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The dynamic environment has resulted in different configurations of organizations, markets, competitors and stakeholders. Organisational structures and the drivers of value and profitability are changing resulting in newer and different models of workplace and productivity. What has been the impact of these on nature of employment (contractual and regular)? How does this impact quality? What is the impact of these trends on jobs for women? What are the skill sets required in entry level jobs in this changing environment?

Changing Models of Workplace and Productivity

Economic change is driving an increasing need for organizations to adapt quickly and adeptly to dynamic market conditions. How companies and their leaders manage change and engage their workforce in the process significantly impact their ability to achieve strategic business objectives. Most organizations are working in dynamic environments and experiencing change in many forms, such as the execution of a new business strategy, restructurings, introduction of new policies, acquisitions, mergers, relocations or the implementation of new technology. With these changes there are innumerable impacts which has resulted in dramatic changes in the work force and in the workplace.

Globally the following changes have been observed...

Workforce Changes:

- It is more geographically diverse.
- Work force is spread across various age groups.
- Women are in the workforce in almost equal numbers as men.
- Women have achieved higher educational levels than men.
- Younger employees are more family-centric.
- Men are more involved in the care of their children than men in the past.
- Significant numbers of both men and women are providing elder care.

Likewise, the workplace changes are:

- The economy is global and 24/7.
- Work hours have increased.
- Jobs have become more demanding and hectic.
- Technology—voicemail, cellphones, BlackBerries, etc.—is blurring the lines between when people are at work and when they are not.
- The job for life has been replaced with growing job mobility and job insecurity.

We are transitioning:

- from a manufacturing-based economy to a knowledge-based and service economy with a greater gap between more skilled and less skilled jobs; and
- From the workforce and workplace of the 20th century to the workforce and workplace of the 21st century.

Like all change, this transition isn't always smooth and there is often a mismatch between assumption and reality. In the wake of this change, employers are looking to find new ways to make work "work." Thus, there has been a movement toward creating an effective workplace.

For surviving in the ever changing markets and to continue creating value for business owners, customers, community and employees organizations are trying to adapt to newer ways of doing business. Business organizations are trying to be more agile in order to adapt rapidly and cost efficiently in response to changes in the business environment. In this context, agility typically refers to the ability of an organization to rapidly adapt to market and environmental changes in productive and cost-effective ways.

To be adapting to the environment and still be agile organizations are undergoing all or few of these changes:

- Changing to structures that are fairly non-hierarchical organization without a single point of control.
- Individuals function autonomously interacts with each other to define the work that needs to be done.
- Roles and responsibilities are not predetermined but rather emerge from individuals' self-organizing activities and are constantly in flux.
- Similarly, projects are generated everywhere in the enterprise, sometimes even from outside affiliates.
- Key decisions are made collaboratively, on the spot, and on the fly.

Because of this, knowledge, power, and intelligence are spread through the enterprise, making it uniquely capable of quickly recovering and adapting to the loss of any key organizational component. The most notable change that has come in is that organizations have fluid role definitions that allow for dynamic decision making structures. Unlike the rigid hierarchies characterizing traditional bureaucracies, organizational structures within new age organizations are more likely to fluidly adapt to changing business conditions into structures that support the current direction and any emergent competitive advantage. Similarly, companies now do not adhere to the concept of sustained competitive advantage that typifies the bureaucratic organizations. Operating in hypercompetitive, continuously changing markets, enterprises now pursue a series of temporary competitive advantages—capitalizing for a time on the strength of an idea, product, or service then readily discarding it when no longer tenable.

IMPACT OF CHANGING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Thomas L Friedman in his book *The World is Flat* talks about how the world is becoming flatter by the day. He talks about the influence of technology and therefore the world becoming a level playing ground for all players. With the pervasive use of technology and the world becoming “flatter”, thousands of workers have been or will be freed from the bonds of time and location. Workers in many industries will be able to work when they want, from where they want. The good news is that this could make them happier and thus more productive employees. Employers also will be able to choose from a much wider labor pool due to fewer restrictions on where work gets done.

Technology has become a part of life. It is that aspect of work life that is fast changing and has an immense impact on the life of all. To keep up with the pace of technology is becoming an immense responsibility. One of the ways in which the technology is used for better effectiveness within the organization is by promoting teleworking and telecommuting. This concept is very slowly catching up in

India, as the infrastructure available in our nation does not permit large-scale use of technology by all people. It will take some time for the concept of teleworking and telecommuting to come to India on a large scale. The Indian culture is also not very conducive for such practices. But awareness amongst people and specially HR managers about the advantages of this mode of working and the related problems would help organizations adopt similar practices whenever a need for such arrangements comes up. This certainly is one of the ways in which the scarcity of talent is being dealt with.

Teleworking and Telecommuting:

Teleworking: ANY form of substitution of information technologies (such as telecommunications and computers) for work-related travel. Teleworking includes variations as home-based businesses that use telecommunications to work with their customers, as well as those who may commute every day to some traditional location but use information technologies to deal mostly with people in other cities, states, or countries. The number of teleworkers in the world is also growing, possibly even at a faster rate than the number of telecommuters. The immense growth of the Internet, assuming that it survives the expansion problems, is a major factor in this.

Telecommuting: moving the work to the workers instead of moving the workers to work; periodic work out of the principal office, one or more days per week either at home or in a telework center. The emphasis here is on reduction or elimination of the daily commute to and from the workplace.

Increasing global competition, coupled with the enhancements in the field of telecommunications is producing more awareness that many forms of work are independent of the locations of either the worker or the employer. The shortage of “employable” talent is one of the reasons why organizations have slowly adapted to teleworking. About 20% of the Indian labor force is currently working from home at least part of the time.

Some of the reasons that teleworking/telecommuting is a favorable option for organizations are;

- Nuclear Families on the rise and therefore women/housewives wanting to work from home.
- Need to cut infrastructure costs
- Work Life Balance
- Need to avoid stressful commute times for journeys to work
- Need to meet fluctuations in demand
- Need to retain valued staff when other demands on their time may be high
- The need to build an accommodative culture in the organization and cater to the needs of the employees

Types of Telework

- **Homework Worker** works in private home, using Information and Communication Technology to connect to the organisation; usually combined with working in office (examples: clerical workers, consultants)
- **Mobile work Worker** uses mobile technology (laptop, mobile phone, wireless network) to be able to connect to the organisation from any location, either when travelling or when at client’s location (examples: sales representatives, technical service people). Office is visited less frequently.

- **Call centre employees** can work from any location; they can be physically separated from the organisation in their entirety (potentially off-shore, where call centres are moved to low-wage countries), and/or individual call centre employees can be home-based or based in (rural) telework offices.
- **Virtual Teams:** Temporary teams (for example in software development) of experts from several locations are brought together to realise a pre-defined outcome that requires a set of expertises that is difficult to find in one location. Team members may never actually meet in the course of the project.

Various models have been developed for measurement of work for such employees. Performance Management for this group needs to focus on:

- The *effectiveness* of any activity: whether wider goals are being achieved. In the context of teleworking, this raises questions around contribution of telework implementation to organisational goals, such as improved customer flexibility and employee retention.
- Matters of *economy*: whether value for money is being delivered from the inputs used. For teleworking, economy can for example be reflected in improvement of the use of human resources (less time wasted travelling or chasing documents) and buildings (desk sharing, touch down desks).
- Issues of *efficiency*: have resources been used productively to create quality outputs? Several studies have shown that teleworking can improve overall outputs, accuracy and service quality.

Performance management appears to be a particularly interesting approach for managing teleworkers, as it is not in itself concerned with direct supervision, and relies strongly on the use of output targets (based on KPIs and Business Goals).

Key Challenges

The possible challenges for Hr due to teleworking and telecommuting as expressed by the interviewees include;

- Employees and employers will have to work together to produce clear guidelines for productivity so that the gains realized through the use of technology are not offset by losses due to greater stress on employees.
- Employers also will need to develop policies to take into account different levels of access and comfort with technology among their workforces.
- The need for extensive training may be required before the workforce is able to fully benefit from the introduction of technology.
- Mind set of Managers needs a change
- Need for building Trust
- Discipline
- Help people to learn and unlearn
- Communication between staff who work at varying times, and who may meet less frequently

Employability Vs. Employment

Another very important influence of technology is the obsolescence rate and therefore the implications. Due to the fast changing technology and with almost every other day witnessing a new creation or innovation, the skills of the employees have to be constantly upgraded. The challenges therefore would be to adopt the changing technologies to increase the productivity and efficiency but at the same time

ensuring that the employees are constantly upgraded with their skills. As today "employability" is what matters to employees and not 'employment" there is a strong need to understand the need for training. One of the reasons often stated in exit interviews is that the employees are not given the opportunity to improve their skills and proper training is not given.

Temporary Staffing

Another outcome of the changing business environment is temporary staffing concept. The temporary staffing is an essential service because businesses need flexibility. They need to be able to fill positions at short notice, for short periods of time. The flexibility in staffing that temporary workers give a company has proven to be so valuable that the number of temps has continued to rise over the years. We used to think temporary staffing only made sense for relatively low-skill jobs but now companies have discovered that there can be value in bringing in interim executives right up to the level of CEO. In fact, there agencies focusing specifically on the placement of seasoned executives in interim assignments.

Types of temp staffing

- Temporary help is a concept whereby companies bring in someone, usually for lower skilled jobs, to cover for a vacation, maternity leave or help for some short-term project.
- Contingent staffing is a much broader concept including all sorts of contractors, consultants and free agents, often for reasonably long periods of time. The driving business reason is still flexibility: companies want to be able to bring in the talent they need at the moment without making a long-term commitment.
- Flexible staffing is rooted in the fluctuating levels of demand and creating a flexible workforce to match it. **Of all the types of temporary staffing this is the one that is truly strategic.**

In using temp agencies companies have stumbled upon some unexpected benefits. One is guaranteed performance. If you bring in temporary employees and they are not working to your standard, a simple phone call to the temp agency is all it takes to have them replaced. The other unexpected benefit is the temp-to-perm phenomenon. Hiring workers as temporaries before making a decision about offering them a permanent job is undoubtedly the single most reliable selection method. It gives the company a chance to "test drive" the worker and the worker a chance to see what it is really like working for the company.

To enhance the performance and to manage the cost for the companies, advanced mechanisms of management of temporary staff has been introduced by staffing companies. In Ma Foi there is a concept called in house services which caters to productivity management for temp staffs in organizations.

Government Policies

With the cross border migration of jobs there is a great need for people with the relevant skills, however, most recruiters and HR professionals complain about the lack of quality talent. Organizations complain that the time required to train people fresh from college is high and they would like to cut down the cost of training and the time required to start being billable for the organization. But the question to be answered is whose responsibility it is to ensure a consistent supply of good talent to the industry? It is a paradoxical situation that is currently being faced in India. On one side there is a huge

unemployment figure and on the other side organizations are unhappy with the basket that they get to choose from. In fact the sky rocketing salaries can be directly linked to the shortage of quality talent in the market.

Therefore the inevitable question is what can be done about this present scenario that is a concern for all organizations. Can organizations crib about the unavailability of quality talent and do nothing about it. Well, as long as they continue to do so they will only continue poach from competitors which are not a positive trend for the industry as it would only lead to spiraling salaries. Thus if organizations resort to such tactics the industry as a whole suffers. Organizations are trying to adopt both micro level and macro level strategies to solve this problem.

Very recent examples of organizations taking up such strategies include Hexaware, Cognizant, ICICI Bank. To give you an example – ICICI Bank has initiated the “ICICI Manipal Academy for Banking and Insurance” which is a JV between ICICI Bank and the Manipal Group. The Academy has been set up to train selected personnel of ICICI Bank in order to ensure that they are ‘Industry Ready’ at the time of completion of the programme. Such tie ups are termed by the company as “relationship building exercises”. The purpose is to make the students industry ready by the time they join the organization. Such programs help in developing behavioral and technical skills, language and application specific skills. Though organizations in the past have resorted to such methods, it has to be further encouraged by the government.

Macro level strategies can also be taken up by organizations actively collaborating with the government and providing valuable inputs and plans.

Employment of Women

The increase in female employment has been aided by a big shift in the type of jobs on offer. Manufacturing work, traditionally a male preserve, has declined, while jobs in services have expanded. This has reduced the demand for manual labour and put the sexes on a more equal footing.

In the formal sector, the percentage of female labour has been found to be 4%, whereas it has been 10% for men. The employment growth rates for women is 3.6 %, while for men, it has been 2.5%.

In countries like India, more women now have paid jobs. In the emerging East Asian economies, for every 100 men in the labour force there are now 83 women. Women have been particularly important to the success of Asia's export industries, typically accounting for 60-80% of jobs in many export sectors, such as textiles and clothing.

Women are a growing advantage for companies: To adapt to changing social and consumption trends companies are increasingly integrating women into their decision making process. Gender diversity is treated as an asset for the corporate image these days.

Few practices followed by MNCs for ensuring the role of women at work

- Creating and monitoring gender diversity indicator: The main indicators include the proportion of women in the company's various business lines, at each level of management at among new

recruits; pay levels and attrition rate between men and women in similar functions, the ratio of women promoted to women eligible for promotions

- Flexible working hours – remote working, part time work, flexi time
- Career flexibility – Career breaks like maternity leave taken by women should not have any negative impacts.
- Coaching, network building and mentoring are highly effective in enabling women to manage their careers in a male centric environment. – Workshops for women, special training programs focusing on their needs

Entry Level Jobs

Increasing complexities of the business environment leads to jobs becoming more demanding. Hence even at the entry level the competencies sought for in candidates is sometime difficult to be matched with the available talent in the market. Approximate statistics say that out of 1400 MBA colleges producing 100,000 MBA Graduates annually, only 23 percent of the MBA Grads are employable. This is from a PAN India study conducted by a research organization. On the other hand, India Inc's annual requirement is 128,000. So apart from IIM'S and very few Premier Management Institutions, there is obvious Employability Deficit in majority of the candidates produced in B.School especially the start ups and emerging ones.

With the increase in employment opportunities particularly for IT and Diploma students, has restricted the opportunities for MBA graduates. The priorities of the recruiters' are also changing in that way. The recruiters' have become choosy in selecting a fresh MBA graduate. Though MBA talent is in demand, getting a good job has been the challenging part of their life. Employers hire MBA graduates because of the communication, managing skill and analytical ability to handle all types of situational problems. Employers give priorities to MBA graduates and also offer higher salaries compared to other graduates. There is always a better chance for MBA graduates to be absorbed at higher levels in the organization. The number of colleges offering MBA courses has increased remarkably during last five years. All the colleges could not maintain the desired level of quality education. Most of the business school graduates failed to acquire the skill as suited to the companies resulting low rate of hiring the students by the companies. MBA graduate hiring in 2008-2010 was also affected a little due to the recession in the United States. The number of companies hiring MBA was 64% in 2007, 58% in 2008 and less than 50% in 2009 (Corporate Recruiters' survey). Thus the rate of hiring MBA and more specifically fresh MBA graduates dropped drastically in 2009 and early 2010. In that way the average starting salaries also declined by 4% to 6% as compared with 2008 salaries.

With so many changes in the offing and the multitude options available with employers, it is important that aspiring aspirants for entry level jobs have to get focused and invest energies in gathering functional and technological knowledge. Being in touch with the current business scenario is very relevant. Flexibility and openness to change is expected from young professionals in almost all streams of work. Openness to change and work across locations and ability to network with diverse pool of people gives candidates the advantage over others.

Conclusion

Change is the only constant that we can be sure of. Hence it is important that we continuously keep ourselves updated with the latest information and upgraded with the latest skills and technology.