Course: MBA 1st Semester Sub: HR Management Topic: HR Ethics	Kundan Kumar Gautam Faculty member (MBA) J D Women's College, Patna

Measures to Handle HR issues

Today's human resources professionals manage more moral, ethical and legal responsibilities than ever before. Beyond compensation and benefits, HR teams are now tasked with challenges like fostering diversity in the workforce, addressing issues of inequality and setting standards around workplace conduct.

Often, human resources ethics policies around these issues can directly impact how a company attracts and retains talent. According to a recent survey, 79 percent of workers said they would not accept a job with a higher salary from a company that has failed to take action in sexual harassment cases.

While HR ethics conversations that challenge the status quo in the workplace are marks of progress, they require HR departments to make tough ethical decisions. Acting as the moral heart of a company can seem like an overwhelming task. But no matter the issue, HR professionals that uphold strong ethical standards and strive for a fair work environment will maintain employee confidence and attract new candidates.

Here are six HR ethics guidelines organizations can follow to master the art of ethical decision-making and become a valuable resource for their employees.

- **Know the laws**: As a representative of an organization, HR professionals need to make tough decisions and hold employees accountable for wrongful actions and that's not an easy task. To do so effectively requires confidence and authority. Knowing important labour laws and compliance practices will help manage these issues as they arise. Familiarizing yourself with these laws early on will save you time and equip you with knowledge to navigate legal challenges in the future.
- **Prioritize professional development**: HR is a constantly changing field, especially as new conversations arise and technology continues to change the way we work. Staying on top of these changes requires a new set of skills and knowledge. Participating in trainings is one way to stay ahead of the curve. As a HR professional, you should prioritize professional development of your employees. The development opportunities offered will instil a sense of confidence, trust and loyalty in the organization.
- **Be an ethical HR leader**: Conflict between colleagues is inevitable in the workplace. Imagine, for example, an employee tells you that his manager, a high-level executive, has treated him unfairly. A situation like this requires you to engage in tough conversations with everyone involved. Being an ethical HR

leader means being confident in your moral decisions and effectively communicating them to employees.

Making an ethical decision requires three things:

- Commitment: "The desire to do the right thing regardless of the cost."
- Consciousness: "The awareness to act consistently and apply moral convictions to daily behavior."
- Competency: "The ability to collect and evaluate information, develop alternatives and foresee potential consequences and risks."

Understanding where you, and your organization, stand on important issues will be critical in this process. Once you define these ethical standards, you can figure out how to respond to any human resources ethics issue—and maintain your employees' trust and respect.

- **Understand conflicts of interest**: Conflicts of interest are detrimental to how a business operates because they create internal politics that distract from a company's bottom line and cause the quality of work to deteriorate. Take favouritism, for example, the practice of giving certain employees preferential treatment. It is not illegal to favour favourites, unless in doing so you are discriminating against someone else on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. While you can't change the law, you can implement company policies that prohibit this behaviour.
One way to establish these policies is to update your employee handbook to define and discourage conflicts of interest—your employees might be partaking in this behaviour without realizing it. In the case of favouritism, the first step is to distinguish between favouritism and fair recognition based on measurable performance. Once you have written standards in place, make sure to also determine consequences for employees who fail to abide by the rules.
- **Implement diversity and inclusion practices**: Discussions today about diversity are often focused on recruiting efforts across race, class and gender. While these are important considerations, it's only one piece of the diversity.

Diversity is about making people feel like they belong. A company might recruit and hire a diverse workforce, but if only certain groups of people feel valued and included, there's a problem.
By working with colleagues to develop a list of company values and morals, HR professionals set the standard for diversity and inclusion at their organization. This list will help professionals zero in on what's important to their organization, and hold employees accountable.

- **Keep information confidential**: From social security numbers to medical records, HR professionals have access to a lot of confidential information about employees. By making sure paperwork and electronic systems are secure, you can rest easy that your company's information is protected.

  As an HR professional, you also have a legal obligation to keep everything an employee tells you confidential, unless otherwise specified or discussed. For instance, if an employee comes to you with a concern about a colleague or tells you they have witnessed sexist or racist behaviour in the office, it is your job to manage this information without revealing your sources.

While HR professionals face a number of hurdles that can make the job challenging, it can also be equally rewarding. After all, HR professionals give a company meaning by improving and enhancing the employee experience. Once you navigate the ethical challenges of the job, you will be able to effectively attract and retain a talented workforce.