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## **IDENTIFYING KEY ISSUES AND RISKS INVOLVED IN NEW-NORMAL SITUATION FOR IMPROVING EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION IN MSME**

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### **Abstract**

The present work identifies changing needs and expectations of its work force while working in the new-normal situation arisen due to current covid pandemic and to provide an optimal solution to that. The study quantifies the level of challenges of different staff categories and evaluates the significance so that a valid and justifiable decision can be made statistically as to how their tangible and intangible benefits can be optimized proportionately in order to provide them with a supportive and rewarding working environment to boost their motivation with a view to increasing the staff satisfaction, which in turn add to the productivity and profitability of the company. Kruskal Wallis test has been used to help in making a meaningful decision for the changing needs and expectations of employees in a balanced way. Employee needs and expectation framework developed for continual improvements in employee satisfaction based on ISO 9004:2018 Quality Management – Quality of an organization – Guidance to achieve sustained success.

**Keywords:** employee needs and expectations, employee satisfaction, MSME, quality management, Kruskal Wallis test, ISO 9004:2018.

### **1. Introduction**

Organizations around the world in 2020 have witnessed a new situation of global lockdown and economic disruption. The global lockdown due to pandemic is causing worst economic downturn. The world trade organization (WTO) projects a 9.2 percent decrease in volume of world merchandise trade in 2020 followed by a 7.2 percent increase in 2021, according to WTO's trade forecast released in October 2020 (Deardorff et al., 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the ways we work, we think, and we act, and has brought several challenges to workforce globally and specifically to micro small medium enterprises (MSME). The impact assessment on MSME sector of India due to Covid-19 shows significant impact on growth, impact on manufacturing and impact on trade, among which manufacturing sector of MSME has taken biggest hit due to the Covid-19 pandemic (Sahoo et al., 2020).

It is imperative that during difficult times and financial crisis due to market conditions arising out of pandemic, MSME are bound to take all necessary cost cutting and downsizing measures for their survival which has adversely impacted employees.

The human resource management (HRM) and its practices play a significant role in devising appropriate strategies and policies to strike a right balance between cutting costs without harming employee stability and also investing in employees' tangible and intangible benefits to keep employees happy and motivated. Hence there is an urgent need to address employee changing needs and expectations in the difficult times based on the key issues and risk factors emerging in the new normal situation.

HRM has a critical role to play in re-shaping the MSME by way of revising policies for maximizing employee satisfaction while adhering to Covid-19 protocols to operate business normally and help in realizing organizational objectives. It is at this crucial time MSME needs to relook company values, vision and mission, for business continuity and to achieve goals and objectives.

The micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) have evolved over time to become one of the significant contributors in Indian economy (Shelly et al., 2020). As per government notification, S.O. 1702(E), dated 1<sup>st</sup> of June, 2020, which came into effect on July 1, 2020, MSME organizations are classified based on their investments and turnover. Upper limits of investments in plant and machinery is Rs.1 crore for micro enterprises, Rs.10 crores for small enterprises, and Rs.50 crores for medium enterprises, whereas the upper limit of turnover is Rs.5 crores for micro enterprises, Rs.50 crores for small enterprises and Rs.250 crores for medium enterprises.

Considering significance of impact of covid-19 pandemic on MSME and also the MSME contribution to national economy, this research study focuses to identify key issue, challenges of its work force and risk involved in a medium sized manufacturing company in West Bengal, India and to provide an optimal solution to that. This study is significant considering regional context of medium sized manufacturing enterprise, as per micro small medium enterprises (MSME) classification in West Bengal, India.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents review of existing literature on employee satisfaction in new normal situation and research gaps are identified. The objective of the present study is laid down in Section 3. In section 4 research methodology used for data analysis is included. Section 5 presents the data analysis, the results and findings of the study. Conclusions are drawn in section 6, including the limitations of the study and future research scope

## **2. Literature Review**

The present section reviews the literature from the context of human resource management (HRM) processes, change management and management systems perspective towards addressing the changing needs and expectation of employees in new normal situation due to Covid-19 and identifies the research gap.

One of the significant HRM processes is to make and revise the compensation packages to include tangible and intangible benefits in a balanced manner for enhancing employee satisfaction considering the changing employee needs and expectations. The concepts and the theory behind the relationships between risk, incentive pay, and organization performance has been studied (Bloom and George, 1997). The risks of poorly productive link incentive for Air India provides insights and the need for vigilant approaches for designing compensation package (Banerjee and Gupta, 2011). Compensation model based on policies, techniques and objectives are defined. Alignment based on internal structure, competitiveness based on pay structure, contributions based on incentive programs and management based on evaluation techniques for meeting objectives which include efficiency, fairness, and compliance are well defined and available in

literature (Milkovich. and Newman, 2013). Considering the strategic, operational, people and process orientations explains the various human resource management roles as strategic partners, change agent, administrative expert, and employee champions to act on each of the roles in advancing human resources development goals and objectives (Ulrich et al., 1996). Characterization of behaviour and attribution to different personality types (Beck and Cowan, 1996), change management through quadrants for incorporating various conditions (Kotter, 1990), Kotter (2002) describes eight phases for managing successful and sustainable change, the PDCA approach for continual improvement (Walton and Deming, 1986) explain the different facets of HRM and change management.

The management systems perspective for continual improvement by understanding internal context of organization are issues related to values, culture, knowledge, and performance (ISO 9001:2015), which are influenced by changing environmental conditional, issues and risks internal and external to organization. Quality Management - quality of an organization - guidance to achieve sustained success, (ISO 9004:2018) standard provides guidelines based on process approach for understanding needs and expectations of interested parties, viz., employees, suppliers, shareholders, customers, and society. The *plan do check act (PDCA) approach* is built into the standards for achieving continual improvement. Organizations need to also create and protect value (ISO 31000), risk awareness, risk mitigation, risk reduction, in a way that the risk orientation in the MSME are influenced by the adoption of ISO 9001:2015 quality management systems requirements, where risk-based thinking is one of the fundamental driver of quality management system.

Various models and frameworks are designed for new normal situation, the adoption of 4R-crisis-normalcy model of HRD can be used by HRD professions to redefine, relook, redesign and reincorporate the HRD interventions in the present covid times (Arora and Suri, 2020). The significance of digital technologies in preserving the social relations in new normal and emergence of e commerce platform for global connect (Kumaramkandath, 2020). Factors influencing job satisfaction during the covid times have been studied on parameters namely commitment, organizational culture, work environment, work motivation on employee performance (Riyanto, 2020). Twenty-seven articles during the period 2020 from the publication of Elsevier and Emerald Insight have indicated new

normal strategy for small and medium enterprises to include orientation and information, government policies, network relationship, financial management, distribution of supply chain and digital transformation (Pratama and Mustaniroh, 2021). There is a need for managers and supervisors to get updated and develop new competencies based on the new normal situation. The emergence of technologies, digital payment systems (Devanesan et al., 2021), changing work procedures and patterns are influencing the work. The value of loss of life has been estimated, the mortality cost and the total cost arising out of morbidity risks is alarmingly high (Viscusi, 2020). India is also witnessing a similar phenomenon.

The MSME organization's dependence on human resources in the new normal situations is extremely high, and even more significant for the manufacturing enterprise where operations from remote location is not possible.

### **Research gap**

Various models and frameworks are available in literature to analyse and design human resource functions and processes in organization and change management pre-covid and post-covid times. However, in literature we do not find studies for enhancing employee satisfaction, based on ISO 9004:2018 framework, integrating PDCA approach and considering the contextual factors (key issues and risks involved in new-normal situation) for a medium sized manufacturing enterprise based in West Bengal, India.

There is also an urgent need to have simple framework in the context of MSME organizations for enhancing employee satisfaction based on employee needs and expectations in the new normal situation considering the contextual factors.

### **3. Research Objectives**

The management of the organizations were aware of the employees changing needs and expectations due to Covid-19 pandemic but wanted to know which among the identified issues and risks factors are significant according to managers and supervisors and resolving them would significantly enhance their satisfaction by

redesigning the tangible and intangible benefits and further monitor and improve upon through a framework.

The objectives of the study are:

- a) To derive at a valid and justifiable decision for optimizing the tangible and intangible benefits between employee category and employee satisfaction, based on statistical significance of the identified issues and risks.
- b) To develop typical employee needs and expectations framework, based on the components of ISO 9004:2018 Quality Management – Quality of an organization – Guidance to achieve sustained success, for monitoring and improving upon the associated issues and risk factors leading to employee dissatisfaction in the new normal condition.

#### **4. Research Methodology and Approach**

With the objective to develop a framework based on system approach as per ISO 9004:2018, as shown in figure 1. for monitoring and continually enhancing employee satisfaction by resolving key issues and risks faced by the employees, the following is the design approach and steps for this research study.

1. The organizations selected for the study are practicing ISO 9001:2015 quality management system requirements, and the managers and supervisors are trained on the management systems requirements and adopt PDCA approach for continual improvement.
2. The number of participants of study were 40 in number. Out of which 25 participants are supervisory staff and 15 are managerial staff of medium manufacturing enterprise located in West Bengal, India.

3. A 7-item questionnaire was developed, the questions asked to the managers and supervisors was. “How satisfied are you with the organization’s ability to meet your needs and expectations with regard to”
  - i. Adequacy of insurance costs, (AIC)
  - ii. Emergency medical expenses support (EMS)
  - iii. Transportation facility arrangements, (TFM)
  - iv. Improved sanitization measures, (ISM)
  - v. Information technology support, (ITS)
  - vi. New competencies development (NCD) and
  - vii. Employee satisfaction level .(ESL)
4. The respondents were asked to rate on a 11point Likert type rating scale Zuell and Scholz (1996) rating scale 0 - being extremely dissatisfied and 10 extremely satisfied.
5. The tests of normality, Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test had been performed to check the normality of the date. The scale validity and reliability has been tested Considering all variables of the study.
6. The Table 1 shows reliability statistics, the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.689, falls within the acceptable value of greater than 0.60, Nunnally (1994).

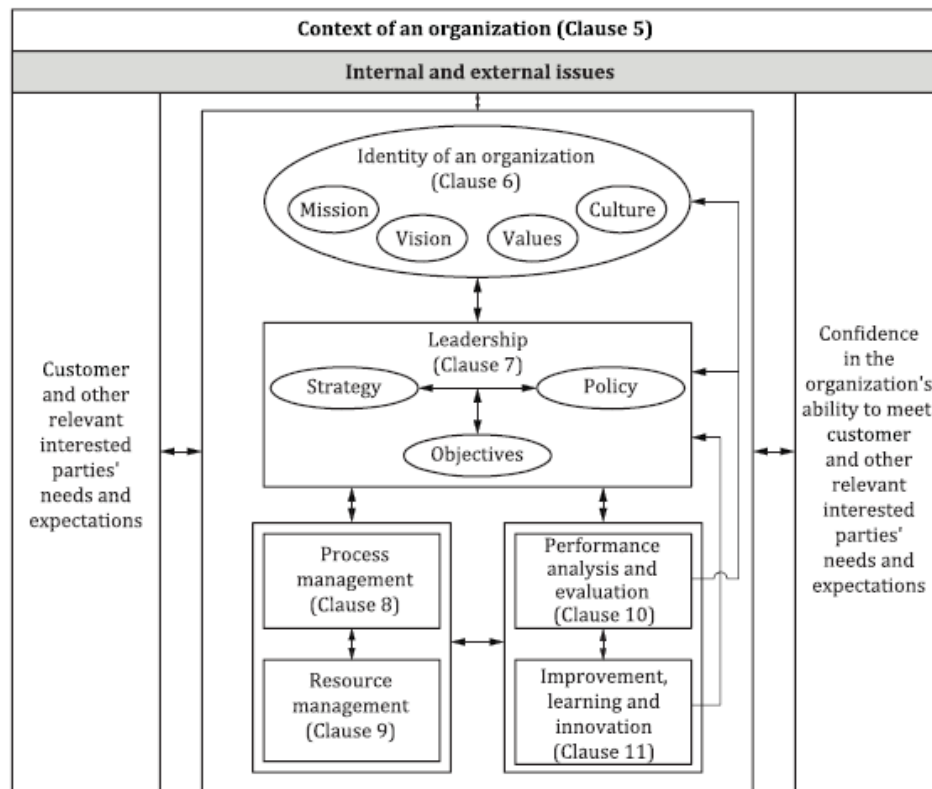
Table 1: Reliability Statistics results

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No. of Items
0.689	0.627	7

7. The following are the steps designed to derive at the typical issues and risk classification matrix derived from needs and expectations of employees.
  - Descriptive statistics for variable items are analyzed.
  - Cross tabulations made for employee categories and satisfaction levels.



- Statistical tests performed for determining the significant issues and risks.
  - Derive at a risk classification matrix based on the identified issues and risks.
8. The proposed typical employee needs and expectations framework in the new normal situation is based on the following components:
- The identity of the organization, which is determined by mission, vision, values and culture.
  - Leadership-comprising of strategy, policy and objectives.
  - Process management.
  - Resource management performance analysis.
  - Improvement, learning and innovation.
9. The proposed framework is developed based on the ISO 9004:2018 structure as shown below.



**Figure 1.** Representation of structure of ISO 9004:2018

## 5. Results and Discussion

The respondent for the research study includes 25 nos. of supervisors and 15 nos. of managers of an MSME, the number of respondents of the study is 40, of which 33 are male respondents and 7 are female respondents. Descriptive statistics of employee needs, and expectations are split based on employee category are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary statistics of employee needs, and expectations based on employee category.

Variable Item	Variable Category	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean		Std. Dev.	Variance
		Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
AIC	M	15	2	5	7	5.93	.23	0.88	0.78
	S	25	1	6	7	6.40	.10	0.50	0.25
EMS	M	15	1	7	8	7.67	.13	0.49	0.24
	S	25	2	4	6	5.40	.13	0.65	0.42
TFM	M	15	1	7	8	7.60	.13	0.51	0.26
	S	25	3	4	7	5.28	.18	0.89	0.79
IMS	M	15	2	7	9	8.00	.17	0.66	0.43
	S	25	1	8	9	8.20	.08	0.41	0.17
ITS	M	15	2	5	7	6.27	.15	0.59	0.35
	S	3	4	7	5	5.48	.17	0.82	0.68
NCD	M	15	2	4	6	5.07	.18	0.70	0.50
	S	25	3	3	6	4.68	.18	0.90	0.81
ESL	M	15	2	6	8	7.20	.20	0.78	0.60
	S	25	3	5	8	6.12	.18	0.88	0.78

Abbreviation, M: Managers; S: Supervisors

Table 3 displays the cross tabulation between employee categories and age categories. The employee categories comprise of managers and supervisors, while age is classified into three categories, viz., up to 30 years, greater than 30 years and less than equal to 45 years and more than 45 Years.

Table 3. Cross tabulation of employee categories and age categories

Employee category	Age category			Total
	Up-to 30 years	More than 30 years and less than equal to 45 years	More than 45 Years	
Manager	1	8	6	15

Supervisor	22	3	0	25
Total	23	11	6	40

The tests of normality, Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test had been performed to check the normality of the data, the significance value is zero, found less than 0.05, hence the data is considered not normal.

Based on the 6 variable items, namely adequacy of insurance cost, emergency medical expenses support, transportation facility arrangement, improved sanitization measures, information technology support and new competency development, non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis Test has been conducted, against the grouping variable employee category comprising of managers and supervisors. The test results are shown in Table 4, indicate that emergency medical expenses support, transportation facility arrangement and information technology support, differ significantly between managers and supervisors. The management of the organizations can look to bridge the gap between employee categories for improving employee satisfaction level.

**Table 4- Kruskal Wallis Test for grouping variable: Employee category, managers, and supervisors**

	Adequacy of Insurance Cost	Emergency medical expenses Support	Transportation Facility arrangement	Improved Sanitization Measures	IT Support	New Competency Development
Chi-Square	3.082	29.344	26.905	1.150	9.294	1.866
df	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Sig.	0.079	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	0.284	<b>0.002</b>	0.172

Further the employee satisfaction level on a 11-point Likert type rating scale of 0 to 10, has been transformed to categorical variable, the Low Satisfaction

was coded for values up to 5, medium satisfaction was coded for values 6 and 7, and high satisfaction was coded for values 8 and above. The Kruskal Wallis test was performed considering employee satisfaction grouping variable against the 6 variable items, namely adequacy of insurance cost, emergency medical expenses support, transportation facility arrangement, improved sanitization measures, information technology support and new competency development. The test results are shown in Table 5., indicate that emergency medical expenses support, transportation facility arrangement, information technology support, and new competency development, differ significantly among low, medium and high employee satisfaction level categories.

**Table 5- Kruskal Wallis Test for grouping variable: Employee Satisfaction Level, High, medium low**

	Adequacy of Insurance Cost	Emergency medical allowances Support	Transportation Facility arrangement	Improved Sanitization Measures	IT Support	New Competency Development
Chi Square	4.635	7.681	9.918	3.252	11.795	6.133
Df	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000
Asymp. Sig.	0.098	<b>0.021</b>	<b>0.007</b>	0.197	<b>0.003</b>	<b>0.047</b>

Against the grouping variable of employee category and employee satisfaction, emergency medical allowances, transportation facility and IT support are found common to differ significantly. The management of the organizations can look deeper into the probable reasons and causes to bridge the gap for common variables for both employee category and satisfaction level category, take possible actions to equalize the employee satisfaction levels, thus enhancing the overall satisfaction level of the within and between employee categories. The management needs to act in each of the identified areas, v.i.z., financial, health and safety, and

operational issues for improving employee satisfaction. A risk classification matrix based on the identified issues and risks is derived based on the financial issues, health and safety issues and operational issues.



Figure 2. Issues and risks classification matrix derived from needs and expectations of employees

A typical employee needs and expectations framework in the new normal condition has been developed (See in Appendix -A) based on (a) ISO 9004: 2018 Quality Management – Quality of an organization – Guidance to achieve sustained success framework components i.e., the identity of the organization, which is determined by mission, vision, values and culture, leadership- comprising of strategy, policy and objectives, process management, resource management. (b) The associated risk factors leading to employee dissatisfaction, arising from the employee needs and expectations in the new normal situation. This framework may be used as a continual development framework for enhancing employee satisfaction levels.

## 6. Conclusion

This study has identified typical key issues viz., adequacy of insurance costs, (AIC) emergency medical expenses support (EMS), transportation facility arrangements, (TFM), improved sanitization measures, (ISM), information technology support, (ITS), and new competencies development (NCD) for supervisors and managers for a medium sized manufacturing enterprise in West Bengal, Kolkata of which the

following are considered significant based on Kruskal Wallis Test, for grouping variable employee category and satisfaction levels.

- i. Emergency medical expenses support (EMS),
- ii. Transportation facility arrangements, (TFM),
- iii. Information technology support, (ITS),
- iv. New competencies development (NCD)

A simple risk classification matrix based on the identified issues and risks is developed based on the financial issues, health and safety issues and operational issues as shown in figure 2.

Typical employee needs and expectations framework in the new normal condition as detailed in Appendix-A, is developed based on the ISO 9004:2018 Quality Management – Quality of an organization – Guidance to achieve sustained success

This study is based on the responses from the employees of manufacturing industries only, which can be considered a limitation of the study as the study has not included the other sectors like service, trading etc.

#### *Future research scope*

The following are the scope for future research work.

- i. This study can be extended to other interested parties, viz., suppliers and partners, society, shareholders, customers, and others, as appropriate to the organizations for the new normal situations.
- ii. The framework could be the models for sector specific enterprise for each category of the micro, small medium enterprises.
- iii. Regional context can be developed based on greater number of samples and based risks and issues.
- iv. A novel performance matrix can be exhaustively developed based on the risks and issues and the components of the framework suitable for new normal situations.

The research work encompassing the above scopes is being carried out and will appear in future publications.

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**Appendix A.**

**Typical employee needs and expectations framework in the new normal situation**

<b>Employee needs and expectations/ (issues) in new normal situation (Level of challenges)</b>	<b>Associated Risk Factors leading to employee dissatisfaction/ Impacts</b>	<b>Organization Identity (Mission, Vision, Values &amp; Culture)</b>	<b>Leadership (Strategy, Policy &amp; Objectives)</b>	<b>Processes Management</b>	<b>Resource Management</b>	<b>Performance analysis and Improvement, Learning and Innovation</b>
Adequacy of Insurance Cost	Health & Safety	Employee health is a part of values	Insurance policies for employees are designed against Covid risks.	Proactive measures for effective policies	Timely premium is paid	Responds to changing insurance requirements
Emergency Medical Allowances	Financial	Employee health is a part of values	New medical expense policy has been devised for needing people affected by Covid-19	Reactive measures for on time payments	Receive the expenses on time.	Management is empathetic

<b>Employee needs and expectations/ (issues) in new normal situation (Level of challenges)</b>	<b>Associated Risk Factors leading to employee dissatisfaction/ Impacts</b>	<b>Organization Identity (Mission, Vision, Values &amp; Culture)</b>	<b>Leadership (Strategy, Policy &amp; Objectives)</b>	<b>Processes Management</b>	<b>Resource Management</b>	<b>Performance analysis and Improvement, Learning and Innovation</b>
Transportation Facility Management	Health & Safety	Employee safety is a part of values	Transportation policies for safe travel are taken as new objective designed as preventive measure.	Safe travel guidelines and protocols	Adequate arrangement and facilities availability	To reach on time maintaining social distancing and safety norms
Improved Sanitization Measures	Health & Safety	Employee safety is a part of values	New sanitization policy as per Covid-19 guidelines	Proactive approach to fight against Covid-19	Resources are allocated on priority	Daily monitoring and reporting procedures
Information	Operational	Operational	Revised IT	IT Support	Turn around	ICT tools and

<b>Employee needs and expectations/ (issues) in new normal situation (Level of challenges)</b>	<b>Associated Risk Factors leading to employee dissatisfaction/ Impacts</b>	<b>Organization Identity (Mission, Vision, Values &amp; Culture)</b>	<b>Leadership (Strategy, Policy &amp; Objectives)</b>	<b>Process Management</b>	<b>Resource Management</b>	<b>Performance analysis and Improvement, Learning and Innovation</b>
Technology (IT) Support		excellence as a part of value	management policy for effective work from home	management and infrastructure development programs	time for infrastructure development	services availability
New Competencies Development	Operational	Operational excellence as a part of value	Employee competence development based on gaps is an important objective.	Risk-based competency development programs.	Resources are allocated based on risk priority	Competency improvements measurement