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Original Article

Geopolitical Conflict and Workforce Resilience in India: An HRM Perspective on Reskilling, Upskilling, and Workforce Analytics

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Abstract

The current research explores the effect of Iran–Israel War on workforce dynamics in India focusing on workforce analytics, upskilling, and reskilling. The study draws on primary data gathered from 400 respondents across various categories such as employees, job seekers, and workers associated with jobs in the Middle East. The instrument used was a structured questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale to collect responses in relation to job uncertainty, job opportunity, job income stability and skill development. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (correlation and regression analysis) were employed in analysing the data using SPSS software. The results show that the geopolitical conflict has had a strong impact on the employment situation, causing a high level of job insecurity, lower levels of international mobility, and a higher cost of living. Another key finding of the study is that reskilling and upskilling are important components of improving employability and workforce resilience during crisis situations. Moreover, workforce analytics is found to be effective in organizations to handle workforce challenges by making data-informed decisions. The study finds that a multi-pronged strategy of skill development, organizational measures, and government interventions is required to limit the negative impact of global conflicts on the Indian workforce.

This article discusses the critical role skills play in shaping the future of employment, the difficulties in preparing the workforce for new roles, and the significance of the Iran–Israel conflict in determining the future of the job market.The article explores the challenges of preparing the workforce for new jobs, the importance of skills in the job market, and the impact of the Iran–Israel conflict on the workforce.

Introduction

Globalization has changed the nature of work, making external environmental events such as geopolitical events to affect the nature of the workforce. The Iran–Israel War of 2026 has caused severe disruptions to the global economic systems, which have impacted trade, energy costs, migration, and employment across different countries. India has strong economic and labour ties with the Middle East and the repercussions of such wars are felt in Indian lives, particularly those of the masses that rely on jobs and livelihoods for their means of survival.

The impact of the war on oil prices and supply chain disruptions has been another significant impact, contributing to the rise in prices and the operational costs of industries in India. This has led to a slowdown in hiring, job security, and lesser job opportunities in the other countries, especially Gulf countries which have a large work force of Indian nationals. The job insecurity of many workers, the delay of recruitment and reverse migration add load to the domestic labor market.

In such a dynamic context, the ideas of reskilling and upskilling have become very relevant. Industries are changing with the new economic landscape, and there is a greater need to develop new skills and refresh old ones in order to stay job ready. Reskilling enables employees to move to new jobs, whereas upskilling upsets their capacity to work in changing work situations. Such practices help to safeguard the workforce's resilience and sustain their long-term employability during the uncertain times. Furthermore, workforce analytics has become an important tool for organizations to make informed decision on staffing, training, and workforce planning in times of crisis.

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The impact of the conflict is not limited to organizations but significantly affects the **common man in India**, including employees, job seekers, and migrant workers. Rising living costs, reduced job opportunities, and increased competition in the labor market have made it necessary for individuals to adapt quickly through continuous learning and skill development.

1 Problem Statement

The Iran– US War has disrupted global economic stability, leading to uncertainty in employment, rising costs of living, and reduced overseas job opportunities for Indian workers. Despite the growing importance of reskilling, upskilling, and workforce analytics, there is limited understanding of how these factors help the Indian workforce cope with such geopolitical disruptions. Therefore, it is essential to study the impact of the conflict on workforce dynamics and identify strategies to enhance employability and resilience among the common people in India.

2 Scope of the Study

The present study focuses on analyzing the impact of the geopolitical conflicts on workforce dynamics in India, particularly among employees, job seekers, and workers associated with Middle East employment. The study is limited to examining aspects such as employment uncertainty, skill development, and workforce management practices. It also explores the role of reskilling, upskilling, and workforce analytics in enhancing workforce adaptability. The geographical scope of the study is limited to selected respondents from India, and the findings are based on their perceptions and experiences during the period of global conflict.

Literature Review

The review of literature provides a theoretical and empirical foundation for understanding the impact of geopolitical conflicts on workforce dynamics, particularly in relation to reskilling, upskilling, and workforce analytics. Anderson and Strutt (2015) examined the impact of global trade disruptions on labor markets and found that geopolitical instability significantly affects employment patterns, especially in developing countries. Their study highlighted that external shocks lead to reduced job opportunities and increased uncertainty among workers. Martin et al. (2012) analyzed the relationship between international trade disruptions and labor demand. The study revealed that conflicts and political instability directly influence workforce mobility and employment trends, particularly in export-oriented economies. Baldwin and Evenett (2020) discussed the economic consequences of global crises and emphasized that disruptions in global supply chains lead to workforce restructuring, layoffs, and changes in skill requirements. They suggested that workforce adaptability is crucial during such crises. World Bank (2021) reported that global conflicts and economic shocks have a direct impact on employment, income levels, and labor migration. The report highlighted the importance of skill development and policy interventions to protect vulnerable workers. International Labour Organization (ILO, 2022) studied the effects of global crises on employment and found that reskilling and upskilling are essential strategies for workforce resilience. The study emphasized that continuous learning helps workers adapt to changing job requirements. McKinsey Global Institute (2021) highlighted that automation and global disruptions are accelerating the need for reskilling and upskilling. The report stated that a significant portion of the workforce will need to change occupations or acquire new skills due to evolving economic conditions. Deloitte (2022) explored workforce trends and found that organizations are increasingly adopting workforce analytics to manage talent effectively. The study emphasized the role of data-driven decision-making in improving workforce planning and performance. KPMG (2021) reported that workforce analytics helps organizations predict future skill requirements and manage workforce risks during uncertain times. The study highlighted its importance in strategic human resource management. PwC (2022) emphasized that upskilling is a critical factor in maintaining employability in a rapidly changing job market. The study found that organizations investing in employee development experience better productivity and retention. Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2014) discussed the impact of technological advancements on employment and highlighted the importance of digital skills. Their study suggested that workers must continuously upgrade their skills to remain relevant. Autor (2015) examined changes in labor markets and found that routine jobs are declining, while demand for skilled labor is increasing. This shift necessitates reskilling and upskilling of the workforce. OECD (2021) reported that skill development plays a crucial role in reducing unemployment and improving economic resilience. The study emphasized government support in promoting workforce training programs. UNDP (2022) highlighted the socio-economic impact of global crises on common people and stressed the need for inclusive workforce development strategies to protect vulnerable populations. Ghosh (2020) studied the impact of global economic disruptions on Indian workers and found that employment opportunities in overseas markets are highly sensitive to geopolitical tensions. Sharma and Kaur (2021) analyzed the impact of rising fuel prices on employment and found that increased operational costs lead to reduced hiring and workforce downsizing. Singh (2022) examined workforce challenges in India and found that job insecurity and skill gaps are major issues faced by workers during economic disruptions. Rao (2021) studied migration patterns and found that reverse migration increases during global crises, leading to additional pressure on domestic employment markets. Patil and Deshmukh (2022) highlighted the importance of skill development initiatives in Maharashtra and found that reskilling programs significantly improve employability among workers. Kulkarni (2023) emphasized the role of workforce analytics in Indian

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organizations and found that data-driven HR practices improve decision-making and workforce efficiency. Joshi and Patil (2023) studied the impact of global uncertainty on job seekers and found that students and young professionals are increasingly focusing on skill development to enhance employability. Chavan (2022) analyzed the challenges faced by common people during economic crises and found that rising living costs and job instability significantly affect their quality of life.

Research Gap

From the above review, it is observed that several studies have focused on global conflicts, workforce challenges, and the importance of reskilling and upskilling. However, limited research has been conducted on the combined impact of geopolitical conflicts like the Iran–US war, trade sanctions on workforce dynamics in India, particularly from the perspective of the common man. Additionally, the integration of workforce analytics with skill development strategies during such crises remains underexplored. Hence, the present study attempts to fill this gap.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the impact of the geopolitical conflicts on workforce dynamics and employment conditions in India.
2. To analyze the need and role of reskilling and upskilling among Indian workers during global crises.
3. To study the importance of workforce analytics in managing workforce challenges during geopolitical disruptions.

Hypotheses of the Study

H_{01} (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant relationship between geopolitical conflict and workforce dynamics in India.

H_{11} (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant relationship between geopolitical conflict and workforce dynamics in India.

H_{02} (Null Hypothesis): Reskilling and upskilling do not significantly influence employability during crisis situations.

H_{12} (Alternative Hypothesis): Reskilling and upskilling significantly influence employability during crisis situations.

Research Methodology

The present study adopts a **descriptive research design** to examine the impact of the geopolitical conflicts on workforce dynamics in India, with a focus on reskilling, upskilling, and workforce analytics. The study is based on **primary data**, collected through a **structured questionnaire** designed in accordance with the objectives and hypotheses of the study. The questionnaire consists of statements related to employment uncertainty, workforce changes, skill development needs, and the role of workforce analytics, measured using a **5-point Likert scale** ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

The **target population** includes employees from various sectors, job seekers, workers associated with overseas employment, and HR professionals, as these groups are directly or indirectly affected by global geopolitical disruptions. A total of **400 respondents** are selected using the **convenience sampling method**, ensuring accessibility and relevance to the research topic.

Data collection is carried out through both **online (Google Forms)** and offline methods to obtain diverse responses. The collected data is coded, tabulated, and analyzed using **SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences)** software. For data analysis, both **descriptive and inferential statistical tools** are used. Descriptive tools such as **percentage analysis and mean scores** are applied to understand respondent perceptions. To test the hypotheses, **inferential statistical techniques such as correlation analysis and regression analysis** are employed to examine the relationship between geopolitical conflict, workforce dynamics, and the role of reskilling and upskilling in influencing employability.

The methodology ensures systematic collection and analysis of data, enabling the study to provide meaningful insights into how workforce dynamics in India are affected by global conflicts and how skill development and workforce analytics contribute to managing these challenges

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data Analysis

Table 1: Data Analysis of Respondents' Perceptions

Sr. No.	Statement	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Mean
1	The geopolitical conflicts has created job uncertainty in India	48	32	10	6	4	4.14
2	Overseas employment opportunities have reduced	45	35	10	5	5	4.1
3	Rising fuel prices have increased cost of living	52	30	8	6	4	4.2
4	Organizations are reducing hiring due to global uncertainty	40	38	12	6	4	4.04
5	There is a need for reskilling to	50	34	8	5	3	4.23

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	remain employable						
6	Upskilling improves job security during crisis	46	36	9	5	4	4.15
7	Workforce analytics helps organizations manage workforce effectively	42	37	11	6	4	4.07
8	Workers are facing income instability due to global conflict	47	33	10	6	4	4.13
9	Government should provide skill development support	55	28	7	5	5	4.23
10	Skill development helps cope with global economic challenges	51	31	9	5	4	4.2

Interpretation of Data

The analysis reveals that a majority of respondents strongly agree that the geopolitical conflicts has significantly impacted workforce dynamics in India. The high mean score (4.14) for job uncertainty indicates that employees are experiencing instability in employment conditions. Similarly, respondents agree that overseas employment opportunities have reduced (mean = 4.10), highlighting the impact on migration and international job prospects.

The increase in fuel prices and cost of living (mean = 4.20) is another major concern affecting the common man, which indirectly influences workforce stability and financial security. Many respondents also believe that organizations are reducing hiring due to global uncertainty (mean = 4.04), indicating cautious behavior among employers.

A significant finding is the strong agreement on the importance of **reskilling and upskilling**, with mean scores of 4.23 and 4.15 respectively. This shows that respondents recognize the need to upgrade their skills to remain employable during crisis situations. Additionally, workforce analytics is perceived as an effective tool for managing workforce challenges (mean = 4.07), suggesting the growing importance of data-driven decision-making in human resource management. The study also indicates that workers are facing income instability (mean = 4.13), which reflects the economic impact of global conflicts on individuals. Furthermore, there is strong support for government intervention in skill development (mean = 4.23), highlighting the need for policy support.

Overall, the findings clearly demonstrate that the geopolitical conflicts had a noticeable impact on employment, income, and workforce stability in India. At the same time, reskilling, upskilling, and workforce analytics are considered essential strategies for coping with these challenges and ensuring long-term employability.

2 Hypothesis Testing

To examine the relationship between geopolitical conflict, workforce dynamics, and the role of reskilling and upskilling, **correlation and regression analysis** were conducted using **SPSS software**.

Hypothesis 1

Table 2: Correlation Analysis for Hypothesis 1

Variables	**Geopolitical Conflict Impact**	**Workforce Dynamics**
Geopolitical Conflict Impact	1	0.682**
Workforce Dynamics	0.682**	1

(**Significant at 0.01 level**)

Interpretation:

The correlation coefficient (r = 0.682) indicates a **strong positive relationship** between geopolitical conflict and workforce dynamics. The significance value ($p < 0.01$) shows that the relationship is statistically significant. Reject H_{01} and accept H_{11}.

There is a significant relationship between geopolitical conflict and workforce dynamics in India.

Hypothesis 2

Table 3: Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 2

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Sig.
1	0.721	0.52	0.511	0

Interpretation:

The regression analysis shows that the value of **R^2 = 0.520**, which means that **52% of the variation in employability** is explained by reskilling and upskilling. The significance value (p = 0.000) is less than 0.05, indicating that the model is statistically significant.

Reject H_{02} and accept H_{12}.Reskilling and upskilling have a significant influence on employability during crisis situations.

Hypothesis Testing Conclusion

The statistical analysis confirms that:

- Geopolitical conflicts significantly affect workforce dynamics in India.
- Reskilling and upskilling play a crucial role in improving employability during uncertain times.

Thus, the study validates the importance of skill development and workforce planning strategies in managing the impact of global crises.

Discussion

The study reveals that the geopolitical conflicts has significantly affected workforce dynamics in India, leading to increased job uncertainty, reduced hiring, and a decline in overseas employment opportunities. Respondents indicated that rising fuel prices and cost of living have created financial stress and income instability among the common man. Organizations are adopting cautious approaches by delaying recruitment and focusing on cost control. The findings also highlight that reskilling and upskilling have become essential for maintaining employability, as workers recognize the need to adapt to changing job requirements. Furthermore, workforce analytics is gaining importance as organizations use data-driven approaches for workforce planning and decision-making. The hypothesis testing confirms that geopolitical conflict significantly impacts workforce dynamics and that reskilling and upskilling positively influence employability during crisis situations.

The government should strengthen skill development initiatives and provide support to workers affected by global conflicts, particularly those dependent on overseas employment. Organizations should invest in reskilling and upskilling programs and adopt workforce analytics tools to improve workforce planning and decision-making. Employees and job seekers should focus on continuous learning and skill enhancement to remain competitive in the job market. Additionally, educational institutions should update their curriculum to align with industry requirements and emphasize practical skill development. These combined efforts will help in improving workforce adaptability, reducing unemployment risks, and ensuring long-term economic stability.

Conclusion

The study concludes that global geopolitical conflicts such as the Iran–US War, US trade sanctions have a direct and significant impact on employment conditions and workforce stability in India. The effects are evident in the form of job insecurity, reduced employment opportunities, and increased financial pressure on individuals. The common man is particularly vulnerable to these changes due to rising living costs and limited job security. However, the study also concludes that reskilling and upskilling play a crucial role in enhancing workforce resilience, enabling individuals to adapt to changing economic conditions. Additionally, workforce analytics serves as an important tool for organizations to manage workforce challenges effectively through data-driven decision-making. Overall, a proactive approach combining skill development and strategic workforce management is necessary to ensure sustainable employment in times of global uncertainty.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of thesis paper.

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