

MANAGING HUMAN RESOURCES IN PANDEMIC ENVIRONMENT

This is in continuation of earlier post on HR CHALLENGES DURING COVID 19

Most of manufacturing activities post lockdowns relaxations necessitated by economic compulsions will have many new normal in terms of business goals/plans/processes/operating norms etc on account of complete disruption of all planned activities for 2020 and consequential turmoil in economic scenario. Human Resources Planning will also not be an exception. Major challenges for Human Resources Planning during pandemic will emerge from following:

- Movement of migrant employees (mostly contract workers) to their respective native states with uncertainties of return.
- Sickness/death of some employees due to covid.
- Social distance planning at work.
- Requirement of new knowledge/skills/competencies on account of changes in business plans/goals/designs/processes.
- Backups for existing/emerging critical roles.

HR will have to be extremely sensitive to these challenges for smooth operations and sustainability of industries. We recommend following strategic actions which may be of help to HR in doing so:

1. Thorough familiarization with all new organizational goals and plans and their implications on HR.
2. Make comprehensive assessment of entire human resources requirements for all new normal wrt business plans/goals/processes/operating parameters both in terms of numbers as well as needed skills/competencies.
3. Make detailed inventory of all able-bodied available employees and skills and competencies.
4. Identify shortages/surpluses both in terms of numbers as well as needed skills/competencies. Categorization of all shortages as critical and non-critical.
5. Identification of existing unskilled/semi-skilled employees with potentials for doing skilled jobs and subject them to training.
6. Initiate hiring process for all critical shortages. Hire unskilled workers as many as available since there will be acute shortage of employees in this category. HR may network with surrounding IITs for engaging their students as apprentices.
7. Explore 12 hourly shift or two 8 hrs shift working based on production pressures.
8. Explore contracting of non-critical jobs to existing employees by designing an incentive scheme in a manner wherein their normal working is not disturbed.

9. Encourage and train employees for multiskilling particularly maintenance crews by offering attractive incentives.

10. Encourage Innovations and Creativity across the organisation for automation and mechanization of as many processes as possible.