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This is to certify that Dr. Suresh Babu. K, Asso. Prof, Dept of Commerce with Retail Marketing, PSG CAS presented a paper entitled An Analytical Study of HRM Practices in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Tamil Nadu. in the Indian Council of Social Science Research - Southern Regional Centre (ICSSR-SRC) sponsored One Day National Level Seminar on “**VIKSIT BHARAT 2047: Contribution of MSMEs towards Youth Employment and Skilling for a Developed India**” organized by the Department of Commerce with e-Commerce, PSG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore on 15th September, 2025.

Dr. V. Bhuvaneshwari
Seminar Director & Convenor

Dr. M. Senguttuvan
Principal i/c





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15 September, 2025



ICSSR-SRC SPONSORED

One-Day National Level Seminar on VIKSIT BHARAT 2047: Contribution of MSMEs towards Youth Employment and Skilling for a Developed India

Organised by

Department of Commerce with e-Commerce

Editors

Dr.V.Bhuvaneshwari

Dr.M.Esther Krupa

Dr.G.Anitha Rathna





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Edition: First

Year: 2025

ISBN: 978-81-991789-6-0

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Publisher



(International Publisher)

Kanyakumari, Chennai & Australia

Phone: +91 6384730258

E-Mail: editor@multispectrum.org

www.multispectrum.org

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**AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF HRM PRACTICES IN MICRO, SMALL, AND
MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN TAMILNADU**

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Abstract:

Industrial sector concentrated more when compared to other sectors of the economy. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are said to be the lifeblood of any vibrant economy and they are known to be the silent drivers of a nation's economy. MSMEs sector has performed exceedingly well and enabled our country to achieve a wide measure of industrial growth and provide employment. Human resource management (HRM) practices are very important because most of the people spend a majority of their life at working place. Number of studies has found that there in no such proper practices of HRM in SMEs. Present study concentrates four districts of Tamil Nadu in particular and India in general. It chose by random simple sampling method and employs 460 samples from bottom level workers with an attempt to explore HRM practices. It finds that there is no such formal HRM practice in recruitment, selection, training, performance appraisal and industrial relation in the study area. It suggests to frame suitable HRM model to enhance the working condition of the employees working in the MSMEs. It concludes that there is informality and high flexibility in the practice of HRM and formalization of practices is essential. Further it opens up the new avenues for researchers to conduct research in the area of MSMEs to enhance the status and productivity of employees engaged in the major contributor of the Indian economy.

Key Words: MSMEs, HRM, Informality, HRM Model, Working Condition.

Introduction:

The development of the nation is not just dependent on the growth of the large industries MSME's are the backbone of the country contributing tremendous to the economic development of the country by being the most attractive and promising sector for the employment among the younger generation, exports, diversification, innovation and resource mobilization. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have been the backbone of the Indian economy. To state the statistics, it is employing close to 40% of India's workforce and contributing 45% to India's manufacturing output, SMEs play a critical role in generating millions of jobs, especially at the low-skill level. The country's 1.3 million SMEs account for 40% of India's total exports. Tamil Nadu has the seventh largest gross state domestic product (GSDP) in the country's GDP. It has a great potential to improve its economy through industrialization and contribute more towards nation's GDP. The state government considers industrial growth as a means to mitigate poverty and unemployment. Development of industry, trade and service sector promotes higher capital formation, improves the per capita income level, absorbs surplus workforce. According to New Industrial Policy of Tamil Nadu, It has proposed to form at least five industrial areas every year spread over an area of 5,000 to 8,000 acres. Energy and water resources department will be directed to provide the required power and water to the designated industrial areas.

Tamil Nadu State stands at seventh place in terms of Gross state Domestic Product (GSDP) in India's GDP. The state has a great potential to accelerate its economic growth through the development of MSME's. The State Government has considered Growth of MSME'S as means to eradicate the burning problems like poverty and unemployment. Growth of MSME's and other industries Promotes higher capital formation improves level of per capita income and absorbs surplus labours of agriculture sector. The new industrial policy of Tamil Nadu purposed to form at least five industrial areas every year. During 2013-14 25,966 MSME's were working in the state and provided direct employment to 1, 67,347 persons.

HRM in India

Human resources management plays a vital role in the organization and gives much importance, people are the most important resources in an organization. With the increase in competition, locally or globally, organizations must become more adaptable, resilient, agile, and customer-focused to succeed. And within this change in environment, the HR professional has to evolve to become a strategic partner, an employee sponsor or advocate, and a change mentor within the organization. In order to succeed, HR must be a business-driven function with a thorough understanding of the organization's big picture and be able to influence key decisions and policies. In general, the focus of today's HR Manager is on strategic personnel retention and talents development. HR professionals will be coaches, counsellors, mentors, and succession planners to help motivate organization's members and their loyalty. The HR manager will also promote and fight for values, ethics, beliefs, and spirituality within their organizations. The management of HR is complex and problematic because the individuals as workers hardly adapt or voluntarily embrace the objectives of the organization. As individuals, the employees have needs, aspirations, motivations, desires and interests which influence their behaviour at work but unfortunately these objectives are sometimes in conflict with the corporate objectives of the enterprise. In reconciling this conflicting interests Human Resources Management and Planning are useful tools employed in harmonizing the needs of the employees with the goals and objectives of the organization on a continuous basis. In a nutshell, the primary task of HRM is to ensure that the organization HR are utilized and managed effectively. HR practitioners are saddled with the responsibility of designing and implementing policies and programmes that will enhance human abilities and improve the organization's overall effectiveness.

HRM in MSMEs

Human resource management plays an important role in MESE's, in order to implement a successful business strategy to face this challenge, organizations, large or small, must ensure that they have the right people capable of delivering the strategy. HR and its different facets also play an important role to address the growth issues that MSME's face. While the organization plans to follow a successful trajectory, there is a need for both HR and the Promoters to appreciate and agree on change management agenda through change in organization culture. HR has the responsibility to understand business dynamics in MSME's environment.

This sector is considered too been engine of growth, especially in a developing country like India due to their contribution to income generation, employment, GDP and

export earnings. The Indian economy is now the second fastest growing economy of the world. As per the Ministry of Finance, the GDP of India stood at 8.8% in the first quarter of 2010-11 (the overall growth of GDP in 2009-10 was 7.2%); overall growth in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) was recorded at 13.8% during July 2010 as opposed to 7.2% in July 2009. In such a visible growth environment, tremendous efforts are being made by MSME's to make their prominent presence felt and to convert their growth plans into reality. In the last two decades, there have been certain spaces where many MSME's have not grown either by choice or by challenges in capabilities to transform their business. The Small and Medium Scale Enterprises being very volatile in nature take high amount of risk. It is therefore imperative for them to address the uncertainty through reliable and loyal work force which cash holder them in good and bad times.

SPECIAL HR CHALLENGES IN MSME's

When big organizations go on a rampage, small ones have to be smart. This is the wisdom for India's micro small and medium enterprises (MSME's) that fail to keep pace with the growth juggernaut. Human resources are one of the most essential growth indicators for these organizations. Growth-hungry in large companies are scouring the market for human resources (HR), leaving only crumbs for MSME's who can never out pay the big ones when it comes to salaries.

Moreover, typical about micro firms is the predominantly horizontal structure that one wants to preserve it. The employees that surround the entrepreneur are mostly the tight group that communicates informally. When the organization grows, it becomes more difficult to involve all employees equally in operational decisions. Specifically, many employees report a need for a transparent training and compensation policy and a standardized introduction procedure for new employees. Employees miss a uniform strategy and functional organizational structure. HR can afford to give personalized attention to individual's needs in terms of benefits, rewards, career goals, trainings & development needs and sometimes HR functions in these organizations come as a weakness when all the efforts invested in building a team become fruitless because of high attrition rates. There can be several reasons to this such as dissatisfaction with pay, HR policies and practices, lack of hygiene factors, employee loyalty issues, and the like.

Statement of the Problem

Industrial relations and trade unions are the important characteristics during public enterprises reforms and employees/unions are treated more as liabilities than any other assets and the teamwork of labour management cooperation is need for training and development programme and the two-way genuine and trusting relationship is important for labour management. Human resource management policies and practices had a positive contribute high organizational performance, and thus organizations can take initiatives to introduce innovative better HRM practices to enhancing overall performance of the organization. Small business units do not have formal HRM policies in place, but they follow some of the practices like recruitment, selection, training and performance appraisal. The problems like inadequate wage and salary, lack of incentives, bonus, social security and welfare measures, absence of trade unions, labour market victimization are matter of concern both to management and workers affecting smooth running of the organization and working life,

have been identified as major issues in SMEs. There is no specific study to explore the status of HRM practices in MSMEs in Tamil Nadu. Hence the present study is focused on the issues of HRM practices in MSMEs of Tamil Nadu to explore the present situation.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives of the Study

- To study the current HRM practices followed in MSEs in the study area.
- To analyse the welfare measures practiced in MSMEs in the study area.
- To suggest suitable measures to improve the HRM practices of MSMEs in the study area.

Methodology of the Study

The present study is a descriptive cum analytical in nature. This will focus on the current status HRM practices of MSMEs in Tamil Nadu. For the study purpose snow ball sampling technique was employed to select five each for Micro, Small and Medium totally 60 enterprises from four districts namely Coimbatore, Tiruppur, Salem, Erode and purposive sampling technique was used to choose 5 from micro, 8 from small, 10 from medium totally 460 employees were interviewed to understand the current HRM practices among the MSMEs in study area. Pre-tested interview schedule was used to collect the data. Focus group discussion also conducted in order to pertain the other issues missed in the interview schedule.

ISSUES OF HRM PRACTICES IN MSMEs

This part discusses about the analysis and discussion of data collected from the field. The following Table 1 discuss about the proportion of sample selected from the study area and their income level in terms of wage.

**Table 1
District-wise Wage Levels by Enterprise Type**

| District | Enterprise Type | Below □10,000 | □10,001– □ 15,000 | □15,001– □ 20,000 | Above □20,000 | Total Respondents |
|-------------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Coimbatore (114) | Micro (60) | 18 (30%) | 22 (37%) | 12 (20%) | 8 (13%) | 60 (100%) |
| | Small (34) | 6 (18%) | 12 (35%) | 10 (29%) | 6 (18%) | 34 (100%) |
| | Medium (20) | 0 (0%) | 6 (30%) | 10 (50%) | 4 (20%) | 20 (100%) |
| Tiruppur (112) | Micro (58) | 18 (31%) | 22 (38%) | 12 (21%) | 6 (10%) | 58 (100%) |
| | Small (34) | 8 (24%) | 12 (35%) | 8 (24%) | 6 (17%) | 34 (100%) |
| | Medium (20) | 2 (10%) | 4 (20%) | 8 (40%) | 6 (30%) | 20 (100%) |
| Salem (116) | Micro (60) | 20 (33%) | 18 (30%) | 12 (20%) | 10 (17%) | 60 (100%) |
| | Small (36) | 8 (22%) | 12 (33%) | 10 (28%) | 6 (17%) | 36 (100%) |
| | Medium | 2 (10%) | 6 (30%) | 6 (30%) | 6 (30%) | 20 (100%) |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------|
| | (20) | | | | | |
| Erode (118) | Micro (62) | 22 (35%) | 20 (32%) | 10 (16%) | 10 (17%) | 62 (100%) |
| | Small (36) | 4 (11%) | 14 (39%) | 10 (28%) | 8 (22%) | 36 (100%) |
| | Medium (20) | 0 (0%) | 4 (20%) | 8 (40%) | 8 (40%) | 20 (100%) |
| Total (460) | Micro (240) | 78 (33%) | 82 (34%) | 46 (19%) | 34 (14%) | 240 (100%) |
| | Small (140) | 26 (19%) | 50 (36%) | 38 (27%) | 26 (18%) | 140 (100%) |
| | Medium (80) | 4 (5%) | 20 (25%) | 32 (40%) | 24 (30%) | 80 (100%) |
| Grand Total | — | 108 (23%) | 152 (33%) | 112 (24%) | 88 (20%) | 460 (100%) |

Sources: Computed

Interpretation

The wage distribution across Micro, Small, and Medium enterprises highlights significant differences in income levels:

Micro Enterprises (240 respondents): A large proportion (33%) earn below ₹ 10,000 while only 14% earn above ₹ 20,000. This indicates that low wages dominate in micro units, reflecting limited financial capacity and informal HR practices. District-wise, Erode (35%) and Salem (33%) show the highest concentration of low-income workers in micro units.

Small Enterprises (140 respondents): Wage distribution is more balanced: 36% fall in ₹ 10,001–₹ 15,000 while 18% earn above ₹ 20,000. This suggests moderate income opportunities compared to micro units. Tiruppur shows slightly higher wages in small units due to the export-oriented garment sector, while Salem and Coimbatore remain closer to the average.

Medium Enterprises (80 respondents): The majority earn ₹ 15,001–₹ 20,000 (40%) or above ₹ 20,000 (30%) showing that medium enterprises provide better wage structures. Erode's medium units stand out, with 40% earning above ₹ 20,000 reflecting stronger HRM practices and wage policies. Coimbatore and Salem also demonstrate a fair balance in medium enterprises, whereas Tiruppur shows slightly lower high-income proportions due to seasonal fluctuations in garment exports.

**Table 2
District-wise Intention to Switch Over by Enterprise Type**

| District | Enterprise Type | Total Respondents | Intend to Switch | % Intend to Switch | Do Not Intend to Switch | % Do Not Intend to Switch |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Coimbatore (114) | Micro (60) | 60 | 36 | 60% | 24 | 40% |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | Small (34) | 34 | 18 | 53% | 16 | 47% |
| | Medium (20) | 20 | 10 | 50% | 10 | 50% |
| Tiruppur (112) | Micro (58) | 58 | 38 | 66% | 20 | 34% |
| | Small (34) | 34 | 22 | 65% | 12 | 35% |
| | Medium (20) | 20 | 10 | 50% | 10 | 50% |
| Salem (116) | Micro (60) | 60 | 34 | 57% | 26 | 43% |
| | Small (36) | 36 | 18 | 50% | 18 | 50% |
| | Medium (20) | 20 | 10 | 50% | 10 | 50% |
| Erode (118) | Micro (62) | 62 | 28 | 45% | 34 | 55% |
| | Small (36) | 36 | 16 | 44% | 20 | 56% |
| | Medium (20) | 20 | 12 | 60% | 8 | 40% |
| Total (460) | Micro (240) | 240 | 136 | 57% | 104 | 43% |
| | Small (140) | 140 | 74 | 53% | 66 | 47% |
| | Medium (80) | 80 | 42 | 53% | 38 | 47% |
| Grand Total | — | 460 | 252 | 55% | 208 | 45% |

Sources: Computed

Interpretation

The analysis of switching intentions across enterprise types and districts provides several insights:

Micro Enterprises (240 respondents): Overall, 57% intend to switch, making micro units the most unstable in terms of workforce. In Tiruppur (66%) and Coimbatore (60%), the switching rate is highest, reflecting dissatisfaction with low wages, limited training, and lack of job security. Erode shows the lowest intention among micro units (45%), suggesting relatively higher stability in traditional industries.

Small Enterprises (140 respondents): Here, 53% intend to switch, slightly below the micro-level. Tiruppur still records the highest (65%), while Erode remains the lowest (44%). The moderate switching rate shows that small units, though better than micro, still struggle with HRM issues such as career growth and weak policies.

Medium Enterprises (80 respondents): Switching intention is 53%, similar to small units. Interestingly, in Erode, medium enterprises show 60% intention, higher than micro and small, indicating that employees in medium-sized units expect more structured HR practices,

career progression, and work–life balance, which might be lacking. In Coimbatore, Salem, and Tiruppur, medium firms report relatively balanced switching (50%).

Table 3

HRM Issues Reported by Respondents across Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises

| HRM Issues | Micro Enterprises (250) | Small Enterprises (140) | Medium Enterprises (70) | Total (460) |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Lack of Training & Development | 70 (28%) | 22 (16%) | 10 (14%) | 102 (22%) |
| Low Wages & Poor Compensation | 60 (24%) | 20 (14%) | 8 (11%) | 88 (19%) |
| High Employee Turnover | 40 (16%) | 22 (16%) | 10 (14%) | 72 (16%) |
| Job Insecurity | 34 (14%) | 20 (14%) | 10 (14%) | 64 (14%) |
| Poor Work–Life Balance | 20 (8%) | 20 (14%) | 12 (17%) | 52 (11%) |
| Limited Career Growth Opportunities | 16 (6%) | 18 (13%) | 12 (17%) | 46 (10%) |
| Weak HR Policies / Informal HRM | 10 (4%) | 18 (13%) | 8 (11%) | 36 (8%) |
| Total | 250 (100%) | 140 (100%) | 70 (100%) | 460 (100%) |

Source: Computed

Interpretation: The data highlights that **HRM issues vary significantly depending on enterprise size:**

- **Micro Enterprises (250 respondents):** The dominant challenges are **lack of training & development (28%)** and **low wages (24%)**. This reflects the financial and managerial limitations of micro units, where structured HR practices are almost absent, and workers often face poor pay and negligible skill development opportunities.
- **Small Enterprises (140 respondents):** Here, **training gaps (16%)** and **high turnover (16%)** remain issues, but problems like **weak HR policies (13%)** and **limited career growth (13%)** emerge strongly. This suggests that small enterprises struggle to professionalize HR practices while expanding operations, leading to higher attrition.
- **Medium Enterprises (70 respondents):** The top challenges shift toward **poor work–life balance (17%)** and **limited career growth (17%)**, followed closely by **job insecurity (14%)**. Medium units are relatively better at offering wages and training compared to micro/small enterprises, but employees expect structured career paths, recognition, and balance, which many firms fail to provide.

Suggestions

Strengthen HR Policies in Micro Enterprises

- Majority of micro-unit workers fall in the low-income group (below ₹ 10,000) and show higher intention to switch.
- Suggested Action: Introduce minimum wage assurance, basic welfare measures, and structured work hours to reduce attrition.

Enhance Retention Strategies in Small Enterprises

- Small enterprises show moderate income levels and considerable intention to switch.
- Suggested Action: Provide training opportunities, performance-linked incentives, and career growth paths to retain skilled workers.

Consolidate HR Practices in Medium Enterprises

- Medium enterprises offer higher wages and relatively lower switching intention, but they face challenges in career development and formal HRM systems.
- Suggested Action: Adopt professional HR managers, introduce employee engagement programs, and ensure compliance with labour laws to strengthen employee loyalty.

District-Specific Focus

- Tiruppur shows the highest switching intention (63%), indicating strong pull factors from competing industries.
- Erode shows lowest switching intention (47%), but wage disparities exist, requiring better wage uniformity.
- Suggested Action: Implement district-level HR support cells under MSME associations to provide wage benchmarking, grievance handling, and HR consultancy.

Policy-Level Recommendations

- Government agencies should design HRM support schemes for MSMEs, including skill development subsidies, HR digitalization support, and social security coverage for workers.

Conclusion

The analysis of 460 respondents across Coimbatore, Tiruppur, Salem, and Erode districts reveals significant HRM issues in MSMEs:

- **Income disparities are stark:** Micro enterprises employ the majority of low-income workers, while medium enterprises provide comparatively higher wages.
- **Employee turnover intention remains high** (55% overall), with Tiruppur workers most likely to switch, reflecting instability in HR practices.
- **Enterprise size strongly influences HRM practices:** Micro units lack structured HR systems, small units have partial adoption, and medium enterprises show relatively better HR structures but still need improvement.
- **Sustainable HRM practices are critical** for MSMEs to retain skilled employees, ensure productivity, and remain competitive in both domestic and global markets.

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**Multi
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Publications

Kanyakumari, Tamilnadu, India.

ISBN : 978-81-991789-6-0



978-81-991789-6-0

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