



THE IMPACT OF COVID19 PANDEMIC ON THE WORK CULTURE IN MICRO, SMALL & MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSME) IN ROHILKHAND REGION

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ABSTRACT

MSMEs are the most common form of business enterprise found throughout the world, yet their key characteristics are not well understood. MSME sector in India is second largest employment generator after agriculture, and acts as a breeding ground for entrepreneurs and innovators with considerable support in strengthening business ecosystem. Various reports, researches and surveys have proved again and again that this sector act as a catalyst for socio-economic development of the country. The COVID-19 outbreak has negatively impacted not only the economic and social activity in India but also the entire global economy. The micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) were significantly impacted by various economic activities. Not only are individual businesses feeling the effects, but so are entire national economies and the entire world. Trade and international travel have already been negatively impacted by the pandemic on a worldwide scale. The Present research work has analyse the impact of Covid pandemic on work culture in MSME sector and assessed the various challenges posed by work from home system in organizational culture of MSMEs. It also analyses the challenges for leadership of MSME firms with regards to organizational culture during Covid pandemic and evaluated the influence of virtual teams on work culture in MSMEs. Interview with managerial staff of 5 MSMEs in Rohilkand region was conducted.

Keywords: Covid19 pandemic, work culture, Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME), Rohilkhand Region.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of COVID-19 has not only caused disruptions in the economic and social activities that take place in the Indian economy, but it has also had a detrimental impact on the economy of the entire world. The many different kinds of economic activities had a negative impact on a sizeable number of micro, small, and medium businesses (MSMEs). Any businesses that were impacted have lost access to both their front-line customers and their capacity to buy raw materials and inputs. Additionally, these businesses have lost the ability to export their products. Because of lockdowns and various other forms of movement restrictions, critical personnel and staff members have been prevented, on multiple occasions, from performing their responsibilities as expected.

The loss of jobs in other sectors of the economy has also contributed to a precipitous decline in demand. There has been a drop in the number of sales. There have been a significant number of other companies in supply networks that have ceased operations. As a result of the uncertainty surrounding the course that the epidemic may take in the future, many individuals as well as organisations have become more frugal in their spending. Because of this, there has been a further decline in the amount of demand for the vast majority of the goods and services that are produced or supplied by MSMEs. Not only are individual businesses seeing the effects of the influence, but also national economies and the entire world are feeling it. Already, the outbreak has made it more difficult for people all across the world to engage in cross-border travel as well as international trade. Supply chains have



been significantly disrupted as a result of China, the European Union, and the United States blocking some or all of their cross-border trade, or at the very least slowing it down. The greatest exporters and participants in global value chains are China, the European Union, and the US. For many micro, small, and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs), both as exporters and as consumers of imported goods, this has had substantial repercussions[8].

A. MSME

In spite of the fact that micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are the most common type of commercial firm found all over the world, the essential characteristics of these businesses are not very well understood. In general, businesses that fall into this category share a number of features, including the following: Independent businesses are companies that are not a part of a larger corporation; they are typically founded and managed by the owners, who also bear the majority (or all) of the risk involved in the venture; they have a relatively small number of employees (if any); typically only produce or sell a limited range of goods or services; have limited market shares and a small customer base; and have limited access to support resources such as finance, external advisers, and go-to-market strategies. Independent businesses are characterised by the following characteristics The following is a list of qualities shared by independently owned businesses: It is a commonly held belief that micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are responsible for more than 90 percent of all businesses and more than 50 percent of all jobs around the globe.7 It is conceivable for their proportion of the overall number of businesses, jobs, and GDP to vary substantially from one nation to the next as well as from one location to another. For instance, in the economies that are a part of the APEC, they are responsible for more than 95% of businesses on average, and in some of the countries that are a part of it, they are responsible for up to 999% of businesses and more than 80% of total employment. Similarly, in the economies that are a part of the WTO, they are responsible for more than 95% of businesses and more than 80% of total employment.8 MSMEs, which stand for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, account for

more than 90 percent of all businesses on the African continent and are the primary forces behind innovation.9 Micro, small, and medium-sized businesses (sometimes abbreviated as MSME and SMME, respectively) are critical players in the economic expansion of the Latin American region. This is due to the fact that they account for more than 99.99 percent of all businesses and employ approximately 67.0 percent of the total labour force. Micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are common throughout the economy, but they are more common in labor-intensive industries, industries with a focus on small markets, industries where the benefits of economies of scale are minimal, and industries where there are no large corporations operating. Even though they can be found in every sector of the economy, they are most prevalent in sectors that are labor-intensive. This area includes a variety of business sectors, some of which are the following: personal services; retail and wholesale trade; small-scale agricultural; travel, tourism, and hospitality; food services; and other professional services. However, these businesses are not the only ones that fall under this category.

• MSME sector in India

In India, the micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) sector is the second largest employment producer after agriculture. It also serves as a breeding ground for entrepreneurs and inventors, and it provides important support in the process of improving the business ecosystem. In India, it is estimated that there are 63 million micro, small, and medium-sized firms (MSMEs), which provide employment for 110 million individuals. More than 6,000 different products are manufactured by India's micro, small, and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs) for sale on both the country's domestic and international markets. According to the data that was provided by DGCIS, the whole value of items related to MSME in India is 147,390.08 million dollars, and their participation to total export during 2017-18 was 48.56 percent. This information was obtained through a survey that was conducted. The micro, small, and medium-sized companies (MSMEs) of the globe that have reached a higher level of integration with global value chains and supply chains are playing a crucial role in the global trade systems that are



in place. According to the information that was gathered in 2019, this industry was responsible for 29% of the overall GDP. Multiple investigations, studies, and surveys have all arrived at the same conclusion: the expansion of this business is a driving factor behind the general socioeconomic progress of the nation. All of this takes on a deeper degree of significance when one considers the new objective of the government, which is to develop a target economy with a target value of \$5 trillion by the year 2025. The micro, small, and medium-sized firm sector is likely to play a big role in the achievement of this objective, as it is anticipated that their contribution to GDP will exceed the mark of 50 percent. One of the reasons why Indian government policies are now more focused on creating a robust ecosystem with improved breadth and depth is because the potential of the Indian micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) sector has not yet been fully realised. This potential can be seen in the breadth and depth of the ecosystem.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic is likely having substantial sociopsychological, physical, and technical ramifications for workers as they seek to adjust to their drastically altered work surroundings. These effects are likely to be compounded by the fact that the epidemic is now ongoing. Even if there is no question that some of these challenges are one of a kind and will, as a result, demand for novel techniques and theories to handle them, some of the concerns that employees are currently confronting are comparable to what MSMEs go through on a daily basis in their work. After all, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are frequently subjected to difficult working conditions, such as high levels of uncertainty and responsibility [9], the requirement to adapt flexibly and continuously to new circumstances [12], and a close connection between the professional and personal spheres of life. (McMullen & Shepherd, 2006) High levels of uncertainty and responsibility [1], [2]. In spite of these professional idiosyncrasies, a significant percentage of micro, small, and medium-sized firms (MSMEs) are very successful in their work and frequently report higher levels of subjective well-being than employees [13]. Therefore,

businesses may find ideas for resolving concerns of employee adaptability and well-being in the current work environment by contemplating the strategies that micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) use to deal with problems that are analogous to their own. In spite of the fact that these environments can be extremely challenging for businesses (Baron, 2010), micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) frequently thrive despite operating in highly uncertain and demanding environments [10], [15] and their ability to craft the "perfect job." Could workers in today's fast-paced environments benefit from taking on some autonomy? Prior study indicates that people working in traditional employment contexts may benefit from adopting traits that are often seen in MSMEs (such as respecting autonomy, tolerating uncertainty, and confronting new situations openly and proactively). According to studies on the role of job design in fostering employees' entrepreneurial qualities [3] as well as more recent research showing the malleability of personality and values in response to significant life events [14], a foundation for future research may be established. These characteristics include appreciating autonomy, tolerating uncertainty, and approaching new situations openly and proactively. In this context, studies on how job design affects an employee's ability to be entrepreneurial (De Similar to this, organisations can consider how micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) manage with the decreased physical and social interaction as an useful area to examine when it comes to helping employees navigate the limited physical and social engagement they currently experience. 2016's [4]. According to a recent study, some micro, small, and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs) may be more vulnerable to feelings of isolation, exclusion from social groups, and decreased wellbeing. Micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises typically have a much smaller number of sources of work-related social support compared to traditional employers, despite the fact that receiving social support from coworkers can typically lessen the impact of these drawbacks (for an overview, see [13]. [11] [5]. Interestingly, though, some micro, small, and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs) are able to get around these restrictions by utilising different, industry-specific sources of social support, like the goodwill of their clients,



which ultimately enhances their wellbeing [2] [7]. It is likely going to be important to make use of such inductive methodologies in order to find such ignored or untapped sources of social support in order to understand how to most effectively assist employees in coping with and adjusting to the present dynamic work environment..

III.OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To analyse the impact of Covid pandemic on work culture in MSME sector
2. To assess the various challenges posed by work from home system in organizational culture of MSMEs
3. To analyse the challenges for leadership of MSME firms with regards to organizational culture during Covid pandemic
4. To evaluate the influence of virtual teams on work culture in MSMEs.

IV.RESEARCH METHOD

The research followed a qualitative data collection method wherein interview was conducted. This interview was conducted with employees of 5 MSME firms in Rohilkhand Region. Based on the request of anonymity the name of the firm and the employees has been kept anonymous, with regards to ethical considerations of the research. Based on the literature review 5 themes were identified for the interviews, which are as following:

- **Work from Home (WFH)**
- **Virtual team**
- **Virtual Leadership and Management.**
- **Presenteeism**

V.DATA ANALYSIS

Work from Home (WFH)

According to responses received from, respondents A from Company MSME1, despite the fact that "remote work" is a more general term that can include "work from anywhere," and despite the fact that he is at a managerial level and therefore required to complete complex tasks that require little interaction with peers, he actually finds that he is more productive when he is working from home and would prefer to do so. However, the vast majority of respondents mentioned that they experience difficulties as a result of fundamental

issues, such as a lack of space in their homes in which they can work.

Another responder B stated that because she shares her rented apartment with other people, she experiences a more extensive range of difficulties than people who live alone due to the fact that she must also traverse the personal space of her roommates. Respondent C mentioned that she frequently has trouble differentiating between work and her personal life and that this is something that she struggles with. This situation has become much more complicated as a result of the mandatory confinement that took place during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Respondent D expressed views that were very similar to those expressed by respondent A. They claimed that while working from home could seem alluring if it provides a safe harbour, the lack of a clear boundary between one's job and personal life as well as the lack of commutes to act as a transition between the two domains can become burdensome. Getting organised and maintaining it, managing the intense emotions that come with the job, establishing and maintaining one's identity so that these emotions don't interfere with the productivity that is necessary for survival, managing feelings of loneliness while also pursuing and maintaining functional relationships that support the work, and establishing some semblance of a longer-term career path were some of the challenges that Respondent E shared.

Interpretation

It is evident that the various ways in which people work outside of regular professional settings will merit increased amounts of attention for both research and practise given the possibility that COVID-19 will accelerate trends toward WFH beyond the immediate effects of the pandemic. This is because, beyond the pandemic's immediate effects, COVID-19 is likely to accelerate trends toward WFH. Future research should examine whether or not the COVID-19 quarantines, which made millions of people work from home, had any effect on work productivity, creativity, or innovation, and if so, how. Research is also required to study the effects of WFH on issues like motivation and authenticity at work, especially when working in co-located workplace environments once more becomes commonplace. Given that the period of



quarantine involved a real window into coworkers' houses as well as those of subordinates and superiors, this is very significant. Both of these points are noteworthy. In point of fact, companies were already adopting and developing technology to monitor the whereabouts of their employees well before COVID-19 came into effect (e.g., with sociometric sensors). When employees are working remotely, it is impossible to manage by walking around, but the fast growing use of videoconferencing has made it possible to create virtual sight lines. However, these virtual sightlines come with a host of dangers, the most significant of which is that they have the potential to heighten emotions of stress and privacy violation due to their constant monitoring. Additionally, there is evidence to suggest that such remote and automated monitoring might promote management centralization and (in the absence of corrective action) may negatively affect lower-level employees' inventiveness. Due to the lack of a response, this is the situation.

Virtual team

Respondent A stated that typical collaboration issues, such as conflict and coordination, can quickly rise in virtual teams because MSME are smaller organisations. Respondent A also stated that virtual teamwork tends to lack the communication richness that is provided to face-to-face teams. According to respondent B, one of the most important recommendations for virtual teams is to construct structural scaffolding so as to reduce the likelihood of conflicts, align teams, and guarantee the secure and complete processing of information. Respondent C shared their opinion that it is essential, particularly in the case of MSMEs, to define team processes, establish team goals, and build-in structural solutions to support psychologically safe interactions.

According to the viewpoint expressed by respondent D. The increased team virtuality that resulted from COVID-19 may also have an effect on the willingness to help others and engage in other prosocial activities. Even though increasing the physical distance between coworkers may, in the short term, reduce the number of helping behaviours, we know that people should be more confident in their requests for assistance from

other people because, contrary to what we typically assume, people are more willing to help and provide assistance of a higher quality in times of crisis. According to respondent E, "best practises" in helping can help people who are seeking help get over these psychological hurdles by protecting their privacy and giving them hope that things will get better once they obtain it. The common barrier to asking for assistance is the perception that doing so would be uneasy, awkward, or embarrassing. Getting help can be difficult because of these feelings. However, "best practises" in helping can help.

Interpretation

In light of the fact that COVID-19 has hastened the growth of virtual teams, it will be beneficial for researchers to monitor and investigate developments that may make it possible for virtual teams to operate at their full potential. For example, working remotely while dealing with a global crisis raises concerns about how negative emotions, such as tension and anxiety, may be properly expressed and controlled in the uncommon setting of virtually connected work, where social and emotional signs are generally scarce. The creative benefits that can result from frequent face-to-face encounters have been proven to be missed by teammates who communicate remotely, according to research that focuses on individual performance. On the other hand, prior research has demonstrated that online teams are typically more productive at brainstorming than face-to-face teams. The exponential growth of virtual teams presents an opportunity to investigate new problems and develop solutions that can improve collaboration in virtual settings. The numerous ways that virtuality differs among remote teams must be carefully considered in order to be effective in this endeavour.

Virtual Leadership and Management

Respondent A shared their opinion that great leaders are those who are able to make the appropriate choices and provide assurance by maintaining a healthy balance of optimism and realism towards the future. To put it another way, effective leaders make it their mission (at any point in time) to project vision, It can be characterised as a symbolic state of affairs that the group identifies with. Respondent B emphasised that in virtual contexts, the lack of conventional physical signs of power and status



can foster more participative ties between people. According to the responses of respondent C When thinking about COVID-19, one of the more particular leader-subordinate activities that will be crucial to explore is the operation of the assessment and appraisal systems. However, working remotely for longer periods of time may limit opportunities for subordinates to receive feedback from leaders, according to the information supplied by Respondent D. Lack of learning opportunities may be linked to weaker organisational commitment and a higher chance of turnover, according to prior studies. Working remotely may also increase the likelihood that an employee will leave an organisation. Respondent E suggested that trust should be created remotely through online contacts so that newcomers would not be at a disadvantage due to the fact that they do not have face-to-face interactions with the leaders of the organisation.

Interpretation

The primary data shows that the effectiveness of leaders during and after the COVID-19 crisis should examine a variety of activities. One of these activities is the degree to which remote leaders are persuasive. These abilities are known as charisma, and developing them requires both training and investment. As a matter of fact, crises have the potential to bring about shifts in leadership styles; hence, businesses can anticipate being better prepared if they ensure that they have appropriately invested in professional development. Future research is crucial to determining whether or not organisations' efforts in employees' professional development during the COVID-19 crisis were worthwhile and, if so, how these dividends are generated.

Presenteeism

Respondent A asserts that in the wake of COVID-19, there was an increase in presenteeism in the workplace (i.e., people going to work when ill). According to respondent B, their company, which is classified as a small enterprise (MSME), does not differentiate between significant and mild illnesses. Despite this, during the pandemic, employees with major illnesses did not take sick leave at their company. During the pandemic, according to the perspective of respondent C,

many feel as though they are being forced to attend owing to the high demands of their jobs, which include excessive workload, understaffing, and compulsory overtime and. Respondent D stated that members of work teams had a tendency to replicate the level of presenteeism displayed by their managers. Respondent E suggests that in this context, It should also be evaluated in order to give confirmation that no distribution of incentives for co-workers are given to put back pressure on them to attend work even when getting sick.

Interpretation

In particular, research should investigate how illness is handled in the post-COVID-19 work landscape (for example, to determine if sick days or snow/weather days are now expected to be WFH days). This is important for those who have occupations that may be done remotely.

Domain of Work	Intepretation	Issues for Future Research	Inight-Driven Actions
Work From Home (WFH)	The massive, abrupt, and mandatory (for many employees) switch to work from home (WFH) has required employees to adapt while employers have become more open to adopting the practice post-pandemic.	How will WFH policies affect employee attitudes and behaviors to their employers as well as their co-workers? How will employee attitudes to privacy and monitoring shift for work that is done outside of an office setting?	Employees should create rituals that allow transitions (in the absence of commuting) in order to manage the boundaries between work and home. Organizations should adopt and encourage routines that enhance trust while being attentive to the costs of increased monitoring.

Domain of Work	Intepretation	Issues for Future Research	Inight-Driven Actions
Virtual Teams	Employees who are forced to work virtually for team projects have needed to navigate the indirect and direct conflicts that can result in performance losses.	How will emotion expression and communication in teams with either low or high virtuality affect outcomes? What factors will lead to helping and prosocial behavior in teams with either low or high virtuality – and how will these impact outcomes?	Team members need to pay attention to the structure and nature of communication flows in order to manage them effectively. Organizations should provide opportunities for non-task interactions among employees to allow emotional connections and bonding to continue among team members.



Domain of Work	Interpretation	Issues for Future Research	Insight-Driven Actions
Virtual Leadership and Management	Leaders are tested when presented with systemic shocks and must continue to project vision. Managers are faced with new challenges to supervise and cultivate the	How will leaders adapt their styles in response to shocks such as the current pandemic? How can organizations create superior leader communication to	Leaders need to balance optimism and realism in their communications with employees while demonstrating skills such as charisma.

VI.CONCLUSION

The findings of previous research on the subject of collaboration between scientists indicate that the benefits of implementing this strategy are easy to recognise. This is especially important to keep in mind in light of the fact that we are currently dealing with an urgent occurrence of seismic proportions known as COVID-19. A large number of heads is preferable to a relatively few number of heads. Nevertheless, it is a truth that our perspective is limited, and it is possible that we have failed to recognise certain tendencies or occurrences that may later prove to be essential. This is a possibility since it is a fact that our perspective is limited. We do not yet know, among the many factors that are currently unknown, how severely the global economy will be hurt or how quickly it will recover. This is one of the many things that are now unknown. This is only one of the many things that we don't know. We also do not know if a vaccination or an effective drug will be accessible, when it will be launched, how broadly it will be transmitted, or how quickly it will be delivered. Moreover, we do not know if there will be a vaccine or if there will be a medicine. Despite the lack of information available, it is very clear that COVID-19 will be credited with fundamentally altering the way in which we perform our jobs. For example, COVID-19 caused a dramatic acceleration in the rate of change that was linked with working away from co-located workplaces. This was due to the fact that more people were working remotely. It is likely that the use of virtual work practises will become more widespread as businesses become more aware of the cost savings that can be achieved by restructuring labour to include fewer full-time employees and more contractors who are connected technologically – and possibly with less office space as a result of the known health risks associated with conventional open-plan offices. These cost savings can be

achieved by restructuring labour to include fewer full-time employees and more contractors who are connected technologically. Virtual work practises can help businesses achieve these cost savings. The difficulties that individuals who work in this manner will confront are readily apparent: a bigger percentage of us will need to learn to work in ways that are significantly different from how people worked in generations before. When viewed from this perspective, COVID-19 makes it extremely clear how vulnerable we are, both as employees and as employers. As a direct result of the epidemic, workers all over the world will either need to retrain for new jobs or they will be let go from their current positions. It is anticipated that the financial, social-psychological, and physical repercussions of these activities will reach extraordinarily high levels. In point of fact, certain groups of employees will feel the consequences of the pandemic more strongly than others would feel them. This could be the case depending on a variety of criteria, including their age, race & ethnicity, gender, personality, and gender. It is essential for practitioners who are planning new courses of action to meet (for example, with new interventions) the requirements of vulnerable categories of workers to have an awareness of how these suddenly emerging changes play out in the course of events. This is because it is essential for practitioners to meet the requirements of vulnerable categories of workers. For instance, people who live alone may have very different requirements and routines for their virtual job in comparison to those people who live with members of their family. It is possible that leaders who are more authoritarian or dictatorial will have a more difficult time motivating their employees in virtual environments than leaders who are more participative and empathic, and as a result, they will have different requirements for training and development than leaders who are more participative and empathic. Last but not least, human resources experts need to build new performance management and appraisal processes in order to effectively cope with populations of remote workers. Additionally, occupational health experts should be trained to recognise mental health difficulties in remote working populations and should be able to provide online assistance and counselling to



those affected by these conditions. Research, in all of its myriad manifestations, is likewise plagued by an overwhelming amount of challenge. How will this affect the amount of work that gets done as well as the level of job satisfaction that employees have? The vast majority of research has concentrated on participants who agreed to WFH on their own volition; however, mandated and mass WFH provide a whole different set of issues. Researchers working for organisations might also look further back into our history to gain a better understanding of how epidemics and pandemics were handled in the past. This would allow them to have a better grasp on how to deal with the long-term effects of an outbreak. The fact that COVID-19 is largely a threat to global health, on the other hand, needs a distinct set of adaptive responses than are required for other infectious diseases. As a consequence of this, we require the development of hypotheses concerning the numerous ways in which a variety of global threats and crises influence the workplace in a wide variety of different ways. We do know that infectious diseases have frequently played a role in the development of humans, and that these diseases have had an impact on our psychology, behaviour, and culture that is surprising but could have been foreseen. Infectious disease threats, such as COVID-19, need to be recognised as a component of the working environment because we now live and work in communities that are interdependent with one another on a global scale. If we want to continue to enjoy the benefits of global collaboration, we will need to devise ways of working together that are not just more clever but also safer.

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