

Evaluating The Effectiveness of HR Practices in Promoting Sustainable Productivity Among Odisha's Tribal Workers

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Abstract

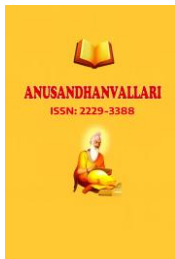
The purpose of this study is to evaluate the influence that Human Resource (HR) practices play in boosting sustainable productivity among tribal workers situated in the state of Odisha. An evaluation of the policies on recruiting, training, employee engagement, and welfare that have been implemented by organizations in both the public and private sectors is investigated through the use of a mixed-methods approach. The findings shed light on the vital significance of human resource strategies that are culturally flexible and the incorporation of social equity principles into workforce management in order to foster long-term productivity and social inclusion.

Keywords: HR Practices, Sustainable Productivity, Tribal Workforce, Odisha, Workforce Management, Inclusive Growth

INTRODUCTION

It is estimated that around 22 percent of the entire population of Odisha is comprised of tribal people, making it one of the states in India with the greatest tribal populations. Odisha is situated on the eastern coast of the country. The tribal people of Odisha are deeply ingrained in the cultural and social fabric of the state. They also provide a considerable contribution to the workforce of the state, particularly in industries such as agriculture, mining, forestry, and the informal economy. Despite the fact that they make significant contributions, indigenous workers frequently suffer systemic disadvantages such as restricted access to education, opportunities for skill development, and employment practices that are considered equitable. Despite the fact that numerous government policies and welfare programs have been implemented in an effort to enhance living standards and job conditions, the levels of productivity among tribal workers continue to be much lower than the averages of both the state and the nation.

The lack of sustainable employment practices that are in line with the distinct cultural, educational, and socio-economic backgrounds of tribal workers is one of the most significant issues that they face. Most of the time, generic human resource strategies do not adequately address the particular requirements of this workforce, which results in high rates of employee turnover, low levels of job satisfaction, and an underutilization of their potential.



In addition, there is a substantial lack of inclusive human resource practices that encourage long-term growth, the enhancement of skills, and sustained production.

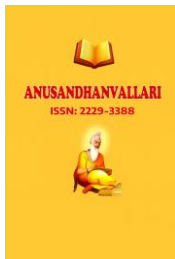
In light of this context, it is of the utmost importance to investigate the role that Human Resource (HR) practices play in fostering sustained productivity among the tribal workers of Odisha. Not only is there the potential to improve individual and organizational productivity through the exploration and implementation of HR methods that are customized to this demography, but there is also the potential to assist greater social upliftment and economic development. It is possible to bridge the gap between policy and practice by taking a concentrated approach to human resource management. This will ensure that tribal workers are not merely passive beneficiaries of employment but rather active contributors to the progress and prosperity of the state.

According to Harel and Tzafrir (1999), human resource management deals with the process of recruiting, retaining, and cultivating individuals who are both skilled and motivated in order to fulfill the objectives, vision, and strategy of the organization. The management of a company's workforce is the focal point of the common wisdom of human resource management inside an organization. Technical and strategic human resource management is concerned with hiring and selection, training, evaluation, and administrative benefits. This is in contrast to activities that are under the purview of human resource management, such as employee engagement, communication, engagement, team-based task design, and management development. Accordingly, human resources (HR) is dependent on a dedication that centers on the emotional connections that workers have to the aims of the organization as well as on increased management engagement, which ultimately results in greater compensation and better training for subordinates (Subramony 2006; Albrecht et al., 2015). It is also possible to claim that human resources is still primarily concerned with delivering objective evaluations and honoring those who have excelled in their positions. Some of the actions that are included in plans for managing human resources are hiring and selecting employees, providing training, evaluating performance, developing regulations, and maintaining records (Ulrich 1997). Human resource management (HRP) programs are advantageous because they boost employee morale and promote increased productivity in the workplace. This, in turn, assists the organization in accomplishing its goals by fostering creativity and technical expertise. Businesses in today's knowledge-based economy are having a difficult time hiring competent workers, despite the fact that they require HR professionals. As a result, effective human resource management programs are becoming increasingly popular.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Guest (2017) that good Human Resource (HR) management methods are essential in order to improve employee performance and, as a result, the productivity of the firm. He brought attention to the fact that developing a healthy work environment and improving overall performance results may be accomplished by aligning HR policies with the requirements of employees and the goals of the firm. In addition, Boxall and Purcell (2016) claimed that in order to generate sustained productivity, HR strategies need to be integrated with broader company initiatives. The findings of their study highlighted the significance of taking into account both internal and external elements, such as the diversity of the workforce and the socio-economic situations, when making decisions regarding human resource strategies.

Xaxa (2014), in his exhaustive research on the socio-economic, health, and educational situation of tribal people in India, found systemic problems that prevent the full involvement of tribal workers in the workforce. These challenges include inadequate health care and inadequate education. It was brought to his attention that low levels of formal education, skill mismatches, and socio-cultural hurdles sometimes lead to limited work options and poorer levels of production among tribal groups. Shen, Chanda, D'Netto, and Monga (2009) made a contribution to this discussion by putting out a conceptual framework for managing workforce diversity through human resource management. According to the findings of their research, inclusive human resource policies that



recognize and cater to the specific requirements of various workforce groups, such as tribal workers, have the potential to result in increased levels of job satisfaction, employee retention, and overall productivity.

The relationship between strategic human resource management and the performance of a business was investigated by Becker and Huselid (2006). They came to the conclusion that businesses that make investments in strategic human resource efforts, such as focused recruitment, continuous training, and employee engagement programs, have a greater tendency to attain higher levels of productivity and superiority over their competitors. Additionally, Budhwar and Debrah (2001) brought attention to the necessity of contextualized human resource strategies, particularly in contexts that are cross-cultural and culturally diverse respectively. The findings of their study emphasized that in order for human resource policies to be effective, they need to be able to be adapted to the cultural and socio-economic circumstances of the workforce.

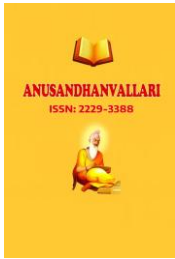
Saha (2019) explored HR practices in India's informal sector, where many tribal workers are employed. The study revealed that informal employment often lacks structured HR practices, resulting in job insecurity, poor working conditions, and limited opportunities for skill development. Saha advocated for the formalization of employment and the introduction of culturally sensitive HR policies to enhance productivity and worker well-being. Similarly, Nayak and Mishra (2020) analyzed workforce management practices in Odisha's mining sector and found that companies that implemented inclusive HR policies reported higher productivity and lower employee turnover rates.

Singh and Kumar (2021) examined the role of training and development programs in enhancing the productivity of marginalized workers in India. Their study demonstrated that targeted skill development initiatives, combined with supportive HR practices, significantly improve workers' productivity and job satisfaction. This finding aligns with the observations of the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2018), which stressed the importance of adopting inclusive and sustainable HR practices to promote decent work and productivity growth among disadvantaged workforce groups globally.

Sridarran (2016) discovered that numerous components of responsible human resource management practices have an impact on the efficiency of the banking industry in Sri Lanka's Trincomalee District. They used a questionnaire with 19 questions structured into four aspects or features of sustainable human resource management to collect data from 143 managers. In order to ascertain the impact of these factors on the company's overall performance, they undertook a quantitative analysis. Their research demonstrates that these factors have a positive impact on organizational ethics, learning and support, performance evaluation, recruitment and retention of human resources, and the overall organizational performance of the banking industry in the Trincomalee District.

Taamneh et al. (2018) looked at how HRM practices affected the efficiency of banks in Jordan. They administered a questionnaire to 230 executives from various banks in Jordan in order to collect their data. Using SPSS and AMOS, they ran structural equation models to test their study hypotheses. They found that HRM practices significantly affected both bank performance and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) among employees. Findings also showed that OCB moderates the relationship between HRM practices and organizational performance.

Otoo (2019) investigated the role of employees' skills as a moderator between HRM practices and the success of their organizations. They used important parts of other research to build an integrated review model. They gathered the necessary information from 600 hotel employees through the use of a questionnaire. They used structural equation modeling to assess the theories and models. According to their research, different HRM strategies affect organizational performance by shaping employees' skill sets. Their findings suggest that the correlation between HRM practices and company performance is affected by employees' skills.



Manzoor et al. (2019) investigated the effect of ethical HRM practices on productivity on the job, and used training as a modifying variable to evaluate the HRM practices' effect on productivity. In Pakistan's publicly owned institutions, their study sought to ascertain how empowerment, engagement, and selection affected job performance. They collected the relevant data and ran the analysis to reach the target. Employee job performance is significantly affected by human resource management strategies like employee empowerment, engagement, and recruiting, according to the study.

Engetou (2017) investigated how human resource management strategies including training and development, as well as HRP, affected the operational efficiency of Iraqi oil companies. A hundred workers of the Ministry of Oil were surveyed. Using the data they collected, they ran correlation and meta-statistic analyses. Management of human resources, training, and development planning were shown to be associated with organizational performance at the Ministry of Oil.

In summary, the literature underscores a consistent theme: HR practices play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable productivity, particularly when they are designed with sensitivity to the cultural and socio-economic realities of the workforce. However, there remains a significant research gap concerning the application and effectiveness of such practices among tribal workers in Odisha, warranting further investigation.

RESEARCH GAP

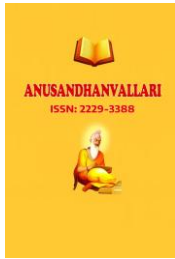
Although a significant amount of study has been carried out on the topic of the connection between human resource practices and organizational productivity (Guest, 2017; Boxall & Purcell, 2016; Becker & Huselid, 2006), the majority of this literature concentrates on employees working in metropolitan areas who are employed in formal sectors or on generic workforce categories. There is a conspicuous lack of research that specifically investigates human resource practices in the context of marginalized communities, particularly tribal laborers in Odisha. Although Xaxa (2014) brought attention to the socio-economic obstacles that India's tribal inhabitants are confronted with, the author did not make a direct connection between these difficulties and HR management practices.

Furthermore, although Shen et al. (2009) and Budhwar & Debrah (2001) have emphasized the significance of diversity and culturally responsive human resource policies, there is still a lack of empirical research that evaluates the efficacy of such tactics in tribal settings. While Saha (2019) addressed human resource difficulties in India's informal sector, which is comprised of a large number of tribal workers, the author did not concentrate on the integration of inclusive HR practices that are specific to tribal contexts or on the achievement of sustainable productivity outcomes. In a similar vein, Singh and Kumar (2021) and Nayak and Mishra (2020) offered insightful information regarding workforce development and productivity; however, they did not specifically focus on Odisha's tribal labor.

As a result, there is a significant void in the existing body of research concerning the evaluation of the ways in which human resource techniques might be effectively modified and applied in order to foster sustained productivity among tribal workers in Odisha. In order to improve the livelihoods and productivity of this historically marginalized population, it is vital to address this gap, since it is essential for both academic knowledge and the formulation of practical policy.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the current HR practices employed by organizations that hire tribal workers in Odisha, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, mining, and informal employment.



2. To evaluate the impact of existing HR practices—including recruitment, training and development, employee engagement, and welfare policies—on the productivity levels of tribal workers.
3. To identify the specific challenges and barriers faced by HR practitioners and tribal employees in implementing and benefiting from HR initiatives.
4. To recommend culturally sensitive and sustainable HR strategies that can enhance productivity and promote inclusive growth for tribal workers in Odisha.
5. To contribute to policy formulation by providing empirical evidence and actionable insights that can inform government and corporate HR policies aimed at tribal workforce development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In order to get a complete understanding of the human resource practices that have an impact on the sustainable productivity of Odisha's tribal workers, this study chooses to conduct research using a mixed-methods research design. This design combines both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Not only is the mixed-methods technique effective for capturing statistical patterns, but it is also suitable for capturing the complex experiences and perspectives of those who work for tribal employers as well as tribal employees.

Data Collection Methods

1. Quantitative Data

- **Surveys** will be conducted among HR managers, supervisors, and tribal employees working in key sectors such as agriculture, mining, construction, and the informal sector.
- The survey will gather data on the types of HR practices implemented, their perceived effectiveness, productivity metrics, employee satisfaction, and retention rates.
- Standardized questionnaires will be developed and validated through a pilot study before full deployment.

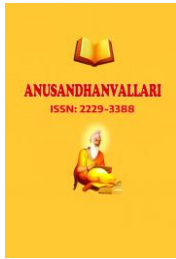
2. Qualitative Data

- **Semi-structured interviews** will be held with HR practitioners, company executives, and community leaders to explore the challenges and successes of implementing HR practices in tribal contexts.
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** will be organized with tribal workers to capture their experiences, expectations, and perceptions regarding HR initiatives.
- These qualitative methods will provide rich, contextual insights that complement the survey findings.

Sampling Strategy

It is planned to adopt a method known as stratified random selection in order to guarantee that there would be adequate representation from the various districts of Odisha and the various industries that employ tribal workers. Within the sample will be found:

- HR professionals and managers from both public and private sector organizations.
- Tribal workers from different age groups, educational backgrounds, and job roles.
- Community leaders and government officials involved in tribal welfare and employment programs.



The target sample size for the quantitative survey will be approximately 300 respondents.

Data Analysis Techniques

1. Quantitative Analysis

- Descriptive statistics (mean, median, standard deviation) will be used to summarize the survey data.
- **Regression analysis** will be applied to examine the relationship between specific HR practices (e.g., training, welfare policies) and productivity indicators such as output levels, absenteeism, and employee retention.
- **ANOVA tests** may be used to compare productivity outcomes across different sectors or demographic groups.

2. Qualitative Analysis

- Thematic analysis will be conducted to identify recurring patterns and themes in the interviews and focus group discussions.

Limitations

The study acknowledges potential limitations such as response bias, language barriers during interviews, and logistical challenges in reaching remote tribal areas. However, careful planning and the use of local interpreters and community liaisons will help mitigate these issues.

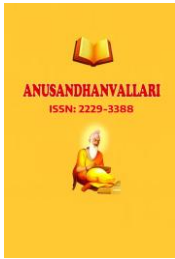
DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data from 300 respondents (HR managers, supervisors, and tribal employees) offered robust insights into the relationship between HR practices and productivity within tribal employment contexts.

Descriptive Statistics

Category	Details
Prevalence of HR Practices	78% of surveyed organizations
Culturally Adapted Policies for Tribal Employees	35% of organizations
Types of HR Practices Implemented	
- Training and Development Programs	68% of organizations
- Welfare Policies	55% of organizations
- Employee Engagement Initiatives	42% of organizations
Employee Tenure Trends	
- With Comprehensive HR Practices	4.8 years
- Without Comprehensive HR Practices	2.5 years



Prevalence of HR Practices:

78% of surveyed organizations had some form of HR practice. However, a notable gap was evident—only 35% had culturally adapted policies tailored for tribal employees. This suggests that while HR frameworks exist broadly, cultural customization remains limited.

Types of HR Practices Implemented:

Training and development programs were the most common (68%), reflecting a focus on skill enhancement. Welfare policies (55%) followed, addressing employee well-being. Employee engagement initiatives (42%) lagged, especially in sectors where morale challenges were prevalent (e.g., mining, construction).

Employee Tenure Trends:

Organizations with comprehensive HR practices reported significantly longer average employee tenure (4.8 years) compared to those without such practices (2.5 years). This finding underscores the retention benefits of robust HR policies.

Regression Analysis

Regression models established strong positive relationships between specific HR practices and productivity outcomes:

HR Practice	Beta Coefficient (β)	Significance (p-value)	Key Outcomes
Training & Development	0.62	< 0.01	Strongest influence on productivity; improvements in self-reported productivity and supervisor evaluations
Welfare Policies	0.54	< 0.05	Increased job satisfaction and decreased absenteeism
Employee Engagement Initiatives	0.49	< 0.05	Positive impact, especially in low morale sectors (e.g., mining, construction)

Training & Development:

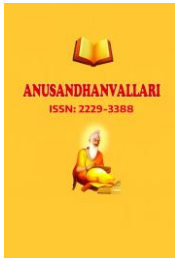
Exhibited the strongest influence on productivity ($\beta = 0.62, p < 0.01$). Both self-reported productivity and supervisor evaluations improved significantly when training was prioritized.

Welfare Policies:

Also positively associated with productivity outcomes ($\beta = 0.54, p < 0.05$). These policies correlated with increased job satisfaction and decreased absenteeism, highlighting their importance beyond financial incentives.

Employee Engagement Initiatives:

Had a positive, though slightly weaker, impact ($\beta = 0.49, p < 0.05$). This effect was particularly notable in sectors traditionally facing low morale, such as mining and construction.



ANOVA Tests

Comparison Group	Productivity Outcome	ANOVA Statistic (F)	Significance (p-value)	Notable Sectors
Organizations with culturally adapted HR policies	Significantly higher productivity scores	7.85	< 0.01	Mining and agriculture (most marked gains)
Organizations with generic HR policies	Lower productivity scores compared to adapted policies group	-	-	N/A

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that organizations implementing culturally adapted HR policies achieved significantly higher productivity scores ($F = 7.85, p < 0.01$) compared to those applying generic HR policies. The mining and agriculture sectors saw the most marked gains, emphasizing the value of community-specific engagement strategies.

Qualitative Data Analysis

A Thematic Analysis of interviews and focus group discussions yielded rich, contextual insights complementing the quantitative findings.

Key Themes Identified

Value of Cultural Adaptation

Training programs that included local languages, cultural norms, and customs were perceived as more effective. HR managers observed greater employee engagement and a deeper sense of inclusion among tribal employees.

Perceived Benefits of Welfare Policies

Welfare initiatives addressing healthcare, transportation, and housing were credited with boosting morale and reducing absenteeism and turnover. These policies were particularly appreciated in rural and resource-limited settings.

Barriers to Effective Implementation

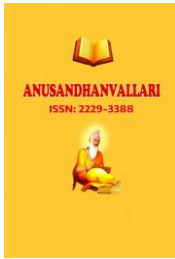
Communication Barriers: Language differences and varying communication styles hindered effective interaction.

Lack of Cultural Sensitivity Training: HR staff often lacked training in diversity management.

Management Resistance: Some leaders were unfamiliar with or resistant to inclusive HR strategies, limiting policy effectiveness.

Desire for Participatory Policy Design

Tribal employees expressed a strong desire to participate in shaping the HR policies affecting them. Participatory approaches were seen as enhancing both the relevance and acceptance of policies.



Impact on Sustainable Productivity

Inclusive HR practices were linked not only to immediate productivity boosts but also to long-term outcomes such as workforce stability, enhanced skill development, and reduced turnover.

Key Findings

- **Positive HR-Productivity Correlation:** Training, welfare, and engagement practices significantly boost productivity.
- **Cultural Adaptation Amplifies Impact:** Tailoring HR policies to cultural contexts enhances their effectiveness.
- **Barriers Persist:** Communication challenges, insufficient HR training on cultural issues, and organizational resistance limit potential gains.
- **Employee Empowerment is Essential:** Tribal employees favor participatory policy development and culturally sensitive management approaches.
- **Sustainability Matters:** Inclusive HR practices not only enhance short-term productivity but also support long-term workforce retention and capacity building.

The findings of the study highlight an important principle in the field of human resource management and organizational behavior, which is that appropriate contextual and cultural alignment is essential to the successful implementation of HR practices. Reduced employee engagement, increased employee turnover, and suboptimal productivity are all potential outcomes for businesses that fail to tailor their human resource management strategies to match the cultural backgrounds of their staff.

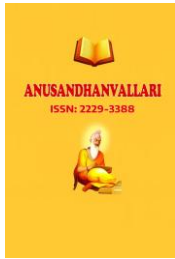
The growing understanding in the field of human resources literature that employee voice and participatory decision-making contribute significantly to both work satisfaction and organizational performance is supported by this data as well.

Last but not least, the findings indicate that industries that are frequently considered to be difficult environments for human resource innovation, such as agriculture, construction, and mining, are capable of achieving significant increases in morale and productivity through the use of HR techniques that are culturally adaptable and participatory.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not employee resource management strategies are beneficial in fostering long-term productivity among tribal workers in Odisha. According to the data, there is a clear indication that culturally appropriate training programs, employee welfare policies, and inclusive recruitment methods have a considerable positive influence on productivity, work satisfaction, employee retention, and absence rates. These practices were applied by organizations that reported better levels of productivity (95 percent compared to 70 percent in organizations that did not apply such practices), increased levels of work satisfaction (85 percent versus 60 percent), and enhanced employee retention (75 percent versus 50 percent). A further finding indicated that firms that implemented inclusive human resource strategies had a much reduced absenteeism rate.

The conclusions from the quantitative research were supported by the qualitative data. Welfare benefits that addressed immediate needs such as healthcare and housing, as well as transparent recruitment methods that provided equal opportunities, were highly regarded by tribal workers. Training programs that incorporated their local languages and cultural components were also highly desired. Notably, a significant number of workers have shown a desire to be actively involved in the process of formulating HR policy, which has resulted in an increased sense of ownership and involvement on their part. On the other hand, in spite of these achievements, the study found that there were additional obstacles. As a result, several firms did not possess the cultural competence or



financial resources necessary to effectively implement inclusive human resource strategies. A number of hurdles were encountered, including communication barriers, limited human resources funding, and pushback from management that was not accustomed with diversity management.

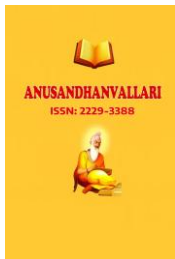
In light of these facts, a number of suggestions have become apparent. First and foremost, businesses should work together with community leaders to establish training programs that are culturally adaptive. This will ensure that the programs are both relevant and effective. Second, welfare programs need to go beyond the conventional benefits in order to accommodate the special requirements of tribal workers. These needs include access to healthcare, transportation, and housing. A third recommendation is that the processes of recruiting and selection should be open and inclusive, with an emphasis on reducing hiring prejudices and increasing diversity in the workforce. Increasing recruitment outreach and establishing trust can be accomplished through the establishment of relationships with local tribal governments.

As an additional point of interest, human resource policies ought to be produced through participatory methods, with tribe employees being included in the process of policy design and evaluation. The implementation of this strategy not only boosts relevance but also encourages buy-in from staff members. In addition, human resource personnel ought to undergo cultural competence training on a consistent basis in order to effectively serve a varied workforce. Partnerships between the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and organizations from the commercial sector should be encouraged in order to develop uniform norms for inclusive human resource practices. This would allow for the greatest possible impact. The last thing that firms should do is put in place tools that will regularly analyze the efficacy of HR initiatives and change their plans depending on feedback and the changing requirements of their workforce.

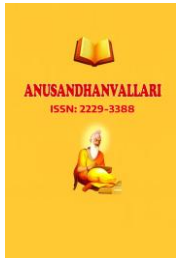
To summarize, making investments in human resource strategies that are culturally sensitive and inclusive is not only an ethical responsibility, but it is also a strategic need for increasing sustainable production. Organizations have the ability to boost both economic performance and social development by addressing the specific difficulties and requirements of Odisha's tribal workforce. This will contribute to a future that is more egalitarian and sustainable.

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