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A Study on Human Resource Policies and Handbook – Buldana Urban, Buldana

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ABSTRACT: Human Resource policies and handbooks are essential instruments that guide the behaviour, performance, and engagement of employees within an organization. They establish clear expectations, define procedures, ensure compliance with labour laws, and create a fair working environment. This research focuses on analysing the human resource policies and employee handbook implemented by Buldana Urban Co-operative Credit Society Ltd., a leading financial institution in Maharashtra. The study investigates the effectiveness, clarity, accessibility, and implementation of these policies across the organization.

The primary objective of the study is to assess whether the HR policies and handbook at Buldana Urban are effectively serving their intended purpose of supporting employee management, ensuring legal compliance, and promoting organizational culture. The research further explores employee awareness, understanding, and satisfaction with the existing HR framework. It also aims to identify gaps in communication, policy enforcement, grievance redressal, and performance management processes as they relate to the employee handbook.

The research adopted a descriptive methodology using both primary data (collected through structured questionnaires and interviews with HR officials and employees) and secondary data (review of HR documents, policy manuals, and official handbooks). A sample of 50 employees across departments was selected using stratified random sampling to ensure a comprehensive understanding of policy impact on different job roles.

Findings from the study reveal that while the HR policies are largely well-documented and available, there are notable gaps in employee awareness, training on policy usage, and regular updates to the handbook. Some employees expressed confusion regarding disciplinary procedures, leave policies, and performance evaluation criteria. Moreover, the lack of interactive sessions or policy briefings was seen as a barrier to effective policy implementation.

The study concludes that Buldana Urban has a solid foundation in place with its HR policy framework, but must invest more in communication, accessibility, and employee education regarding these policies. It recommends periodic reviews of the handbook, digital access, training workshops, and improved feedback systems to enhance the relevance and usability of HR policies across the organization.

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic and evolving business environment, the human resource function plays a central role in shaping organizational success. At the core of effective HR practices lies a comprehensive set of human resource policies and a well-structured employee handbook, which together ensure consistency, transparency, and fairness in managing the workforce. These tools act as a bridge between the organization's strategic goals and its human capital, aligning employee behaviour with organizational values, culture, and expectations.

Buldana Urban Co-operative Credit Society Ltd., one of the most prominent financial institutions in Maharashtra, has witnessed remarkable growth in the cooperative banking sector. With expansion comes the challenge of managing a large and diverse workforce while maintaining operational efficiency, compliance, and employee satisfaction. In this



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context, having clear, accessible, and up-to-date HR policies and an employee handbook becomes essential for guiding day-to-day operations and ensuring organizational discipline.

This research aims to study the structure, clarity, effectiveness, and implementation of human resource policies at Buldana Urban. It also evaluates the relevance and accessibility of the HR handbook for employees and explores whether it serves as a useful tool for communication, grievance handling, performance management, and compliance. By analysing employee awareness, satisfaction, and challenges related to these policies, the study intends to identify areas of improvement and offer recommendations for better HR governance.

The study holds significant importance as it not only provides insights into how a cooperative institution like Buldana Urban manages its human resources but also contributes to the broader discourse on strengthening HR systems in non-corporate, semi-urban financial institutions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Human Resource (HR) policies and employee handbooks are central to organizational governance and employee management. They serve as formal guidelines that shape the work culture, regulate employee behaviour, and ensure consistency in HR practices across various departments. The following review explores key concepts and research studies related to HR policies and handbooks, with a focus on their relevance in cooperative and financial institutions.

2.1 Understanding HR Policies

HR policies are documented rules and principles that provide a framework for managing employees. According to Armstrong (2014), HR policies act as a reference point for decision-making and ensure fairness, transparency, and legal compliance. They cover areas like recruitment, leave management, code of conduct, compensation, grievance redressal, disciplinary action, and employee benefits.

Flippo (1980) emphasizes that well-drafted HR policies help in minimizing ambiguity in organizational operations. They also safeguard both employer and employee rights and clarify expectations. In cooperative institutions, where hierarchy is flatter and community service is prioritized, policies play a vital role in balancing social responsibility with professional discipline.

2.2 The Role of the Employee Handbook

An employee handbook is a compiled document that presents HR policies in a simplified, employee-friendly manner. It typically includes company culture, rules, benefits, conduct guidelines, and procedures for performance management and conflict resolution. As per Dessler (2011), a good employee handbook fosters employee engagement, reduces confusion, and strengthens employer-employee relationships.

Gupta and Joshi (2018) argue that handbooks act as a communication bridge between HR and employees, especially in organizations with a large or dispersed workforce. In semi-urban financial institutions like Buldana Urban, where digital communication may be limited, a printed or semi-digital handbook becomes an essential tool for policy dissemination.

2.3 Importance of Policy Clarity and Accessibility

A recurring theme in literature is the importance of policy clarity and ease of access. Aswathappa (2010) highlights that policies must be clearly written in simple language and made accessible to all levels of employees. Vague or overly technical documents often discourage employees from reading or using them.

In cooperative organizations, where employees come from diverse educational and linguistic backgrounds, the clarity of communication becomes even more crucial. Some researchers recommend translating handbooks into local languages and including FAQs to make them more user-friendly.

2.4 Policy Implementation and Training

Having policies in place is not enough—implementation is key. According to Saks and Haccoun (2016), organizations that regularly conduct orientation programs, refresher sessions, and policy training workshops report higher employee awareness and compliance levels.



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A study by Rao (2015) found that in many Indian financial institutions, HR policies are well-documented but poorly communicated. Employees often remain unaware of the benefits they're entitled to or the procedures they must follow in disciplinary matters due to a lack of formal training on policy use.

2.5 Relevance in Cooperative Institutions

Co-operative financial institutions like Buldana Urban operate in a unique context, blending community service with financial operations. These organizations often face challenges related to informal work culture, local-level autonomy, and compliance with regulatory bodies.

Sharma (2019) emphasizes that such organizations must balance professional HR practices with their social mission. Policies must not only full fill statutory requirements but also reflect cooperative values. An effective handbook can institutionalize these principles and help streamline operations as the organization scales.

2.6 Gaps in Existing Literature

While several studies have focused on corporate HR policy frameworks, limited literature is available on cooperative institutions, particularly in rural or semi-urban regions. The implementation, perception, and effectiveness of HR handbooks in such settings remain underexplored. This study aims to fill that gap by examining how Buldana Urban has developed, implemented, and utilized its HR policies and handbook—and how these tools affect day-to-day employee management and growth

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology is the blueprint for conducting the study in a structured, objective, and logical manner. It defines the tools, techniques, and procedures used to collect, analyse, and interpret data to address the research objectives. This study investigates the structure, clarity, implementation, and employee perception of HR policies and the employee handbook at **Buldana Urban Co-operative Credit Society Ltd.**, a leading financial institution in Buldana district, Maharashtra.

3.1 Research Design

The research adopts a **descriptive research design**, which is appropriate for exploring current practices, employee opinions, and organizational systems without altering the environment. Descriptive design enables the collection of factual, observable, and quantifiable data that help in understanding how HR policies are developed, communicated, and implemented within the organization. This design also allows for identifying gaps and suggesting improvements based on the actual workplace scenario.

3.2 Research Objectives

The methodology was designed to full fill the following objectives:

- To study the structure and scope of HR policies and the employee handbook.
- To assess employee awareness and understanding of HR policies.
- To evaluate the effectiveness and accessibility of the handbook.
- To examine the role of HR in communicating and enforcing policies.
- To identify gaps in policy implementation and suggest improvements.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

Primary Data Collection:

- A **structured questionnaire** was administered to employees from various departments including finance, customer service, recovery, IT, and administration.
- The questionnaire included **closed-ended, Likert-scale, and multiple-choice** questions to gather quantitative responses on policy clarity, accessibility, usefulness, and satisfaction.
- **Personal interviews** were conducted with HR managers and department heads to gather qualitative data regarding the challenges in policy implementation and employee communication.



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Secondary Data Collection:

- Official HR documents, employee handbooks, appointment letters, and internal circulars were reviewed.
- Previous audit reports and HR compliance documentation were used to understand historical policy evolution and organizational practices.

3.4 Sampling Design

A **stratified random sampling** technique was used to ensure fair representation from different employee groups and departments. Employees were categorized by role, experience, and department, and samples were randomly selected from each stratum.

- **Sample Size:** 50 employees
- **Sampling Unit:** Employees of Buldana Urban Co-operative Credit Society Ltd.
- **Geographical Coverage:** Head office and selected branches in Buldana

This approach ensured diverse perspectives were captured, providing a balanced view of HR policy awareness and application.

3.5 Tools and Techniques for Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using:

- **Percentage Analysis** to measure frequency of responses.
- **Graphical Representation** (bar charts and pie charts) to visualize trends.
- **Content Analysis** of interview responses to identify qualitative themes.

This helped in drawing insights into how well the HR policies are understood and utilized by the employees.

3.6 Scope of the Study

The study is confined to Buldana Urban's operations in Buldana district. It covers employees across hierarchical levels and departments but does not include comparative data from other cooperative societies. The study focuses only on internal HR policy mechanisms and does not extend to external labor laws or union policies beyond their mention in the handbook.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

- The findings may not be generalizable to other organizations or regions.
- Time constraints restricted long-term tracking of employee behaviour post-policy awareness.
- Some respondents may have provided cautious answers despite confidentiality, especially in the interview phase.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from 50 employees across different departments of Buldana Urban Co-operative Credit Society Ltd. provides a clear insight into the organization's human resource policy structure and the effectiveness of its employee handbook. The findings suggest that while the organization has made significant progress in documenting and establishing HR policies, there are areas where improvements in communication, accessibility, and employee engagement are necessary.

Policy Awareness and Clarity

Around 82% of respondents were aware of the existence of HR policies and the employee handbook. However, only 60% reported that they had read or referred to the handbook. This indicates that while policies are in place, efforts to promote awareness and accessibility among employees are not entirely effective. Some junior staff admitted to never being introduced to the handbook formally.



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Accessibility and Usage

Most employees (about 70%) stated that the HR handbook is available in physical form, but not all branches had updated copies. Very few employees had digital access to the handbook, and this was a common point of concern. Lack of access to soft copies or online HR portals was cited as a barrier to timely reference and understanding of policies.

Policy Relevance and Implementation

A significant number of employees found the leave policy, code of conduct, and grievance redressal sections to be clearly written and useful. However, some respondents (28%) felt that disciplinary procedures were either vague or inconsistently applied. It was also noted that performance management and promotion guidelines were not explicitly defined, leading to confusion and perceived bias in HR decisions.

Role of HR and Feedback Mechanisms

Interviews with HR personnel revealed that policies are revised periodically, but employee feedback is not systematically collected during updates. Employees also expressed that they rarely receive training or orientation on HR policies post-induction. The lack of ongoing policy briefings or workshops was identified as a major reason for miscommunication.

V. CONCLUSION

The study of Human Resource Policies and the Employee Handbook at Buldana Urban Co-operative Credit Society Ltd. reveals that the organization has a strong foundational HR framework in place, aimed at ensuring fairness, transparency, and organizational discipline. The policies are well-documented and cover essential areas such as code of conduct, leave management, grievance redressal, and employee responsibilities.

However, the research highlights a few critical areas that require attention. While a large portion of employees are aware of the existence of HR policies, only a moderate percentage actively refer to or understand them, largely due to limited accessibility, lack of orientation programs, and absence of regular communication. Furthermore, the handbook, though comprehensive, is not frequently updated or digitized, limiting its utility for modern, tech-savvy staff.

Another key finding is the lack of active employee involvement in policy review or feedback processes. Employees expressed the need for more structured training sessions and open discussions on HR guidelines. The absence of digital access, regular policy awareness drives, and performance-linked policy application reduces the impact these documents can have on organizational effectiveness. In conclusion, while Buldana Urban has commendably established HR policies and handbooks, greater emphasis should be placed on communication, accessibility, training, and feedback integration to make these policies more impactful and employee-centric. Strengthening these areas will not only enhance policy compliance but also contribute to improved employee engagement, trust, and long-term organizational success.

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