

We Cherish Our Employees As Our Precious Human Capital And Driving Force

Nirmala Behera



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RSB Transmissions (I) Ltd manufactures several components and sub-systems including propeller shafts, steering systems & components, transmission components & assembly and construction equipment aggregates. It supplies to almost all the vehicle manufacturers in the country besides, catering to export markets. Presently, it has 13 manufacturing plants spread over seven locations in India and one each in Homer (USA), and Silao (Mexico) giving employment to about 3,500 people. As the pandemic COVID19's disruption spared none in the world, the company has taken some unique initiatives to safeguard its employees on multiple aspects. In conversation with T Murralli, the Executive Director, Group HR, RSB Transmissions (I) Ltd, Nirmala Behera shared her views on some of the initiatives take by the group. Edited excerpts:



Q: How does your company instill confidence in the employees in the current COVID19 situation of continuing uncertainty – in terms of health, welfare and economy? Tell us also the key motivating factor that was effective much more than others?

Behera: Instilling confidence has been a continual exercise ever since out-break of COVID19 since we considered RSBians as our closely-knitted family built on an unshakable edifice of togetherness. We traditionally cherished them as our precious human capital and driving force, addressed their healthy well-being, aligning every process to highest standards of health and safety with voluntary health-check measures at planned intervals, extending to their family members too.

First confidence booster came from our Chairman, RK Behera, right at the outbreak, through an email addressed to every RSBian on the

perilous scenario of the pandemic situation across the globe, consequential mandatory lock-down and COVID preventive measures to be taken by them and their family members. His inspiring quote from mail: 'While we have a big challenge of virus assuming global dimension, let us all join our hands to break the COVID19 outbreak by taking all mandated health-safe-guard measures and march our strides with optimistic look for a healthy and prosperous future,' which ushered in unparalleled motivation across our fraternity.

This was followed by advisory from HR, from time to time, to all our colleagues on the guidelines issued by WHO and Government, as also sanitising workplace and Gemba with high-end hygienic practices, as a precautionary measure, to stall potential contact to the dreaded virus. We have also taken strict measures of voluntarily quarantining our colleagues to work from home, using all the available

digital modes, and given mandatory leave breaks, wherever warranted, to avoid contact spread.

Further, we formed a vibrant HR team called 'RSB COVID19 Warriors' as a part of our 'Service in all Humility to Humanity' and reached affected folks during the entire lock-down period. It was great teamwork.

Q: Can you elaborate on the highlights of the teamwork?

Behera: At Jamshedpur 26,750 COVID beneficiaries were covered during the lockdown period by providing hygienically packed food packets in aluminium foil with mineral water and basic provisions, covering slum areas in Jamshedpur and 13 villages of Birbans, Saraikela.

RSB plant at Sanaswadi, distributed 500 meal packets with mineral water to 19 affected people and police personnel at the outskirts of rural Pune. Besides, a basic health



checkup was conducted for police personnel of Shikhrapur, near Sanaswadi.

RSB corporate office in Pune, distributed provision kits for 200 affected folks in rural areas, given provision kits to 250 affected folks, through CII, Pune, covering affected folks of slums and also provided sanitizers to 7,500 patients and health workers in rural Aurangabad through Savitri Bhati Phule Mahila Trust's Hedgewar Hospital, Aurangabad. While RSB, Lucknow, distributed provision kits and food to the victims at rural Lucknow, RSB, Pant Nagar, distributed Provision Kit, for folks, through Tata Vendor Park members, Pant Nagar.

The biggest motivating factor has been from our peer leaders, Chairman, RK Behera and Vice Chairman/MD, SK Behera, who constantly kept in touch with our colleagues during lockdown through digital platforms, boosting at every stage with their inspirational interactions. Our HR team kept advisories from time to time with updates on COVID through e-modes, employee engagement programmes viz yoga sessions, health and fitness, ergonomics, stress management, on-line display of talents like music, vocal songs, digital competition for children of employees, etc.

Q: Do you see any silver lining in the cloud, in the current scenario?

Behera: While COVID19 has taught us how to remain healthy, hygienic and boost immune systems, unlocking measures have brought our plants pan India back

into operations, albeit in stages, as per the directives. We have implemented strict SOPs during the unlocking phase at the plants with our specially formed a Task Force Team and remote audits. While RSB, in its annals of history, always saw the silver lining in every dark cloud during its journey of umpteen trade storms, ups and downs, recession and withstood steadfast to be back to normalcy, COVID is also a passing phase and would go off bringing trade, commerce and industry back to its glory in a matter of time.

Q: How do you see this positivity evolved in your plant, energize the value stream down the line – your suppliers?

Behera: We have implemented strict SOPs during the unlocking phase through separate Task Force Teams at each location with remote audits. This has, in turn, injected positivity in the entire supply value stream. We always considered suppliers as our partners in progress. During lock-down, we ensured that the advisories are sent regularly through sourcing heads, followed by web meetings and invites to participate mandatorily in CII COVID webinars for supply chain partners. The entire process of COVID measures through SOPs now forms part of contractual obligations in the entire supply chain and has boosted the morale of the entire stream. Besides, monitoring and measurement at planned intervals, which form part of our PDCA process, has kept a watch on the effectiveness of implementation with no compromise on deviations.

Q: Personal hygiene and social distancing were brought in by COVID19; what are the advantages they would bring in, in the future?

Behera: While personal hygiene has brought, by default in the wake of COVID, high sense of discipline in maintaining a healthy enduring life and has awakened rich ethics of ancient India for inducting into interactive platforms globally, the biggest gain for an employee or people at large, is that it has brightened prospect of boosting one's immunity with healthy lifestyles and increase the disease-free life span. This has been possible by increased penetration of print and electronic media, besides other digital platforms and apps. Work-from-Home digital platforms have brought great self-reliance and instilled independence in executing tasks.

Q: How do you see the current scenario helping you formulate new HR Policies?

Behera: The current scenario will bring about changes in the corporate style of working – digital platforms forming edifice - and bring about changes in HR policies. Work-from-Home through net and lap-tops will perhaps be the order of the day. Flexi working hours, creativity, hiring from remote locations and experiential learning will go in re-defining HR policies. It will be a digital intelligence in its prime role defining style of functioning with a focus on increased productivity. We may have to watch and formulate policies when scenario unfolds with time post-COVID. **MT**