

Are Indian Companies Really Becoming Employee-Centric? A Secondary Data Analysis of HR Policies

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary Indian corporate landscape is witnessing a paradigm shift in Human Resource Management (HR) philosophies, with an increasing emphasis on employee-centric policies. This research paper undertakes a comprehensive secondary data analysis to critically examine whether Indian companies are genuinely transitioning towards employee-centric HR frameworks or if such initiatives remain largely performative. Drawing upon data from Gallup's State of the Global Workplace Report (2026), Aon's Annual Salary Increase & Turnover Survey (2025), Great Place to Work India Rankings (2026), and various industry-specific studies, this paper evaluates the efficacy of contemporary HR policies including flexible work arrangements, mental health support, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and statutory compliance under India's new Labour Codes effective November 2025. The findings reveal a complex dichotomy: while leading organizations particularly in the IT, financial services, and hospitality sectors have made substantial strides in implementing progressive HR policies, a significant proportion of the Indian workforce continues to experience high levels of stress (28%), burnout (68% in IT sector), and work-life imbalance. The analysis indicates that India's overall attrition rate, though declining from 18.7% (2023) to 17.1% (2025), remains alarmingly high in sectors such as e-commerce (28.7%) and professional services (25.7%). Furthermore, despite 87% of Indian employees identifying work-life balance as a top priority, 56.3% report experiencing pressure to sacrifice personal time for work-related tasks. The study concludes that while a cohort of exemplary organizations demonstrates genuine commitment to employee welfare, systemic gaps persist across the broader corporate ecosystem. The paper offers strategic recommendations for HR practitioners and policymakers to bridge the gap between policy formulation and actual implementation, advocating for a more holistic, evidence-based approach to employee-centricity in the Indian context.

Keywords: *Employee-Centric HR Policies, Work-Life Balance, Employee Engagement, Attrition Rate, Indian Corporate Sector, Secondary Data Analysis, Labour Codes 2025, Burnout, Mental Health, Diversity and Inclusion*

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of employee-centricity has evolved from being a peripheral HR buzzword to a strategic imperative for organizational sustainability in the twenty-first century. In the Indian context, this transformation is particularly significant given the country's demographic dividend, competitive labour market, and the post-pandemic reconfiguration of workplace dynamics. The new Labour Codes effective from November 2025 have further catalysed this shift by mandating appointment letters for all employees, reducing gratuity eligibility from five years to one year for fixed-term employees, instituting free annual health checkups for employees above 40, and requiring timely wage payments by the 7th of every month. These statutory changes, coupled with evolving employee expectations, have

compelled Indian organizations to re-evaluate their HR frameworks. However, the critical question that emerges is whether this ostensible shift towards employee-centricity represents a genuine structural transformation or merely a superficial adaptation to regulatory pressures and market expectations. The Indian corporate sector presents a fascinating case study in this regard, characterized by stark contrasts between the progressive policies of multinational corporations and leading domestic conglomerates on one hand, and the persistent challenges faced by small and medium enterprises and traditional industries on the other.

The significance of this inquiry is underscored by compelling empirical evidence. According to Gallup's State of the Global Workplace: 2026 Report, only 23% of Indian employees are engaged at work, representing a 7-point decrease from the prior three-year rolling average. Alarming, merely 17% of employees report thriving in their overall lives, significantly below the global average of 34%. Concurrently, 36% of employees experienced sadness and 31% experienced anger "a lot of the previous day," figures that substantially exceed global averages. These statistics paint a sobering picture of employee well-being in India and raise fundamental questions about the depth and authenticity of employee-centric initiatives.

This research paper adopts a secondary data analysis methodology to critically interrogate the employee-centric claims of Indian companies. By synthesizing data from multiple authoritative sources including international consulting firms, industry associations, academic journals, and government reports, the study aims to provide a nuanced, evidence-based assessment of the current state of HR policies in India. The paper is structured to first review existing literature, then detail the research methodology, present findings from the secondary data analysis, discuss the implications of these findings, and conclude with actionable recommendations for HR practitioners and policymakers.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The theoretical foundations of employee-centric HR policies can be traced to the Human Relations Movement pioneered by Elton Mayo and the subsequent development of organizational behaviour theories emphasizing psychological contracts, job satisfaction, and employee engagement. In the Indian context, the evolution of HR practices has been influenced by a complex interplay of cultural factors, economic liberalization, globalization, and more recently, digital transformation and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Several contemporary studies have examined the state of work-life balance in Indian companies. Research published in the International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews (2024) found that while 50% of Indian employees believe they have a good work-life balance, 56.3% feel pressure from their workplace to sacrifice personal time for work-related tasks. Furthermore, 68.8% of respondents reported occasionally feeling overwhelmed by work responsibilities in the past month, and 43.8% felt it was very common for professionals in India to prioritize work over personal life. These findings suggest a persistent cultural orientation towards work-centricity that may undermine formal HR policies.

The Journal of Informatics Education and Research (2025) conducted a comprehensive survey revealing that 81% of respondents strongly agreed that work-life balance is essential for overall well-being. However, 78% reported being routinely distracted by work-related thoughts, indicating significant work stress intrusion into personal lives. The study also documented a generational divide in perceptions of responsibility for work-life balance, with younger employees (18-25 years) emphasizing employer responsibility (58.34%) while older employees (45-60 years) viewing it primarily as individual responsibility (90.91%). From an organizational perspective, the Great Place to Work India 2026 rankings identify Hilton, Cisco Systems India, Synchrony International Services, IHG Hotels & Resorts, and Flipkart Group among the top employers. These organizations are distinguished by their comprehensive wellness programs, flexible work arrangements, and strong diversity and inclusion metrics. Similarly, the WCRC International rankings of India's 50 Most Loved Workplaces highlight TCS, Microsoft India, NVIDIA India, Google India, and Procter & Gamble India as exemplars of psychological safety, representation, and equity.

However, sectoral analyses reveal significant disparities. The Nasscom-Deloitte workforce report (2025) found that 68% of IT professionals in India show at least two clinical indicators of burnout, including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, or reduced personal accomplishment. The FICCI financial sector wellness report (2024) documented that 61% of BFSI employees score in the high-stress category on the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10),

compared to 48% across all sectors. These findings suggest that even in sectors with ostensibly progressive HR policies, implementation gaps and cultural factors may limit their effectiveness.

The economic implications of these trends are substantial. According to Aon's Annual Salary Increase & Turnover Survey covering 1,060+ companies across 45 industries, India's overall attrition rate, while declining from 18.7% in 2023 to 17.1% in 2025, remains significantly elevated in high-churn sectors. The cost of replacing leadership positions can reach 200% of annual salary, while replacing frontline employees costs approximately 40% of yearly compensation. Research by ASSOCHAM indicates that every rupee spent on employee wellness generates Rs. 133 in savings on absenteeism costs and Rs. 6.62 in reduced healthcare costs, underscoring the business case for genuine employee-centricity.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a descriptive and analytical research design based exclusively on secondary data. The research adopts a qualitative-quantitative mixed approach, wherein quantitative data from surveys and industry reports are analyzed alongside qualitative insights from case studies and expert commentaries. The study period focuses primarily on data collected between 2023 and 2026, with longitudinal comparisons extending to 2010 where relevant data is available.

3.2 Data Sources

The secondary data for this research has been drawn from multiple categories of authoritative sources:

- (a) International Consulting and Research Firms: Gallup's State of the Global Workplace Report (2026), Aon's Annual Salary Increase & Turnover Survey (2025), PwC's APAC Workforce Survey (2024-2025), Deloitte's Global Human Capital Trends (2025), and McKinsey's Future of Work in India reports.
- (b) Industry Associations and Government Bodies: Nasscom-Deloitte IT Workforce Report (2025), FICCI Financial Sector Wellness Report (2024), ASSOCHAM Employee Wellness Studies, and data from the Ministry of Labour and Employment regarding the implementation of new Labour Codes.
- (c) Academic Journals: Peer-reviewed publications from the International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews, Journal of Informatics Education and Research, and other UGC CARE-listed journals focusing on Indian HR practices.
- (d) Corporate Rankings and Certifications: Great Place to Work India Rankings (2026), WCRC International's India's 50 Most Loved Workplaces (2025), and Statista's Best Employers in India (2025).
- e) Sector-Specific Reports: Industry analyses from WiseMonk, Devdoot, and other specialized HR analytics platforms.

3.3 Data Analysis Framework

The data analysis follows a multi-dimensional framework examining:

- (i) Policy Formulation: The existence and comprehensiveness of employee-centric policies including flexible work arrangements, mental health support, diversity and inclusion initiatives, career development programs, and wellness benefits.
- (ii) Policy Implementation: The actual execution of stated policies, measured through employee satisfaction surveys, engagement scores, and workplace climate assessments.
- (iii) Outcome Metrics: Quantifiable indicators of employee-centricity including attrition rates, engagement scores, burnout prevalence, work-life balance satisfaction, and productivity measures.

(iv) Sectoral and Organizational Variations: Comparative analysis across industries, company sizes, and ownership structures (MNCs vs. domestic firms, large corporations vs. SMEs).

3.4 Limitations

The study acknowledges several limitations inherent to secondary data analysis. First, the reliance on published reports may introduce selection bias, as organizations with poor HR practices are less likely to participate in surveys or disclose negative data. Second, variations in survey methodologies and sample compositions across different studies may limit direct comparability. Third, the rapidly evolving nature of HR practices in India means that some data may not fully capture the most recent policy innovations. Fourth, sector-specific studies may not be generalizable to the entire Indian corporate ecosystem. Despite these limitations, the convergence of findings across multiple independent sources provides reasonable confidence in the overall conclusions.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Employee Engagement and Well-being Metrics

The analysis of Gallup's State of the Global Workplace: 2026 Report reveals a concerning trajectory for employee engagement in India. While India's engagement rate of 23% marginally exceeds the South Asian regional average (21%) and global average (20%), it represents a significant 7-point decline from the 30% recorded in 2024 and a 10-point drop from the peak of 33% in 2022. This downward trend suggests that despite increased policy attention, employee engagement is deteriorating rather than improving.

The life evaluation metrics are even more alarming. Only 17% of Indian employees report thriving in their overall lives, compared to the global average of 34%. This figure has remained stagnant since 2024, indicating that policy initiatives have failed to translate into meaningful improvements in holistic well-being. Concurrently, 62% of employees are classified as "struggling" and 22% as "suffering" in their life evaluations.

Emotional well-being indicators paint a similarly distressing picture. In 2025, 28% of Indian employees experienced stress, 31% experienced anger, and 36% experienced sadness "a lot of the previous day." While stress levels have decreased by 2 points from the prior three-year average, anger and sadness levels remain substantially above global averages (22% and 23% respectively). The persistence of these negative emotional states suggests that workplace environments continue to generate significant psychological distress.

4.2 Attrition and Retention Patterns

Aon's comprehensive survey of 1,060+ companies across 45 industries provides robust data on attrition trends. India's overall attrition rate has shown a gradual decline from 18.7% in 2023 to 17.7% in 2024 and 17.1% in 2025. Projections for 2026 suggest stabilization around 16.5%, approaching pre-pandemic levels. However, this aggregate figure masks significant sectoral variations.

High-attrition sectors include E-commerce (28.7%), Information Technology (25%), Professional Services (25.7%), Financial Services (24.8%), and Hi-Tech (21.5%). In contrast, traditional industries demonstrate greater stability: Metals and Mining (8.6%), Automobile Sector (12.4%), Chemicals (12.9%), and Engineering (14%). For India's top-5 IT services companies (TCS, Infosys, HCL, Wipro, Tech Mahindra), the last-twelve-month attrition rate has stabilized at approximately 13% as of FY2025, significantly lower than the pre-pandemic level of 18%.

The cost implications of attrition are substantial. Replacing leadership positions can cost up to 200% of annual salary, while frontline employee replacement costs approximately 40% of yearly compensation. Furthermore, research from University College London (UCL) indicates that burned-out employees are 2.6 times more likely to seek new employment within six months, creating a vicious cycle of attrition and burnout.

4.3 Work-Life Balance and Burnout

The analysis of work-life balance data reveals a paradoxical situation. While 87% of Indian employees identify work-life balance as a top priority for combating toxic work culture, empirical indicators suggest persistent challenges. According to the International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews (2024), 56.3% of employees feel pressure from their workplace to sacrifice personal time for work-related tasks. Only 37.5% believe their organization promotes a healthy work-life balance culture, while an equal proportion remains neutral.

Burnout statistics are particularly concerning in knowledge-intensive sectors. The Nasscom-Deloitte workforce report (2025) found that 68% of IT professionals in India exhibit at least two clinical indicators of burnout. Drivers include perpetual sprint cycles with no recovery time, always-on client communication across time zones, and the collapse of boundaries between work and home in post-pandemic hybrid setups. In the BFSI sector, 61% of employees score in the high-stress category on the PSS-10 scale, compared to 48% across all sectors.

The generational analysis reveals divergent perspectives. The Journal of Informatics Education and Research (2025) documented that 66.67% of employees aged 18-25 view work-life balance as a joint responsibility of employer and individual, compared to 81.82% of those aged 45-60. However, when asked whether it is primarily the employer's responsibility, agreement decreases with age (58.34% for 18-25 vs. 40.91% for 45-60), while the perception of individual responsibility increases dramatically (25% for 18-25 vs. 90.90% for 45-60).

4.4 Progressive HR Policies: Evidence of Genuine Employee-Centricity

Despite the challenges documented above, a cohort of Indian companies demonstrates exemplary employee-centric practices. The Great Place to Work India 2026 rankings identify organizations across diverse sectors that have institutionalized progressive HR frameworks:

In the IT sector, Infosys offers sabbatical programmes for employee rejuvenation and continuous learning. Microsoft India has implemented comprehensive mental health initiatives and flexible work options. TCS has pioneered the "25/25" work model, allowing employees to work from anywhere including the company's 75 offices or from home. These initiatives have contributed to measurable outcomes, with remote work options reducing attrition by 25-30% and hybrid models cutting attrition by 18% across Indian companies.

In traditional industries, Tata Steel provides industry-leading leave policies and comprehensive health and safety measures. Hindustan Unilever links its Sustainable Living Plan with employee welfare, offering agile working arrangements and career breaks. These organizations demonstrate that employee-centricity is not limited to the technology sector.

The WCRC International rankings of India's 50 Most Loved Workplaces (2025) highlight additional exemplars. TCS, Microsoft India, NVIDIA India, Google India, and Procter & Gamble India are recognized for outstanding psychological safety, representation, and equity scorecards. Notably, Procter & Gamble India maintains women in leadership positions exceeding 30%, while L'Oréal India implements global gender parity benchmarks with transparent DEI dashboards.

4.5 The Impact of New Labour Codes

The new Labour Codes effective from November 2025 represent a significant statutory push towards employee-centricity. Key provisions include mandatory appointment letters for all employees, gratuity eligibility reduced from five years to one year for fixed-term employees, free annual health checkups for employees above 40, and mandatory timely wage payment by the 7th of every month. The Codes also mandate 26 weeks of maternity leave, sick leaves, casual leaves, and national and festival holidays.

However, the analysis suggests that statutory compliance alone is insufficient for genuine employee-centricity. Research indicates that companies offering benefits 15-20% above statutory minimums experience 23% lower attrition rates, while health insurance covering dependents reduces turnover by 20-30%. This suggests that market-leading organizations are moving beyond compliance towards competitive differentiation through superior employee welfare.

4.6 Gender Dimensions of Employee-Centricity

The gender analysis reveals persistent disparities that challenge claims of comprehensive employee-centricity. Data from the Journal of Informatics Education and Research (2025) indicates that while 52.38% of female respondents work 40-50 hours per week (compared to 35.29% of males), males work longer hours in extreme categories (26.47% working 50-60 hours vs. 14.29% of females; 11.76% working 60+ hours vs. 4.76% of females).

More significantly, women shoulder a disproportionate burden of non-work responsibilities. In childcare, 43% of women are involved compared to only 12% of men. In housework, 86% of women participate compared to 71% of men. Among married respondents, these disparities become even more pronounced: 60% of married women handle childcare compared to 12% of married men, and 93% of married women manage housework compared to 76% of married men. Notably, zero female respondents reported having no responsibilities outside of work, while 6% of male respondents indicated no non-work responsibilities.

These findings suggest that even organizations with progressive formal policies may fail to address structural gender inequities that fundamentally undermine employee-centricity for female employees.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this secondary data analysis reveal a complex and nuanced picture of employee-centricity in Indian companies. Rather than a binary conclusion of "yes" or "no," the evidence suggests a stratified corporate ecosystem where employee-centricity exists on a spectrum from exemplary to inadequate.

5.1 The Dichotomy of Indian Corporate Employee-Centricity

The most striking finding is the existence of a two-tier system. Tier 1 comprises multinational corporations, leading domestic conglomerates, and progressive startups that have genuinely internalized employee-centric philosophies. These organizations demonstrate their commitment through comprehensive wellness programs, flexible work arrangements, transparent DEI metrics, and above-market compensation and benefits. The Great Place to Work and WCRC International rankings provide empirical validation of their practices, and their attrition rates are generally lower than sectoral averages.

Tier 2 encompasses the majority of Indian companies, including many small and medium enterprises, traditional manufacturing firms, and even some large corporations in competitive sectors. These organizations may have formal HR policies that appear employee-centric on paper, but implementation is inconsistent, cultural barriers persist, and employee well-being outcomes remain poor. The high attrition rates in e-commerce (28.7%), IT (25%), and professional services (25.7%) suggest that even sectors with ostensibly modern HR practices struggle with retention, indicating a gap between policy and practice.

5.2 The Engagement Paradox

The decline in employee engagement from 33% (2022) to 23% (2025) presents a paradox. This period coincides with increased policy attention to employee welfare, the proliferation of wellness programs, and the statutory enhancements introduced by the new Labour Codes. Several factors may explain this counterintuitive trend:

First, the post-pandemic normalization of hybrid work may have created new stressors including digital fatigue,

blurred work-life boundaries, and reduced social connection. Research indicates that 25% of remote workers report feeling lonely compared to 16% of on-site employees, and loneliness significantly impacts engagement and satisfaction scores.

Second, economic uncertainty and competitive pressures may have led to increased workload expectations that outpace policy improvements. The finding that 68.8% of employees occasionally feel overwhelmed by work responsibilities supports this interpretation.

Third, there may be a growing awareness gap between what employees expect and what organizations deliver. As younger, more digitally-connected employees enter the workforce with higher expectations of flexibility, purpose, and well-being support, traditional HR approaches may appear increasingly inadequate.

5.3 Cultural Barriers to Employee-Centricity

The persistence of cultural factors that prioritize work over personal life represents a significant barrier to genuine employee-centricity. The finding that 43.8% of respondents feel it is very common for professionals in India to prioritize work over personal life, combined with 56.3% experiencing pressure to sacrifice personal time, suggests that organizational cultures may undermine formal policies. The generational divide in perceptions of responsibility for work-life balance further complicates this issue, with older employees socialized into accepting work-centric norms while younger employees demand greater employer accountability.

5.4 The Business Case Revisited

The economic arguments for employee-centricity are compelling and well-documented. ASSOCHAM's research demonstrating a Rs. 133 return on absenteeism savings for every rupee invested in wellness, combined with the Harvard Business Review finding of a 3:1 return on investment for comprehensive health insurance and wellness initiatives, provides strong justification. However, the persistence of high attrition and burnout rates suggests that many organizations either remain unaware of these economic imperatives or prioritize short-term cost savings over long-term human capital investment.

The data on attrition costs is particularly instructive. With leadership replacement costs reaching 200% of annual salary and the "chain reaction effect" where one resignation triggers waves of departures, the financial logic for employee-centricity is incontrovertible. Yet sectoral variations suggest that competitive pressures in high-growth industries may create environments where employee welfare is systematically deprioritized.

5.5 Gender as a Critical Lens

The gender analysis reveals that claims of employee-centricity must be evaluated through an intersectional lens. The disproportionate burden of non-work responsibilities borne by women, particularly in childcare and housework, means that uniform policies may have differential impacts. An organization offering flexible work arrangements may appear employee-centric, but if cultural expectations prevent women from utilizing these arrangements without career penalties, the policy fails to achieve its intended purpose. The finding that zero female respondents reported having no non-work responsibilities, compared to 6% of males, underscores the need for gender-sensitive policy design.

5.6 The Role of Statutory Frameworks

The new Labour Codes represent a necessary but insufficient condition for employee-centricity. While statutory mandates ensure a baseline of employee protection, genuine centricity requires organizational commitment that exceeds compliance. The finding that companies offering benefits 15-20% above statutory minimums experience 23% lower attrition rates validates this interpretation. However, statutory frameworks play a crucial role in protecting

employees in organizations that lack intrinsic motivation for welfare investment, particularly in the SME sector where resources and HR expertise may be limited.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

This secondary data analysis leads to a nuanced conclusion regarding employee-centricity in Indian companies. The evidence supports a qualified affirmative: a significant and growing cohort of Indian companies is genuinely becoming employee-centric, but this transformation is neither universal nor evenly distributed. The corporate ecosystem exhibits a pronounced polarization, with exemplary organizations setting global standards for employee welfare while a substantial majority continues to struggle with implementation, cultural barriers, and resource constraints.

The key conclusions are:

- (i) **Policy-Practice Gap:** While progressive HR policies have proliferated across Indian companies, the translation of policy into practice remains inconsistent. High attrition rates, declining engagement scores, and persistent burnout indicate that formal policies alone are insufficient.
- (ii) **Sectoral Stratification:** Genuine employee-centricity is most evident in multinational corporations, leading IT and financial services firms, and progressive domestic conglomerates. Traditional industries, SMEs, and high-churn sectors such as e-commerce continue to face significant challenges.
- (iii) **Well-being Crisis:** Despite increased policy attention, employee well-being indicators remain concerning. With only 17% of employees thriving, 36% experiencing sadness, and 68% of IT professionals showing burnout indicators, the human cost of inadequate employee-centricity is substantial.
- (iv) **Cultural Inertia:** Persistent cultural norms that prioritize work over personal life, combined with gendered expectations regarding non-work responsibilities, create structural barriers that formal policies alone cannot overcome.
- (v) **Economic Imperative:** The business case for employee-centricity is robust, with clear evidence linking welfare investment to reduced attrition, lower absenteeism, and improved productivity. Organizations that fail to recognize this imperative risk competitive disadvantage.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this analysis, the following recommendations are offered for HR practitioners, organizational leaders, and policymakers:

For HR Practitioners and Organizational Leaders:

- (a) **Move Beyond Compliance:** Organizations should view the new Labour Codes as a floor rather than a ceiling for employee welfare. Designing benefits packages that exceed statutory minimums by 15-20% can yield significant returns in retention and productivity.
- (b) **Address Implementation Gaps:** Policy formulation must be accompanied by robust implementation frameworks including manager training, cultural change initiatives, and regular employee feedback mechanisms. The gap between stated policy and actual practice must be systematically monitored and addressed.
- (c) **Prioritize Mental Health:** With 80% of Indian workers reporting mental health challenges and corporate burnout rates reaching 78%, comprehensive mental health support including counselling services, stress management workshops, and workload management protocols should be institutionalized.

(d) **Implement Flexible Work Strategically:** While remote work reduces attrition by 25-30%, organizations must also address the loneliness and disconnection that affect 25% of remote workers. Hybrid models that combine flexibility with meaningful in-person interaction may offer optimal outcomes.

(e) **Adopt Gender-Sensitive Policies:** Employee-centric policies must account for differential impacts on women. This includes providing childcare support, ensuring that flexible work arrangements do not carry career penalties, and actively redistributing non-work responsibilities through cultural change initiatives.

(f) **Invest in Predictive Analytics:** Organizations should leverage engagement surveys and attrition data to identify at-risk employees before resignation intentions emerge. Structured stay interviews with high-performing employees and preemptive compensation reviews can prevent talent loss.

(g) **Focus on Manager Quality:** Gallup's research consistently identifies manager quality as the primary driver of engagement. Investing in manager training, particularly in coaching, empathy, and workload management, may yield higher returns than policy changes alone.

For Policymakers:

(a) **Strengthen Enforcement Mechanisms:** While the new Labour Codes provide a robust statutory framework, effective enforcement remains critical. Enhanced inspection protocols, whistleblower protections, and meaningful penalties for non-compliance are essential.

(b) **Support SME Capacity Building:** Small and medium enterprises, which employ a significant proportion of the Indian workforce, often lack the resources and expertise to implement progressive HR practices. Government-supported capacity building programs, HR consultancy subsidies, and sector-specific guidelines could extend employee-centricity beyond large corporations.

(c) **Promote Sectoral Benchmarking:** Public dissemination of sector-specific attrition rates, engagement scores, and best practices could create competitive pressure for improvement while helping organizations benchmark their performance.

(d) **Address Gig Economy Gaps:** The findings of this study primarily reflect formal employment relationships. As the gig economy expands in India, policymakers should consider extending welfare protections to platform workers and contract employees.

6.3 Directions for Future Research

This study identifies several avenues for future inquiry. Primary research using large-scale surveys could validate and extend the secondary data findings. Longitudinal case studies of organizations that have successfully transitioned to employee-centric models could identify specific implementation strategies. Sector-specific deep dives, particularly in high-churn industries such as e-commerce and IT, could reveal industry-specific barriers and solutions. Finally, research examining the impact of artificial intelligence and automation on employee well-being in the Indian context is increasingly urgent as these technologies reshape work processes.

In conclusion, while Indian companies are demonstrably moving towards employee-centricity, the journey is incomplete and uneven. The organizations that will thrive in India's competitive labour market are those that recognize employee welfare not as a cost to be minimized but as a strategic investment to be optimized. The data is clear: employee-centricity is not merely an ethical imperative but an economic necessity. The question is no longer whether Indian companies can afford to become employee-centric, but whether they can afford not to.

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