

## A Graceful Exit: Rethinking HOW ORGANIZATIONS Say Goodbye



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Message from  
**CHAIRMAN**



## Message

***Dear HR Professionals,***

As we release this new edition of our newsletter, we are stepping into an exciting phase for the HR community. Workplaces are transforming at unprecedented speed, driven by technology, shifting workforce expectations, and the urgent need for compassionate, future-ready leadership. In this evolving landscape, NIPM Kerala Chapter stands not just as a professional body, but as a unifying force that brings together the wisdom, passion, and purpose of HR leaders across our geographies.

Our chapter has always been known for its credibility, ethics, and commitment to strengthening the HR profession. Today, our responsibility is greater than ever—to ensure that we continue to shape progressive, people-first organisations. NIPM must be the place where ideas are born, leaders are moulded, and meaningful conversations begin. This calls for deeper collaboration, stronger participation, and a renewed sense of pride in our community.

As Chairman, I see our Chapter evolving into a vibrant ecosystem that champions continuous learning, cross-industry exchange, innovative practices, and contemporary HR thinking—from digital transformation and labour law reforms to organisational culture and leadership excellence. Our initiatives in the coming months will focus on creating more opportunities to learn, connect, and contribute. But the real strength of this organisation lies in you—your involvement, your insights, and your willingness to grow together.

To every HR professional who is part of NIPM Kerala Chapter, I invite you to take an active role: share your experiences, contribute articles, mentor young professionals, speak at our forums, and let your voice shape the future of our fraternity. And to those who are not yet part of this community, I extend a warm invitation. Your participation can enrich our collective journey and help us build workplaces that uphold dignity, fairness, and sustainable performance.

Let us use this moment to reaffirm our commitment to advancing the HR profession. Together, we can make NIPM not just an association we belong to—but a movement we are proud to lead.

Warm regards,

**Anilkumar G**  
Chairman  
NIPM Kerala Chapter

Message from  
**SECRETARY**



## Message

Dear Members,

It gives me immense pride and joy to pen this message as the Secretary of the National Institute of Personnel Management, Kerala Chapter. At the outset, I wish to place on record our deep appreciation and gratitude to the previous Executive Committee for their outstanding leadership and tireless efforts which culminated in the Kerala Chapter once again being honoured with the Best Chapter Award. This recognition stands as a testament to their vision, commitment, and collective spirit that has consistently upheld the high standards and reputation of our Chapter.

As we move forward, the newly elected Committee is privileged to inherit this strong legacy. Under the dynamic leadership of our eminent Chairman Mr. Anilkumar G and with a team comprising energetic professionals and increased representation of women members, we are confident of taking the Chapter to greater heights. Our focus will continue to be on promoting professional excellence, fostering knowledge sharing, enhancing member engagement, and strengthening our linkages with industry and academia.

We seek the wholehearted support and active participation of all our members in every initiative of the Chapter. Together, let us continue this journey of learning, collaboration, and service, reinforcing Kerala Chapter's proud position as a model Chapter within NIPM's national network.

With warm regards and best wishes,

Best Regards

**Saji V Mathew**

Hon. Secretary

Message from  
EDITOR'S DESK



## Message

Dear Readers,

It is with immense enthusiasm and a deep sense of responsibility that I greet you in this issue of Kerala Personnel, the first to be released under the stewardship of the newly constituted NIPM Kerala Chapter leadership team. We are committed to not just maintaining this publication's legacy but elevating it to new heights, making NIPM Kerala the foremost platform for HR excellence in the region. Our fresh energy is focused on delivering immediately relevant, intellectually stimulating content that serves as a Knowledge Hub for contemporary HR trends, a Community Connector to spotlight achievements, and the Voice of the Profession for vital debate and mentorship. In this issue, you'll find insights reflecting our focus, and we extend a personal invitation to every member to collaborate with us; your contributions are crucial to making Kerala Personnel a truly reflective and dynamic mirror of our profession as we look forward to a future of collaboration, innovation, and impactful HR leadership together.

Happy Reading!

**Dr. Ranjana Mary Varghese**  
Editor



## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

The Monthly Executive Committee Meetings for the month of September 2025 was held on 29th September 2025 through Online from 7.00 pm onwards

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The Monthly Executive Committee Meetings of the for the month of August 2025 was held on 21st August 2025 at the Community Hall, Skyline Epic, Thammanam, Kochi. The EC Meeting was followed by Dinner for EC Members & Spouse hosted by Mr. Anilkumar G, Chairman, NIPM Kerala Chapter.

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The following Meetings of the Executive Committee Meeting of Kerala Chapter were held during the month of July 2025:

07-07-2025 - Online

10-07-2025 - Online

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2025-2027



Anilkumar G  
CHAIRMAN



N V Ravidev  
VICE CHAIRMAN



Saji V Mathew  
HON. SECRETARY



Sarika C K  
HON. ADDL. SECRETARY



P K Kurien  
HON. TREASURER

### EX OFFICIO MEMBERS



Johnson Mathew



Kshama Sandeep

### EC MEMBERS



Dr. Ranjana Mary  
Varghese



Tinu Elizabeth Shaji



John Mathew Sebastian



Sreelekha S Kumar



Sreelal M R

### CO-OPTED MEMBERS



Prasita Prasad



Anuradha Subramanian



Jithin Chakkalakkal



A N Thomas

## CO-OPTED MEMBERS



G Anilkumar



Jayarajan V



Dr. A J Augustine



Anish Aravind



Martin Jacob



K Srijith



Suresh Varghese K



K K Vijayakumar



Dr. K Anilkumar



Dr. Manoj Mathew



Dr. Manoj Menon



Adv Bejoy K Thomas



Dr. Sabu Augustine



Mahesh Chandrasekhar



M D Varghese



Paul Varghese



Ajeshkumar N K



K K Ramachandran



Vinod S



Rajasree R



Anand A S



Shiju Bhaskaran



Arunanand T A



Muralikrishnan B



Nibu John



Jismie Jose



Amrutha U



Leya Elizabeth Mohan



Poornima Viswanathan



Deeya Kuriachan



PERMANENT INVITEE



K P Philip  
Fellow, NIPM



P John Sam  
Fellow, NIPM



V N Sreedharan Nair  
Fellow NIPM



P K Sivadasa Menon



N Sreekumar  
Fellow, NIPM



Prof. A S Girish  
Fellow NIPM



P Premchand  
Fellow NIPM, Ratna



Dr. George Sreeba  
Fellow NIPM



Prasad M George



P J Joy



Dr. N Vijayan Pillai  
Fellow NIPM



M Thomas Kadavan



K K Vijayakumar



K Lal John  
Fellow NIPM



Joe Varkey

ALAPPUZHA  
CLUSTER



Benny John  
CLUSTER CHAIRMAN



Sudeesh Dinakaran  
CLUSTER SECRETARY

KOTTAYAM  
CLUSTER



Suresh P Varghese  
CLUSTER CHAIRMAN



Dweepu DavisThattil  
CLUSTER SECRETARY

TRISSUR  
CLUSTER



Sunilkumar P S  
CLUSTER CHAIRMAN



Ramaeshan P T  
CLUSTER SECRETARY

KOZHIKODE  
CLUSTER



Sameera Chakeeri  
CLUSTER CHAIRPERSON



Habeebu Rahman  
CLUSTER SECRETARY

INFOPARK  
CLUSTER



Karthikeyan Subramanian  
CLUSTER CHAIRMAN



Deeya Kuriachan  
CLUSTER SECRETARY



# Legal Update 2025





# Legal Update 2025



NIPM Kerala Chapter's 25th Edition of Annual Flagship Program Legal Update 2025 to focus on Business Results. Deep appreciation of Labour Laws framework is a definite requirement towards this. NIPM through its Annual Legal Update Program, scan one year Judgments at Supreme Court and High Court level. Through this we are keeping the participants aware of the latest developments in Labour Laws with regard to various aspects of Human Resource Management. The Program was held at Hotel The Renai Cochin, Palarivattom, Kochi.

Inauguration: By Hon'ble Justice N. Nagaresh, Judge, High Court of Kerala

**Key Resource Person:** Adv. Aditya Joshi, Joshi BSL. LLB, Senior Advocate, High Court of Pune, specializing in Labour and Industrial Court Cases, having more than 25 years of experience successfully litigated and provided counsel on a multitude of labour-related matters.

Resource Persons:

Adv. Benny P Thomas, Leading Lawyer in Kerala High Court & Supreme Court of India, Managing Partner, Thomas & Thomas Advocates, Executive Director, south Indian Bank Ltd

Mr. Varkiachan Pettah, Leading Labour Law Consultant, Legal Expert and Former General Manager (IR), English India Clays Ltd.

Prof. A.S. Girish, Adjunct Faculty, XIME Cochin, Former Head (HR & Admin), & Former HR Advisor, Apollo Tyres Ltd., India.

215 Participants from various Industrial Sectors all over Kerala and nearby States attended the Legal Update 2025.





NIPM Research Compendium – Released the 12th Edition of NIPM Research Compendium by the hands of Hon. Justice N. Nagaresh during the Inaugural Session of Legal Update 2025 on 21st June 2025. Dr. Santhosh Bhav, Editor also spoke on the occasion and briefed about the publication.

## Annual General Body Meeting 2024-2025



21-06-2025 – the Annual General Body Meeting of NIPM Kerala Chapter was held at 6.30 pm at Hotel The Renai Cochin and adopted following:

- i) Adopted MoM of the last AGM 2023 held on 29th June 2024
- ii) Adopted annual Activity Report of the Chapter 2024-2025
- iii) Adopted Audited Accounts and Balance Sheet for the FY 2024-2025
- iv) Appointed M/s. Saji KThomas & Co. as Auditors for the FY 2025-2026



# Annual Award Nite 2025 Annual Day Celebrations 2025





## Annual Award Nite 2025 Annual Day Celebrations 2025



The function was presided over by the then Chairman Mr. Johnson Mathew. Dr. M H Raja, National President, NIPM India, Mr. P R Basavaraju, Hon. National General Secretary, NIPM India and various other NC Members.

Various Annual Awards were presented to the Winners of competitions held during previous months and also annual awards i.e. **NIPM Best CSR Award, Zachariah Memorial & KRC Nayar Memorial Awards** for 1st & 2nd Rank Holders of MHRM 2024 batch conducted by Mahatma Gandhi University, M. Sulaiman Memorial Academic Excellence Awards to Children of NIPM Members, Honoring of Elders NIPM Members who have crossed 60 years of Age as on 30th June 2025 etc.

**NIPM Outstanding HR Manager of the Year Award 2024-2025** - Presented to Mr. Jithin Chakkalakkal, Life Member and Sr. Manager (HR), Reflections Info Systems.



**Kerala Personnel Annual Issue 2025** – The Annual Issue 2025 of our Publication Kerala Personnel was released during the function by Dr. M H Raja, National President, NIPM India.





**LaunchHeR Season 3.0** – Final Results of the Winners of the various competitions held under this Project was announced and Cash awards/Mementos / Certificates etc. were presented to the Winners during the Award Nite.



NIPM Life Time Achievement Award - Presented to Mr. K.P. Philip, Fellow NIPM & Former National Vice President, NIPM India for his outstanding contribution to the Institute and the Profession.



## New Team of Office Bearers NIPM Kerala Chapter for the term 2025-2027



The Biennial Elections to the Chapter Executive Committee was completed as per NIPM Election Manual and the schedule finalized for the same. The Results were published in Kerala Chapter Website also as per schedule. The Incoming Chairman & Hon. Secretary was introduced during the Annual Day Celebrations by presenting Flower Bouquets to them by the outgoing team. Mementos to the Outgoing Chairman Mr. Johnson Mathew and Outgoing Hon. Secretary Ms. KshamaSandeep were presented by the incoming team for their excellent contribution to the Chapter during their term of office.



Annual Dinner- The meeting was followed by cultural programs presented by family members of our Chapter and networking Dinner for Members / Invited Guests & Family Members.





22-06-2025 – NIPM National Council Meeting – NIPM Kerala Chapter hosted the 378th National Council Meeting at Houseboat, Kumarakom on 22nd June 2025. The National President, National Hon. Gen. Secretary and all other NC Members present in the meeting appreciated the well-organized arrangements and hospitality provided by Kerala Chapter



17-08-2025 – Rajagiri Business School, Kakkanad, Kochi - Engaging with the newly inducted MA HR students at Rajagiri Business School under the banner of the NIPM Student Chapter. The session was filled with refreshing energy, sharp questions, and honest reflections. The Resource Persons were Ms. Sarika C. K., Hon. Addl Secretary & Ms. Anuradha Subramanian, EC member, NIPM Kerala Chapter. The Team brought textbooks into real world. Some of the key take aways were:

**Why invest in professional bodies like NIPM?** Because your network is your net worth. Being part of platforms like NIPM opens doors to mentorship, industry insights, and a peer group that keeps you inspired, updated, and supported.

**Understanding the HR landscape early-** From HR Business Partners to Talent Acquisition, from Learning & Development to Total Rewards HR has many hats. Knowing where your passion fits in helps you grow with intent, not just by chance.

**The power of networking** - Don't wait to graduate to start connecting. Every conversation is a potential collaboration. Whether at conclaves, webinars, or alumni meets show up, speak up, and follow up. LinkedIn isn't optional anymore - It's your digital handshake. Craft it well. Be visible, be authentic, and be consistent. Start today even one post a month builds your credibility.

## One day Workshop & Knowledge Sharing Sessions



You are cordially invited for a Knowledge Sharing Session as per details below:

Topic

### The Future of HR: Leading Change and Building Organizational Resilience

28th JULY 2025  
7:00pm-8:00pm  
(Incl. QA Session)



Resource Person:

Mr. Anand Bhaskar

28-07-2025 – Knowledge Sharing Session at NIPM House on the topic **The Future of HR: Leading Change and Building Organizational Resilience**. The Resource Person for the Session was Mr. Anand Bhaskar, CEO & Principal Consultant- PGC India & Dubai, Org. Transformation & Leadership Coach (PCC, ICF).

The newly inducted team of NIPM KC, kicked off the first knowledge-sharing session of the year with an impactful conversation led by the dynamic expert Mr. Anand Bhaskar (Founder, PGC India). It was an evening filled with bold ideas and thought-provoking perspectives on how HR is no longer just a support function, but a strategic powerhouse. HR is the Business – not behind the scenes, but at the forefront of growth. CEO leads, HR orchestrates – change needs collaboration, not silos. The rise of the Strategic Generalist – blending business acumen with empathy and agility. The LACE Framework and Power Coaching – vital tools for tomorrow's HR leaders.



You are cordially invited for a Knowledge Sharing Session

Topic

### "Digital Credibility - Enabling HRBP Role"

Resource Person



Achyut Menon

Executive Search Expert | Career Transition Coach  
& Managing Director,  
Options Executive Search Pvt. Ltd., Hyderabad.



29th AUG 2025  
FRIDAY  
7:00pm onwards

29-08-2025 – NIPM Kerala Chapter organized its Monthly Knowledge Sharing Session through Online on the Topic **Digital Credibility - Enabling HRBP Role** The Resource Person: Mr. Achyut Menon, Executive Search Expert, Career Transition Coach & Managing Director, Options Executive Search Pvt. Ltd., Hyderabad.

20-08-2025 – NIPM Kozhikode Cluster organized a Session on **Future Ready HR AI Tool From Hire to Exit** at Gokulam Grand Hotel, Kozhikode. The Resource Person was Mr. Nissamudheen Firoz, Vice President-HR, Bridgeway Group, Award Winning HR Strategist, Certified AI Innovator, Executive PGP-Strategic HRM, XLRI.



### FUTURE READY HR AI Tools From Hire to Exit

• Live demos of cutting-edge AI tools already revolutionizing HR  
• Real-time exploration - **bring a fully charged laptop**  
For the best experience!

20  
Aug. 2025  
Gokulam Grand  
Hotel, Calicut  
02.30PM - 06.30PM

Register Now



Reg. Fee: ₹499



Mr. Nissamudheen Firoz

Vice President  
Human Resources, Bridgeway Group  
Award-Winning HR Strategist  
Certified AI Innovator  
Executive PGP - Strategic HRM, XLRI



## One day Workshop & Knowledge Sharing Sessions



23-09-2025 – Rajagiri College of Social Science & RBS in association with NIPM Kerala Chapter and SHRM India organized an Industry Fraternity Meet (Fireside Chat), as part of Rajagiri Conclave. The Theme for the Program was **Frontiers of HR in the Age of AI**. The Resource Persons for the event were as under:

Moderator: Nishith Upadhyaya, Executive Director, SHRM India (Knowledge & Advisory Services)

Panelists:

- ii) Mr. Jeeva Balakrishnan, President & CHRO, Cholamandalam Investment & Finance
- iii) Mr. Sujit Bose, Chief Human Resources Officer, Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters

This program brought together leading voices from industry and academia, creating a platform for bold insights, real-world strategies, and inspiring perspectives. It promises an immense value for HR professionals, industry leaders, and students alike. The Meeting was followed by Dinner hosted by Rajagiri Group for the invited audience and Guests

27-09-2025 – Inaugurated HR Club Management & Maserclass on the topic **Role of HR Manager in the Age of AI** at Jaibharat School of Management Studies. The Resource Person was Mr. Martin Jacob, Special Invitee to EC NIPM Kerala Chapter and Vice President (HR), Kancor Ingredients Ltd.

30-09-2025 - Evening Knowledge Sharing Session was organized by NIPM Kerala Chaptajer through Online from 7.00 pm onwards on the topic **AI in HR Through Maslow's Lens – From Basics to Real-World Applications**. The Resource Person for the Session was Mr. Arun Paul, Head of Human Resources, Orion Innovation.

## Student Chapters & Interactive Sessions



26-08-2025 – Inauguration of Student Chapters & Interactive Sessions at following Colleges:

- a) SCMS Cochin School of Business, Kochi (PGDM) – 41 Students
- b) SCMS School of Technology & Management (MBA) – 100 Students

The Inauguration of NIPM Student Chapter and HR Forum was done by Mr. Anilkumar G, Chairman, NIPM Kerala Chapter. Representing NIPM-KC the following were also present and interacted with the Students:

Mr. Saji V Mathew, Hon. Secretary  
 Ms. Sarika C.K., Hon. Addl Secretary  
 Ms. Prasita Prasad, EC Member

From SCMS Group Mr. Sunny Thomas, Director Corporate Relations also spoke on the occasion.

The energy in the campus was infectious both students and faculty members of SCMS expressed their joy and excitement, sharing how much they are looking forward to the opportunities, learning, and industry connect that NIPM will bring to their academic journey. It was truly inspiring to see young minds eager to step into the world of HR with such passion. With this launch, we are not just opening chapters; we are opening doors to learning, collaboration, and building the future of HR leadership. Total 141 Students from both the above organizations joined NIPM as Student Members



## NIPM ONAM Celebrations 2025



27-09-2025 NIPM ONAM Celebrations 2025 – NIPM Kerala Chapter organized Kerala's Harvest Festival Onam 2025 for Members & Family Members at IMA House, Kaloor, Kochi which included various Games / Cultural Events followed by delicious Onam Sadhya. It was a great opportunity for our members to come together with their families, celebrate our unity and showcase the spirit of NIPM.

# A Graceful Exit: Rethinking HOW ORGANIZATIONS Say Goodbye

**Amritha Menon**

Director-People & Culture at Myridius



In the world of work, much attention is given to how employees are welcomed into an organization. Induction programs, onboarding initiatives, welcome parties, and cultural integration activities are meticulously designed to create a strong first impression. Yet, the other equally important milestone in the employee life cycle, the exit, often receives far less thought and care.

A graceful exit is not merely a polite formality; it is the truest expression of organizational maturity. How an organization says goodbye speaks volumes about its culture, values, and respect for people.

## Rethinking Exits as a Transition

Separation, whether initiated by the employee or the employer, is a natural part of professional life. Employee initiated exits usually stem from opportunities better aligned with personal aspirations, financial needs, or career growth. This is not an act of disloyalty but an individual making choices that serve their life stage and priorities. Employer initiated exits, on the other hand, often arise from restructuring, evolving business needs, or performance-related considerations. Rarely is it driven by personal animosity.



Unfortunately, many organizations still perceive exits as uncomfortable events accompanied by awkward silences, subtle exclusions from emails and meetings, sudden withdrawal of warmth or even strained interactions. These subtle shifts in behaviour can undo months or years of positive employee experience and leave lasting impressions that travel through networks and platforms far beyond the four walls of the company.

### Why Dignified Exits Matter

**Employer Branding** – Every exit is a brand touch point. Alumni carry stories that shape how the organization is perceived externally. A respectful exit can create lifelong ambassadors. In the digital era, where platforms like Glassdoor and Ambition Box are widely used by aspiring candidates to learn about cultures of organizations they want to associate with, a negative review from a disappointed alumnus, can prove costly and lead to organizations losing out on the finest talent. There is also room for former employees to become future clients, or referrers.

**Employee Experience Continuity** – A consistent culture of care, right from entry to exit, builds credibility. Employees notice when values are upheld even in difficult moments. Existing employees take a mental note of how their colleagues' exits are managed, and form perceptions about the employer's stand on people centricity.

**Talent Circulation** – In today's fluid job market, many former employees may return as 'boomerang hires'. Rehiring talent is a cost-effective and more efficient way to fill vacancies as the assimilation happens faster since they are already aware of the Company's culture, basic policies, and processes. How they are treated on exit strongly influences this possibility.

**Organizational Learning** – Exit interviews, when handled with trust and empathy, can yield candid insights that inform retention strategies and cultural improvements. A respectful, empathetic environment is crucial for people to open up with candid feedback. A seamless exit process reinforces a culture of psychological safety and trust showing that respect is not conditional on tenure.

### Leading with Empathy and Respect

What if organizations approached exits with the same intentionality as onboarding?

Imagine:

1. A structured offboarding process that acknowledges contributions.
2. Farewell conversations that celebrate achievements, rather than dwell on reasons for departure.
3. Alumni engagement programs that sustain meaningful connections.

Such practices reflect an evolved mindset -one that accepts career transitions as a natural part of growth, both for individuals and organizations.

### A Personal Reflection

Of all my transitions, one that continues to stay with me is my exit from Infosys, Bengaluru over a decade ago. Despite being a quiet presence for most of my tenure, I was deeply touched when the entire lateral hiring team from buildings one and two of Bengaluru campus came together to bid me farewell. They shared stories, memories, and appreciation that made me feel valued. It remains the most dignified exit I have experienced. Even my manager, who is usually a man of few words, spoke about his time working with me! Infosys, the IT giant, had the capability to find my replacement (a junior resource in the hiring team) in a matter of days. It was not about setting the stage for a boomerang

hiring there; it was only about respect for the individual, the culture, and the brand promise that the organization lived by. This, to me, is proof that even in parting, organizations can create a sense of belonging and respect.

### **The Way Forward**

Exits need not feel like breakups. They can be milestones marked by mutual respect, gratitude, and warmth. In today's dynamic, opportunity-rich world with high talent mobility, careers evolve, people grow, and organizations change. How, we as leaders representing our organizations, respond to this is the differentiator. A dignified exit acknowledges this reality while strengthening trust, reputation, and culture.

As people leaders, let us ask ourselves - What memories are we creating for employees when they walk out of our doors? Because how we say goodbye often says more about our culture than how we say hello.

### **About the Author**

*Amritha Menon is a global people leader with experience across India and Canada. She currently serves as Director – People & Culture at Myridius, overseeing HR Business Partnership, DEIB, HR Operations and ERGs, for the India region.*

*She holds an MBA in Human Resources and an M.Sc. in Counselling Psychology and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Psychology, researching imposter syndrome and its impact on child development.*

*A passionate animal lover, trained singer, classical dancer, and mother to a 12-year-old, Amritha lives by a leadership philosophy centred on respect, believing true leadership is measured by how we treat others, especially when no one is watching.*



# WORK-READY GRADUATES: BRIDGING THE EMPLOYABILITY GAP THROUGH COLLABORATION

In today's fast-paced, innovation-driven economy, companies face a growing challenge: the talent they need often isn't what academic institutions are producing. The root of this disconnect lies in outdated curricula, slow-moving educational systems, and a lack of real-world exposure in academic environments. To stay competitive, companies must take a proactive role in shaping the future workforce—starting with the classroom. In an era defined by rapid technological advancement and shifting global economies, the traditional boundaries between academia and industry are being redefined. While academic institutions are tasked with preparing students for the future, industries seek professionals equipped with practical, job-ready skills. However, a persistent gap exists between what students learn and what employers need. Bridging this divide calls for a synergistic partnership—one where industry

## Prof. Dinna Johnson

Assistant Professor  
Rajagiri College of Social Sciences  
Kalamassery



and academia co-develop curricula that are relevant, dynamic, and future-focused.

Industry - academic collaborations in India have been on the rapid rise. Many universities and institutions, such as IITs, have developed close ties with industry partners, leading to significant technological advancements. IIT Madras, for example, has a long association with the automotive industry in Tamil Nadu. Ashok Leyland is a leading Indian commercial vehicle manufacturer. IIT Madras and Ashok Leyland joined hands to develop an electric bus named "Circuit." Considering the growing pollution levels in the cities, introducing such indigenously designed electric vehicles can lead to sustainable transportation solutions. When institutions

collaborate with industry partners to address real-world challenges and develop solutions, it helps India gain self-reliance. Another example is the collaboration of IIT Kanpur with the Indian aerospace industry. India is making strides in space technology through the efforts of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Nano Satellites are being developed by ISRO, which can carry up to 3 Kg of innovative payloads required for future science and experimental payloads. IIT Kanpur collaborated with the Indian aerospace industry and ISRO to develop a cutting-edge product called the "Nanosatellite Propulsion System." The objective of the propulsion system is to manoeuvre the nanosatellites in space with precision so that their overall performance improves with an extended operational life. Since Nanosatellites are compact, they are not only cost-effective satellites but can be used for applications such as Earth observation, communication, and scientific research.

We need to adapt diverse approaches to strengthening industry - academic collaborations, ranging from funding initiatives such as the National Research Foundation announced by the Government of India to promoting dedicated research organizations. As a country, India has to tailor its strategies to its distinctive needs and strengths. However, there are some challenges that the Indian university system has to confront for sustainable industry-academia collaboration.

The Indian education system has traditionally focused on theoretical knowledge rather than practical applications. As a result, many Indian Higher Educational Institutes (HEIs) often overlook industry collaboration and technology transfers, focusing more on traditional academic activities. This leads to missed possibilities for commercializing intellectual property and leveraging basic research for headways in patents, licensing, or start-up ventures. National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, announced in July 2020, advocates active promotion of industry-academia

collaboration to enable our higher educational institutes to train students to be a dynamic and industry-ready workforce.

Recently, the University Grants Commission has notified "Guidelines for Sustainable University-Industry Collaboration in Indian Universities". Under these guidelines, all Higher educational institutions must establish an Industry Relations Cell (IRC) on their campuses to facilitate seamless interactions between professors of the university and industry partners. Both universities and industry partners must work on identifying and applying for joint research funding from diverse funding sources to sustain such collaborations.

For example, in the professor-of-practice scheme announced by the University Grants Commission (UGC) universities and colleges can appoint industry leaders as professors of practice to work with the institutions in developing relevant and responsive curricula to meet the skill requirements, emerging trends in the job market and the evolving needs of the industry. Such partnerships are essential for fostering innovation and closer ties between academia and industry. Forward-thinking companies understand they are no longer just consumers of talent—they must become co-creators of it. By working closely with academic institutions to design relevant, future-proof curricula, they not only improve employability but also fuel innovation, agility, and long-term competitiveness. Increasing industry-academia collaboration in Kerala will significantly boost employability among graduates. By aligning educational programs with the practical needs of local and global industries, students can gain relevant skills, hands-on experience, and better insights into current market demands. This synergy will help bridge the skill gap, reduce unemployment, and support Kerala's economic growth by creating a more competent and job-ready workforce.



# Beyond Regulation: Prohibition and Abolition of Contract Labour



**Dr. Rajen Mehrotra**  
Assistant Labour Commissioner  
Andaman & Nicobar Islands

## Background

The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) [CLRA] Act, 1970, which governs the service conditions of contract labour employed in establishments, has two key parts: Regulation and Abolition.

The Regulation part requires the Principal Employer (i.e., the establishment) to register with the Appropriate Government (State or Central) before engaging contract labour for specified work. It also makes it mandatory for contractors employing contract labour to obtain a license.

This process is well established and widely followed. The Act applies to establishments and contractors engaging 20 or more contract workers. In states such as Gujarat and Maharashtra, this threshold has been raised to 50, and the same will become

uniform across India once the new Labour Codes are implemented.

Section 10 of the CLRA Act deals with Prohibition and Abolition of contract labour.

- Section 10(1) empowers the Appropriate Government, after consulting the Central/State Board, to prohibit by notification in the official Gazette the employment of contract labour in any process, operation, or work in an establishment.
- **Section 10(2) outlines the factors to be considered before abolition, namely:** (a) whether the work is incidental to or necessary for the business of the establishment; (b) whether the work is of a perennial nature; (c) whether it is ordinarily done by regular workmen in similar establishments; (d) whether the work is of sufficient scale to employ a considerable number of whole-time workers.



If any question arises regarding whether the work is of a perennial nature, the decision of the Appropriate Government is final.

### Regulation

Both Central and State Governments are generally liberal in granting registrations to establishments and licenses to contractors. This is because Governments are interested in attracting investment, aimed at economic development and generating employment.

### Prohibition and Abolition

Both Central and State Governments have the authority to prohibit or abolish contract labour. However, in practice, such steps are rarely taken. Governments act only on the recommendations of the Contract Labour Advisory Board, and cannot do so independently.

If a trade union or contract labour group submits a demand for abolition, it is referred to the Advisory Board. The Board (often through a sub-committee) examines the matter thoroughly, hears the employer, and then makes recommendations. The Government, after reviewing these, may notify prohibition/abolition. It can accept or reject recommendations but must provide reasons.

If the decision by the Government results in prohibition and abolition of contract labour, then such decisions are by and large litigated by employers and the process is time consuming.

Supreme Court Verdicts on Prohibition and Abolition of Contract Labour

- **Gujarat Electricity Board vs. Hind Mazdoor Sabha (1995):** Reinforced that all four conditions under Section 10(2) must be satisfied. If a task has always been done by contract workers since

inception, it technically cannot be abolished. However, governments have sometimes ignored this ruling. Courts may alternatively order regularisation of long-serving contract labour under Rule 25 of the CLRA Rules, 1971, which requires equal wages for equal work.

- **Parimal Chandra Raha vs. LIC (2003):** Held that contract labour working in LIC's canteen through a contractor could not be treated as LIC employees, since contract labour is not included in the definition of "workman" under Section 2(s) of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947—even though canteens are statutorily required under Section 46 of the Factories Act, 1948.
- **Dena Nath vs. National Fertilizers Ltd. (1992):** Stressed the need to consider industry-wide practices before prohibiting contract labour. This exercise also needs to be undertaken by the Central / State Boards of the respective Governments, while reviewing the complaints and deciding upon them.
- **SAIL vs. National Union Waterfront Workers (2001):** A five-judge bench held there is no automatic absorption of contract workers upon abolition, overruling the earlier Air India case (1996). This position was reaffirmed in *Kirloskar Brothers Ltd. vs. Ramcharan & Ors.* (2022). Hence, many trade unions are reluctant to press for abolition, as it does not guarantee regularisation, though it can still trigger industrial relations issues.
- **The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSH and WC) Code, 2020:** Implications The OSH & WC Code, 2020, in Chapter XI Part I, regulates contract labour. It allows their engagement only for non-core activities, including: sanitation, security, canteen /catering, loading/unloading, hospitals, training institutions, guest houses, courier services, construction / maintenance, gardening, housekeeping,

transport, and intermittent activities-even if these are core.

Most listed activities are of a perennial nature. Hence, under the Code, they cannot be abolished by government notification, unlike under the CLRA Act.

The Second National Commission on Labour had recommended:

1.No contract labour in core production/service activities.

2.Equal remuneration for contract and regular labour.

Only the first recommendation has been incorporated in the OSH&WC Code. As a result, most establishments will continue to pay minimum wages, using cost arbitrage.

Section 57 of the OSH and WC Code, 2020 permits contract labour even in core activities if: (a) such activities are ordinarily done through contractors; (b) they do not require full-time workers for the major portion of the working hours in a day or for longer periods, as the case may be;

c) there is a sudden increase in workload that needs to be accomplished in a specified time.

Thus, in an establishment, if a core activity from the commencement of the establishment is performed by Contract workers, then the same can be continued through contract workers. This provision is likely to trigger trade union litigation once the Code is enforced. Section 57(2)(b) also allows aggrieved parties to approach the Appropriate Government to decide whether an activity is "core."

## Conclusion

Many establishments, while signing long-term settlements with unions, have introduced new

lower wage grades for fresh recruits, aligning them with minimum wages. This is seen as a precaution if they are required to absorb contract workers.

Currently, almost every establishment-public and private-engages contract labour under the CLRA Act, 1970. Once the OSH & WC Code, 2020 becomes operational, the share of contract labour will increase further. Employers must ensure compliance and extend statutory social security benefits to contract labour.

However, most employers still pay only the minimum wage to contract workers. This often leads to dissatisfaction, as workers expect higher wages and opportunities for advancement in their careers and lives. Employers should adopt a more pragmatic approach by paying a living wage rather than the bare minimum. For most medium and large enterprises, this would be only a marginal cost increase, but it could significantly improve workplace morale and industrial relations.

In the future, industrial relations challenges will increasingly revolve around contract labour, as establishments reduce or eliminate permanent/temporary workers. Trade unions will adapt by shifting their membership base to contract workers and also designated officers performing worker role.



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# AI: Beyond Human, How Do We Handle Feelings?



**Saranya Rajendran**

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In today's world, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has moved from being a futuristic concept to an everyday reality. From recruitment to performance management, AI tools are revolutionizing the way organizations function. From screening resumes and predicting attrition to understanding employee moods through chatbots, AI is transforming the workplace like never before.

**But amid this wave of automation, one question lingers: Can AI truly understand human feelings?**

## **The Human Element in a Digital Era**

While AI excels at processing data, identifying patterns, and automating repetitive tasks, it lacks one defining human trait which is empathy. Emotions, motivations, and personal struggles cannot be coded into algorithms. This is where HR professionals step in as the bridge between technology and humanity.

Human Resource professionals bring a heart-centred approach to workplaces that machines simply cannot replicate. Understanding a team member's hesitation before a performance review, sensing burnout before it shows in productivity numbers, or providing emotional support during difficult life events, where the moments that define human connection in the workplace.

## **Empathy: The Core of Human Resource Leadership**

In the age of AI, empathy is not a soft skill; it's a strategic differentiator. As automation takes over routine HR operations, the focus for HR professionals must shift toward emotional intelligence, active listening, and compassionate communication.

When employees feel seen, heard, and valued, engagement rises, and trust deepens. An AI system may detect a drop in performance metrics, but only a human can ask, "How are you doing?" and truly mean it.

### Reimagining HR's Role in the AI World

Rather than viewing AI as a threat, HR must see it as an enabler, a partner that handles data-driven decisions, allowing humans to focus on the people side of business.

Here's how HR can redefine its role and thrive in the age of AI:

- Use AI for insights, not judgments: Let data guide, but allow human wisdom to decide.
- Build emotionally intelligent workplaces: Invest in leadership training that promotes empathy and inclusion.
- Champion ethical AI use: HR must ensure fairness, transparency, and privacy in all AI-driven processes.
- Keep the human connection alive: Encourage meaningful conversations, mentoring, and real-time feedback that foster belonging.

### The Future Belongs to the “Human” in Human Resources

As organizations embrace AI, the role of HR becomes even more vital. The future HR

professional will be both tech-savvy and heart-savvy. They will use AI as a powerful tool but lead with compassion, understanding, and ethical responsibility.

Many companies have reduced their HR teams with the rise of AI, but the human touch can never be replaced. Technology may support HR, yet it cannot replicate the warmth, empathy, and connection that only humans can offer.

Because at the end of the day, machines can think, but only humans can feel. Our ability to care and connect will always keep the workplace truly human.

### About the Author

Saranya Rajendran, is an accomplished HR professional with over a decade of experience in the IT industry. Currently I am serving as Lead HR Business Partner at Williams Lea An RRD Company. I am a certified POSH trainer and is passionate about building people-centric workplaces that combine technology with empathy. My work focuses on talent development, employee engagement, and fostering inclusive cultures that inspire growth and innovation.





# Reverse Mentorship: What Gen Z Teaches Senior Leaders



**Thushara Renjith**  
Lead – Human Resources  
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In today's evolving workplace, much of the conversation revolves around managing the new generation — the Gen Z workforce. They are often labelled as “difficult to manage” or “hard to retain.” But perhaps the question we should be asking isn't how do we manage them — Are we prepared to manage them?

Having spent the last five years in an organization where nearly 80% of the workforce belongs to Gen Z, I thought to share my personal take aways on reverse mentorship. The experience has been eye-opening, at times confusing, but ultimately enriching. But now I feel we are equipped to manage them by not harming their aims and our own legacy. Here are five lessons in reverse mentorship which I found helpful during these years.

## 5 LESSONS



### 1. Leading the “Why” Generation: Can You Answer Their Questions?

Gen Z is a generation of curious thinkers — they constantly ask “Why?” Why do we follow certain processes? Why not explore better ways? They do not accept explanations at face value; they value clarity, transparency, and authenticity.

This generation values authenticity over authority. And that means — more than ever — management today needs genuine, open, and downward communication that connects with people at every level.

The HR Take away: A culture that welcomes questions becomes a culture that learns, innovates, and retains talent. The next wave of great leaders will not just tell people what to do —

they'll inspire them with why it matters.

So, are we really prepared to answer their Why's?

## **2. From Tenure to Purpose: The New Loyalty Equation**

The modern workforce is redefining what work means. Shaped by the Covid-19 pandemic and a renewed focus on personal wellbeing, employees today—especially Gen Z—no longer see a company as a lifelong destination. The traditional idea of staying with one employer until retirement has faded—in fact, many no longer see retirement as a fixed milestone at all. Instead, they value freedom, flexibility, and purpose. Many prefer gig opportunities, portfolio careers, or even early retirement options that allow them to enjoy life beyond work.

They prioritize work-life balance, quality time with family, and a fair, decent pay over high packages that come with stress or burnout. Since they do not necessarily aim for long-term association with one employer, they make career choices based on present satisfaction and alignment with their personal values.

The HR Take away: Gen Z employees stay where they find meaning and alignment. When their work connects with their purpose, they engage deeply—when it does not, they move on without hesitation.

## **3. Adapt or Obsolete: Leadership in the Age of AI**

The new generation works smart, not hard. They simplify tasks, leverage technology, and constantly explore faster, more efficient ways to deliver results. With deep awareness of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), and Analytics, they naturally integrate innovation into daily work.

In a fast-moving digital world, they expect leaders to stay relevant, tech-savvy, and open to learning.

Their tools, language, and learning styles have evolved—and leadership must evolve with them. The HR Take away: To engage and retain this generation, digital fluency must become a leadership essential. Encourage continuous learning, support innovation, and embrace emerging technologies. Alignment with their tech-driven mindset builds stronger trust, engagement, and performance.

## **4. The New Life-Work Equation: Balance Before Burnout**

How often do we stop to ask: Do we work to live, or live to work?

For many of us, work has become central to life, sometimes even defining our purpose. But the new generation sees it differently. They live in the moment and embrace the philosophy: “Spend your earnings, don't just preserve them.” They live in the moment, valuing experiences, personal growth, and balance over traditional milestones like long tenures or rigid career paths.

This shift shapes their expectations from work:

- Longer, flexible holidays to recharge
- Clear boundaries between work and personal life — no after-hours office chats
- Opportunities to focus on their own “me-world”

They value freedom and balance as much as fair pay. Organizations that respect these priorities are more likely to gain their loyalty, engagement, and creativity.

The HR Take away: To attract and retain this generation, HR must promote balance without compromising productivity. Flexibility, mental health support, and respect for personal time are no longer perks—they are essentials for a sustainable workplace.

**5. Mind First: Why Mental Health Is the New Metric of Success**

This is not a new concept, but the pandemic and




related health challenges have made it impossible to ignore. The past few years have highlighted the critical importance of mental and emotional wellbeing—both for employees and organizations.

Many forward-thinking companies have responded by introducing initiatives such as: Mindfulness and meditation sessions, Wellbeing workshops focussed on stress management, Counselling, and mental health support programs. Gen Z employees actively seek organizations that prioritize emotional wellbeing and understand the importance of a healthy mindset. They know that a supportive, mindful workplace not only fosters productivity but also enhances creativity, engagement, and loyalty.

The HR Take away: Mental health is no longer optional—it is a strategic priority. HR must embed emotional wellbeing into the company culture, not just as occasional programs but as an ongoing commitment. Companies that genuinely invest in employee mental health will attract top talent, reduce burnout, and build a resilient, future-ready workforce.

Evolving Workforce Dynamics: Then vs. Now

Aspect	Past Workforce	Gen Z Workforce (New Workforce)
 <b>Communicat-Style</b>	Formal, hierarchical, and authority-driven.	Open, transparent, collaborative and feedback-oriented.
 <b>Career Outlook</b>	Saw a company as a lifelong destination; aimed to stay until retirement.	Sees career as a journey of experiences; open to multiple employers and flexible paths.
 <b>Definition of Success</b>	Job stability, promotions, and long-term tenure.	Personal fulfillment, meaningful work, and work-life balance.
 <b>Loyalty</b>	Loyalty to organization – valued tenure and job security.	Loyalty to values and purpose – stays only when aligned with personal beliefs.
 <b>Technology Adoption</b>	Adopting technology gradually; often cautious.	Digital natives – highly tech-savvy, adaptive, and innovation-focused.
 <b>Work-Life Balance</b>	Work often prioritized over personal life.	Seeks harmony – values personal time, family, and mental health.

The shift in workplace values has never been more evident. The new generation—especially Gen Z—approaches work with a mindset entirely different from the generations before them. The following comparison highlights how workforce expectations have evolved over time:

### Real-World Example of Reverse Mentorship

Reverse mentorship is more than a concept—it works in practice. Many global companies have successfully implemented reverse mentorship programs, where junior employees mentor senior leaders on technology, digital trends, and modern workplace perspectives.

Reverse mentorship is not about seniors learn from Gen Z or vice versa—it is about mutual learning. Gen Z bring fresh perspective, digital agility, and emotional intelligence; senior leaders bring wisdom, experience, and strategic foresight. Together, they create a workplace that's purposeful, progressive, and people-first.

**As a closing reflection:** How can we truly judge the new generation when they were shaped, in part, by parenting and societal influences of our own generation? Just as we inherited values from our parents, they are practising what they have learned—amplified by a rapidly changing world.

### The Best Leaders Do Not Just Mentor Down — They Listen Up!



### About the Author

Thushara Renjith is the Lead – Human Resources at Mantle Solutions (A Lulu Group Company), bringing over 20 years of cross-industry experience across Retail, IT, BPO, FMCG, and Services. She is passionate about building people-first, future-ready workplaces and frequently writes on HR innovation, employee experience, and the evolving world of work.

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