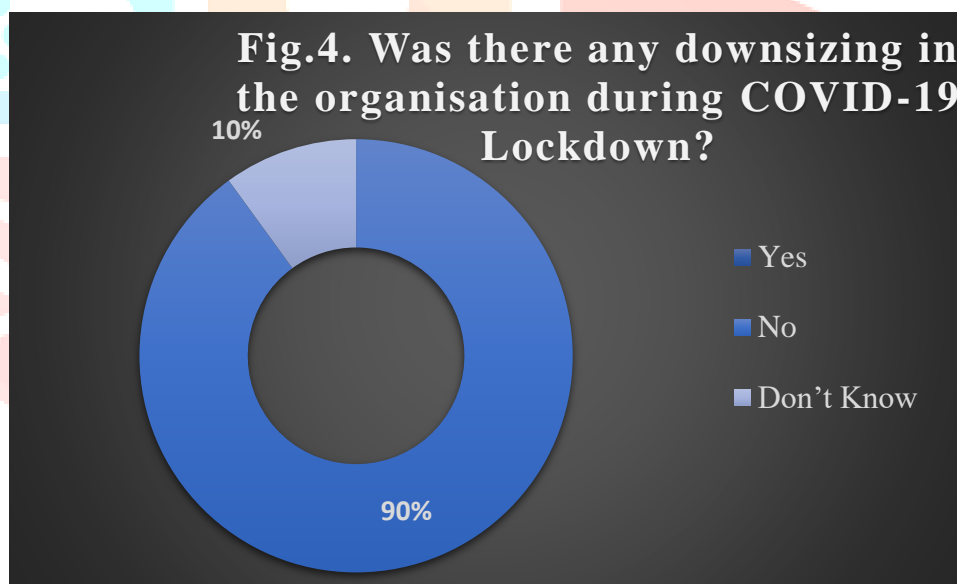
Out of the 50 respondents 60% were females. 16.67% were in the age group of 26-30 years, 50% were in the age group of 31-35 years and 33.33% were in the age group of 36-40 years respectively. The males' consisted 40% of the total respondents, out of which explained as 25% each were in the age group of 26-30 years, 31-35 years, 36-40 years and 45 years & above respectively.



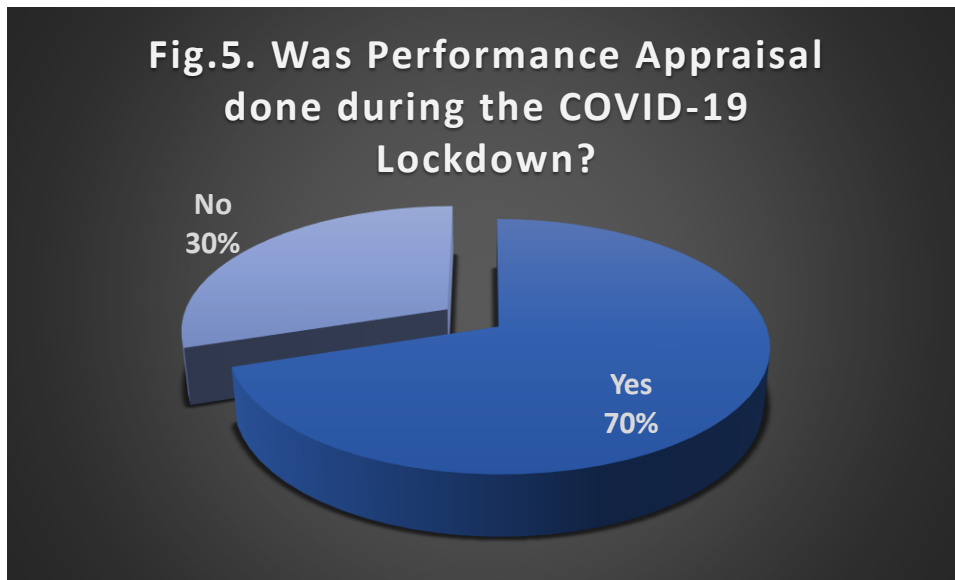
The analysis show that 100% of the male respondents are designated at the middle level in their respective organisations, whereas 16.67% of the females are designated at Junior level, 33.33% of the females are designated at Middel level and 50% of the females are designated at the Senior level in their respective organisation.



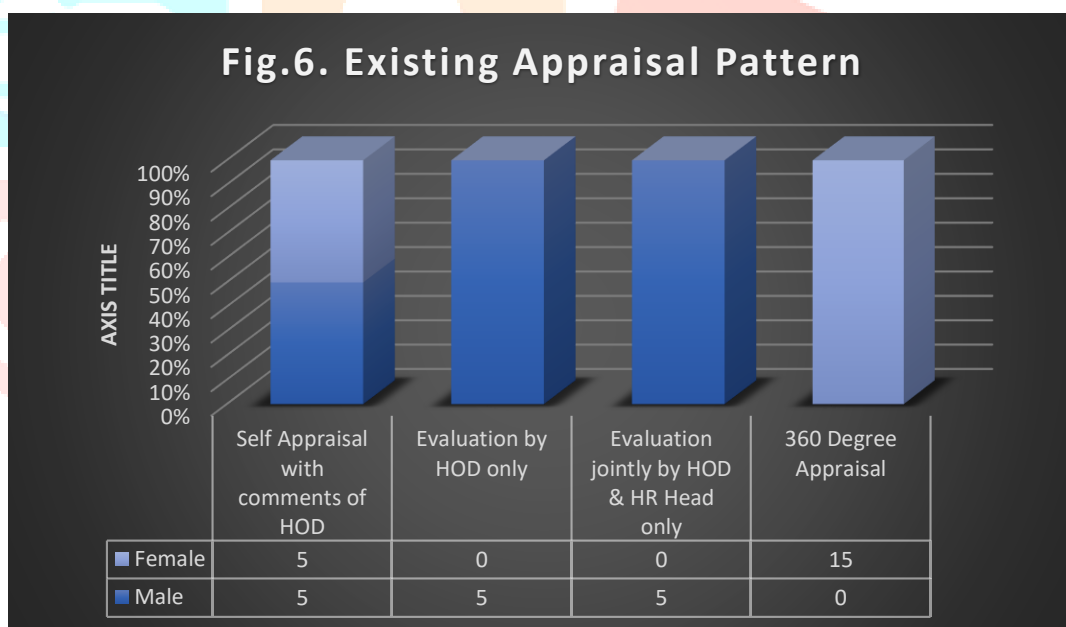
25% and 75% of the male respondents were either working in their current organisation for 1-2 years or 5-10 years respectively. The 33.33% of the female respondents were working in their current organisation for less than 1 year, where as 16.67% each were working for 1-2 years, 3-5 years, 5-10 years and more than years respectively.



The above figure indicate that all the respondents implied that either there was NO downsizing during the COVID-19 Lockdown or if it was so they were unaware of such steps taken by their organisations. This may also implement that they were unwilling to divulge in any negative remarks regarding their organisation.



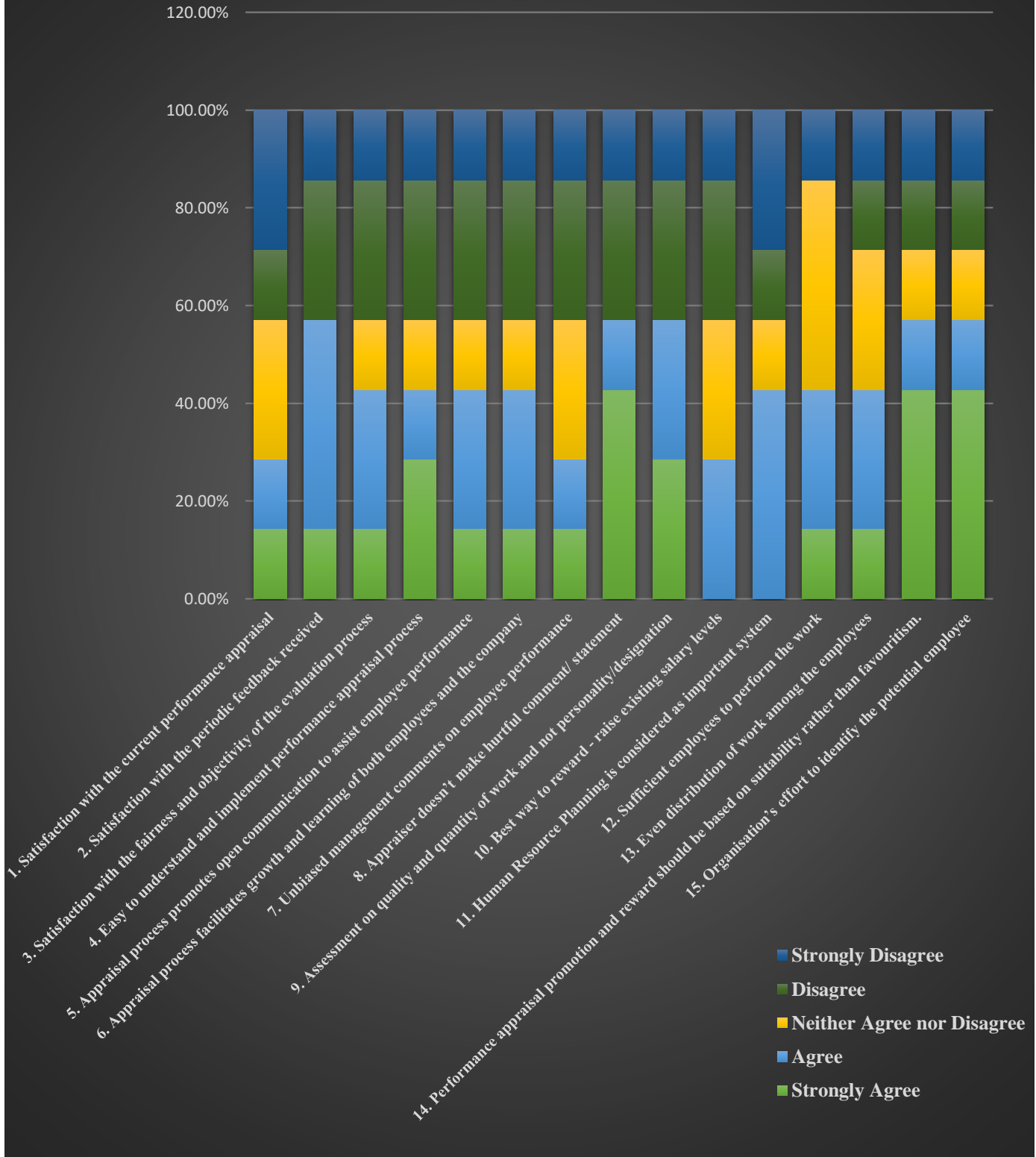
As we are aware that majority of the workforce suffered tremendously during the COVID-19 lockdown. Yet amongst these tiring times there were still few firms that focused on appraising their employees. This can be seen from the fact that out of the total 50 respondent 70% were given appraisal even during the pandemic.



Out of the 35 respondents who were given appraisal as per their evaluation during the lockdown period, majority of the female employees were appraised using 360<sup>0</sup> degree appraisal, where as 5 of them were self-appraised with remarks of their HOD.

The male respondents were appraised via self-appraisal with remark from HOD or they were evaluated by their HOD only or they were joint evaluated by their HOD & HR.

### Fig.7. Satisfaction with the Current Performance Appraisal System



**Table 1. Satisfaction with the Current Performance Appraisal System**

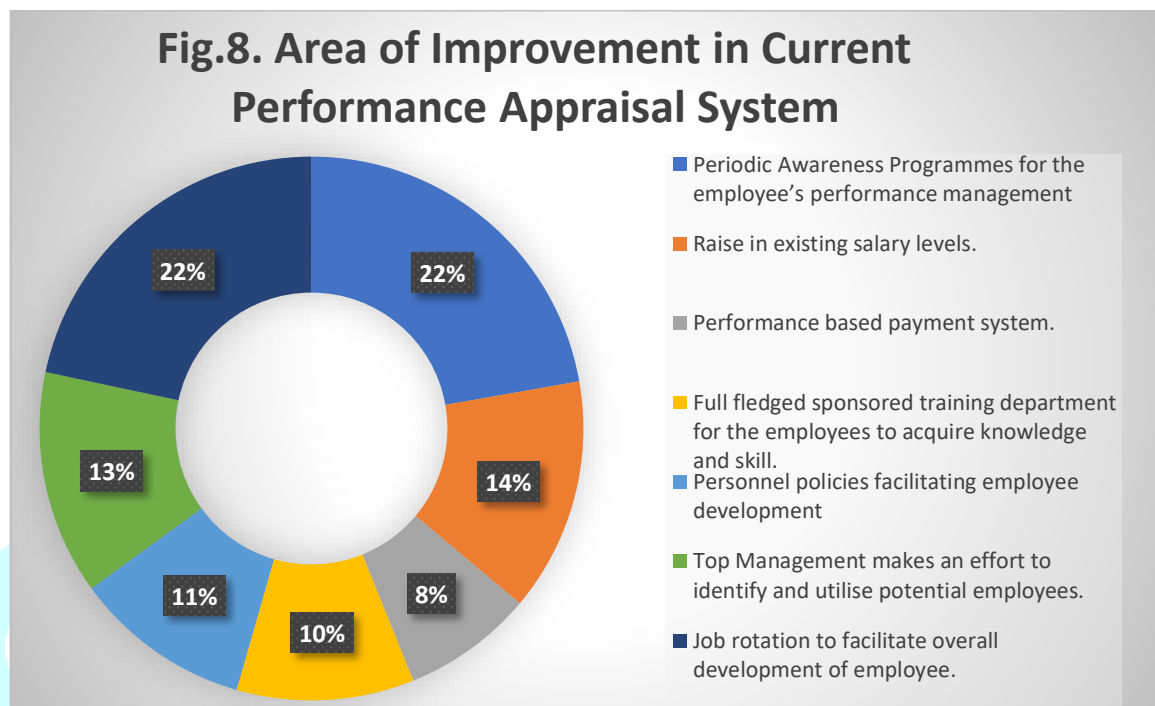
Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Satisfaction with the current performance appraisal	14.29%	14.29%	28.57%	14.29%	28.57%
2. Satisfaction with the periodic feedback received	14.29%	42.86%	0	28.57%	14.29%
3. Satisfaction with the fairness and objectivity of the evaluation process	14.29%	28.57%	14.29%	28.57%	14.29%
4. Easy to understand and implement performance appraisal process	28.57%	14.29%	14.29%	28.57%	14.29%
5. Appraisal process promotes open communication to assist employee performance	14.29%	28.57%	14.29%	28.57%	14.29%
6. Appraisal process facilitates growth and learning of both employees and the company	14.29%	28.57%	14.29%	28.57%	14.29%
7. Unbiased management comments on employee performance	14.29%	14.29%	28.57%	28.57%	14.29%
8. Appraiser doesn't make hurtful comment/ statement	42.86%	14.29%	0	28.57%	14.29%
9. Assessment on quality and quantity of work and not personality/designation	28.57%	28.57%	0	28.57%	14.29%
10. Best way to reward - raise existing salary levels	0	28.57%	28.57%	28.57%	14.29%
11. Human Resource Planning is considered as important system	0	42.86%	14.29%	14.29%	28.57%
12. Sufficient employees to perform the work	14.29%	28.57%	42.86%	0	14.29%
13. Even distribution of work among the employees	14.29%	28.57%	28.57%	14.29%	14.29%
14. Performance appraisal promotion and reward should be based on suitability rather than favouritism.	42.86%	14.29%	14.29%	14.29%	14.29%
15. Organisation's effort to identify the potential employee	42.86%	14.29%	14.29%	14.29%	14.29%

As per the data collected regarding the current appraisal system and the efforts made by the organisation to match the manpower to workload demand-supply ratio it can be seen that a majority of the respondent disagree with the fact that the company still appraised them using the existing evaluation pattern during the work from home situation that aroused due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While most of the respondents remained neutral on whether they think that their performance appraisal is fairly done and that it was easy to understand, few still agreed to the fact that their evaluation needs to be based on the quality as well as quantity of work done during a stipulated time period and also it should be unbiased in nature.



Majority of the respondents also disagree to the fact that money or monetary benefits can be the only way to appraising one's efficiency in the organisation. It can be seen that the respondents believe that apart from monetary benefits which was temporary base of satisfaction, they require emotional satisfaction that comes with the acknowledgement of the hard work done by them via their evaluation report.



The above given pie chart clearly show that the respondents give more weightage to the fact that their current organisation needs to create periodic awareness programmes where employee's potential can be explored and they can be given timely and helpful feedback regarding their performance. Also the management should strive to make efforts to utilize the potential employees by identifying their talents and skills and entrusting them jobs as per their level.

The other factors that the respondent felt can be improved in the current appraisal system includes performance based salary increment, sponsored training programmes to improve the skills, developing employee friendly personnel policies etc.

## Conclusion

"A good performance management system is as crucial as a good management board of the organization."

- Anand Dewan, Group CEO - BYLD Group

Although it can be said that overall the employees are somewhat satisfied with the process of evaluation and the appraisal given by their current working organization, there is still a subtle undercurrent of dissatisfaction amongst the majority as these new-age employees who in the name of work from home are giving more than 100% of their efforts in order to survive these critical times, feel that merely giving a certain percentage of raise as a form of appraisal is not enough now. They believe that aside from

giving raise it is more important that their work be acknowledged by their superiors, they should be given training to handle work and improve their existing skills that can lead to promotions. All said aside this can be done only if the higher-ups and the management makes a due effort to enhance the potential of their employees with the aim of employee welfare as their priority.

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