SANSKRITHI SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
Approved by AICTE, New Delhi. Affiliated to JNTUA, Anantapur.
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# Problem solving Learning

**Critical Thinking:** Developing critical thinking skills is essential for effective problem-solving. This involves analyzing information, questioning assumptions, evaluating evidence, and drawing logical conclusions.

**Collaborative Problem-Solving:** Encouraging collaboration among learners promotes diverse perspectives and collective problem-solving. Group discussions, team projects, and cooperative learning activities foster collaboration and enhance problem-solving abilities.

**Real-World Context:** Problem-solving learning should incorporate real-world scenarios and authentic problems that students may encounter in their professional or personal lives. This approach enhances the relevance and applicability of problem-solving skills.

**Analytical Skills:** Teaching analytical skills equips learners with the ability to break down complex problems into smaller components, analyze data, identify patterns, and draw meaningful insights.

**Creative Thinking**: Nurturing creative thinking skills encourages learners to explore innovative solutions and think outside the box. Techniques like brainstorming, mind mapping, and lateral thinking can stimulate creativity in problem-solving.

**Decision-Making:** Effective problem-solving involves making informed decisions. Teaching decision-making frameworks, such as cost-benefit analysis, risk assessment, and SWOT analysis, helps learners evaluate options and make optimal choices.

**Technology Integration:** Incorporating technology tools and resources can enhance problem-solving learning. Utilizing software, simulations, virtual environments, and online platforms provides opportunities for hands-on practice and simulation of real-world problem-solving.

For all these skills we are conducting case studies & workshops to enhance student skills

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**Case studies:**

**Case studies**

| S. No. | Name of the video | Link |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Leading from Behind \| Life lessons from the trenches \| Capt. Raghu Raman \| Leadership Talks | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BGbEWxG8BI |
| 2 | Making a Commitment \| Shiv Khera \| TEDxIIFTDelhi | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PjQXhoXvln4 |
| 3 | The Ordinary Heroes of the Taj Hotel: Rohit Deshpande at TEDxNewEngland | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQGz1YRqBPw |
| 4 | TEDxSSN - Dr. Pawan Agrawal – Mumbai Dabbawalas | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N25inoCea24 |
| 5 | Bhopal Gas Tragedy | https://youtu.be/FdyBy2s9I5c |
| 6 | The untold story of india Batter King | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0C4tXjbo2Y |
| 7 | PC Mustafa, Harvard Kennedy School | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01_eOCGNYN8&t=880s |
| 8 | CNBC-TV18 DISRUPTORS\| The Birth Of Online Supermarket Giants, Big Basket | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fk09gYlKC7g **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRV7m4hJdrE** |
| 9 | DMart Case study | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDQvTD1oyH0 |
| 10 | The Patanjali Empire \| Patanjali Products Now a Click Away \| CNBC TV18 | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-w-ZIT5D6o |
| 11 | Patanjali Case study | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fao4nf4pqhY |
| 12 | Teaching The World\| BYJU'S The Learning App On CNBC-TV18 DISRUPTORS | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IaRK-nDKUGw |
| 13 | Amazon case study | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJZGEeDoZHA |
| 14 | 100 Years of TATA STEEL \| Spirit of Steel \| Tata Steel Jamshedpur | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1iUSKBtgaak |

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| S. No | Name of the content | Link |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Patanjali case | https://walnutfolks.com/patanjali-case-study/ |
| 2 | DMART case | https://www.slideshare.net/ShubhamRathi32/dmart-a-complete-study-retail-business |
| 3 | Bigbasket | https://iide.co/presentations/bigbaskets-digital-marketing-strategy/ https://www.digitalvidya.com/blog/case-study-bigbasket-online-grocery-marketplace-digital-marketing/ https://www.themarcomavenue.com/blog/how-big-basket-became-peoples-favourite-online-grocery-marketplace/ |

**Case study Presentations by the students:**




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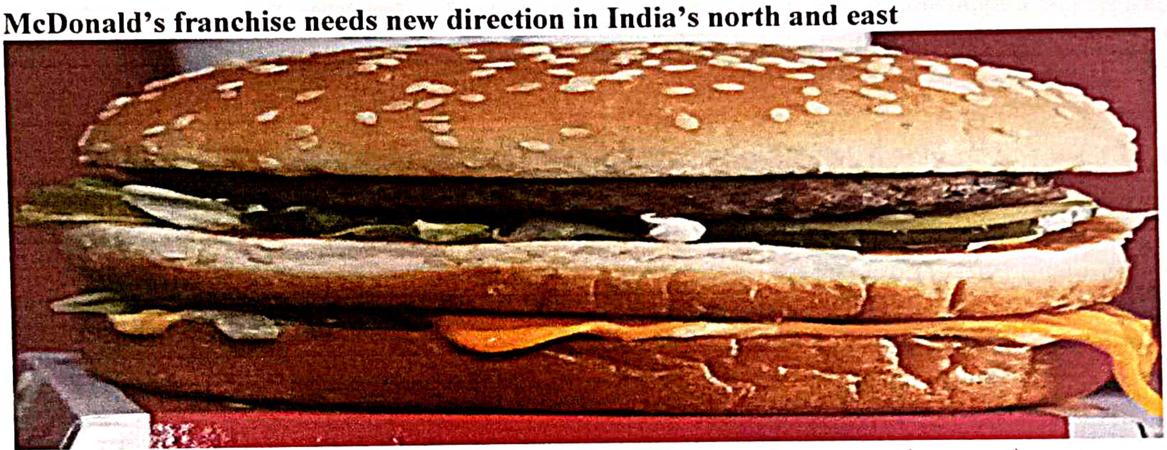
**Sample Case Studies:**

**McDonald's franchise needs new direction in India's north and east**



*What strategy should the QSR major adopt to boost its brand image and ensure long-term growth?*

In December 2018, McDonald's India announced that it had posted its first-ever profit after 22 years of business in the country. This was despite the global fast food giant being embroiled in a long-drawn legal dispute with one of its main franchisees — Connaught Plaza Restaurants (CPRL).

On August 21, 2017 McDonald's had announced that it had terminated the franchise agreement with CPRL for 169 restaurants operating across northern and eastern India. According to McDonald's, CPRL had violated the terms of the franchise agreement through alleged financial irregularities, mismanagement, and inadequacies with respect to internal control systems. However, Vikram Bakshi, MD of CPRL, challenged the termination in the Delhi High Court and said he would continue to run the outlets until a verdict was passed by the court or an acceptable offer was made by McDonald's to buy out his stake in CPRL.

McDonald's long running dispute with its franchisee had cost it dearly, and the company posted a loss of ₹3.05 billion in the financial year ended December 2017. According to some analysts, mass closure of the restaurants disappointed customers and affected McDonald's brand image in

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the country. Going forward, the fast food chain could lose a long-term growth opportunity in the country's rapidly growing quick service restaurant (QSR) sector, they added.

**Expansion in India**

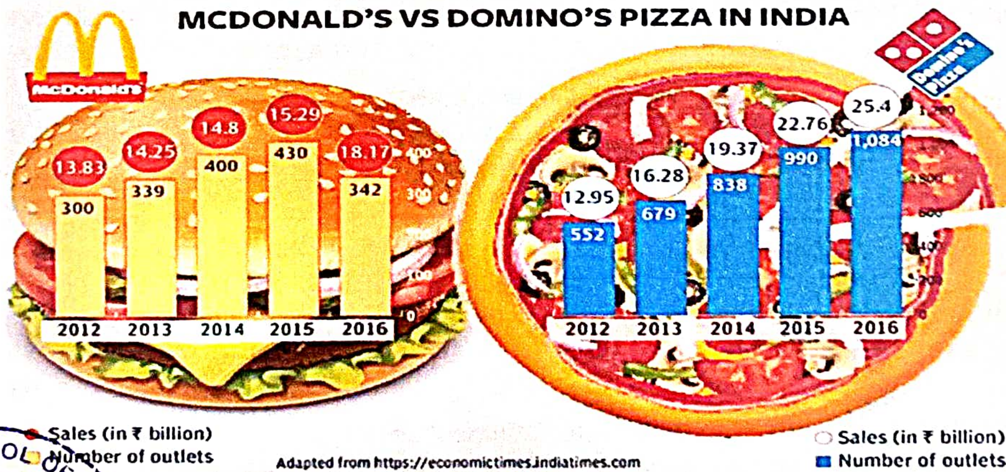
Globally, McDonald's adopted a franchise business model to easily penetrate new markets and enlarge its target markets. About 80 per cent of its restaurants worldwide are owned and operated by franchisees. This model helped push up McDonald's gross margins and operating income, and gave it a stable revenue stream with lower operating costs and risks.

When McDonald's entered India in 1996, it followed the franchise model here as well. Its operations were managed by two companies: CPRL and Hardcastle Restaurants Pvt. Ltd (HRPL). HRPL started out as an equal joint venture between McDonald's and Amit Jatia, vice-chairman of Westlife Development, which operated QSRs in India. In 2010, HRPL was converted from a joint venture to a master franchisee of McDonald's. While Hardcastle operated in the southern and western parts of the country, CPRL handled McDonald's northern and eastern businesses.

McDonald's reshaped the country's fast food culture by serving low-priced, value-oriented products, quickly and efficiently. According to industry observers, a key reason for its success was the ability to customise its menu to suit local tastes by understanding Indian customers' preferences.

By 2012, McDonald's was the market leader in India's QSR sector, with a market share of 10.9 per cent, followed by Domino's, at 10.2 per cent. However, the chain's growth slowed in 2013, hit by growing competition, with rivals such as KFC, Pizza Hut, and Domino's offering lower-priced options on their menus.

Moreover, a string of food quality issues at some McDonald's restaurants seriously dented its image in the country, said analysts. Same-store sales growth of McDonald's remained negative for eight quarters between mid-2013 and September 2015. Despite revamping its restaurants and upgrading its menu, McDonald's still struggled to retain dominance in the QSR sector. In 2016, Domino's overtook McDonald's its market share touching 16 per cent, while the latter's dropped to 7.4 per cent ***(see Graphic on McDonald's vs Domino's in India)***.



**Franchisee woes**

CPRL was a 50:50 JV between McDonald's and Bakshi, a partnership that flourished for years, outperforming its rivals. The first cracks in the venture appeared in 2008, when McDonald's tried to buy out Bakshi's share for $7 million. Bakshi said this was far less than it was worth. Reportedly, consulting firm Grant Thornton valued CPRL at $331 million in 2009.

In a sudden turn of events in August 2013, McDonald's ousted Bakshi as MD of CPRL, citing financial discrepancies. The allegations included mismanagement of funds, lack of attention to the JV, and conflict of interest. McDonald's said Bakshi had pledged 51,300 of his CPRL shares without the company's approval to raise a loan of ₹200 million to fund his real estate business. There were also allegations of Bakshi leasing out his property to a rival company, leading to conflict of interest.

According to McDonald's, Bakshi was not devoting enough time to CPRL as his focus was on directorship of 25 other companies. However, Bakshi refuted the allegations saying that the CPRL board, which had representatives from McDonald's as well, was aware of all his actions. McDonald's accused the franchisee of failing to pay royalties over two years. CPRL was required to pay 5 per cent of overall sales as royalty to McDonald's. In response, Bakshi claimed that the royalty money was being used to repay bank loans and that both the McDonald's nominee directors on the CPRL board were aware of it. He said that a debt of about ₹460 million had been repaid to banks in two years alone.

In September 2013, Bakshi moved the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) stating that his removal was oppressive in nature and McDonald's intended to buy him out at a lower valuation to take full control of the business. McDonald's retaliated by pursuing arbitration against Bakshi in the London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA). The ensuing legal battle saw the acrimony between the partners worsening.

**Food safety, health concerns**

The first signs of serious trouble appeared on March 21, 2017, when the health licenses, mandatory for running the McDonald's restaurants in Delhi, were set to expire for 43 outlets. Bakshi, one of the four board members of CPRL, refused to sign the licence renewal applications claiming that unsafe food was being served by some of the outlets, and professing his inability to control the food supply. As a result, in June 2017, 43 of the 169 McDonald's restaurants in northern and eastern India shut shop.

On July 14, 2017, the NCLT ruled in Bakshi's favour and reinstated him as the MD of CPRL, a move that McDonald's vowed to challenge. NCLT ruled that all steps taken in the pursuance of non-election of Bakshi were unlawful, and restrained McDonald's from interfering in the functioning of CPRL.

Thereafter, on August 21, 2017, McDonald's announced the termination of its franchise agreement with CPRL for 169 restaurants in the north and east of India, stating that CPRL had violated certain obligations as part of the agreement, including a default on payment of royalty to McDonald's. McDonald's India asked CPRL to stop using its brand system, trademark, designs, and associated intellectual property, within 15 days of the termination notice.

Describing the move by McDonald's as "contemptuous" and "oppressive", CPRL continued to run the outlets and even moved the Delhi High Court claiming unfair practice and licence termination by McDonald's. Bakshi alleged that the termination of the franchise agreement was in contempt of the NCLT order. He said that each store was working on the basis of an operating

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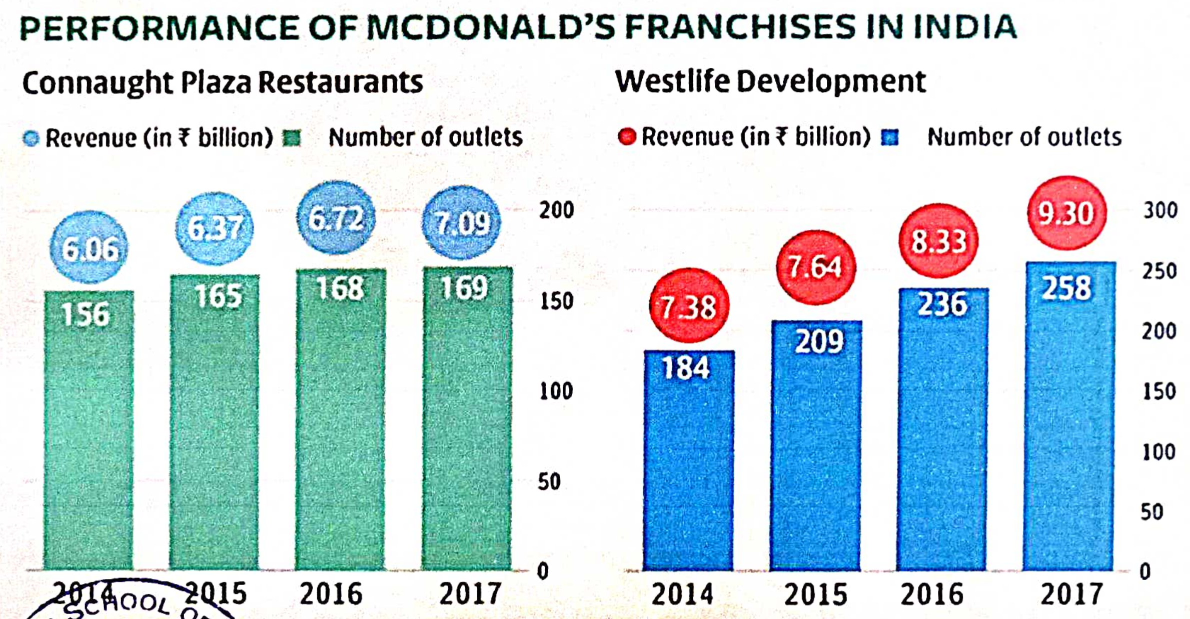
agreement of 20 years. Meanwhile, on September 12, the LCIA passed its verdict asking Bakshi to sell his stake in CPRL to McDonald's at a fair valuation in accordance with their JV agreement. It rejected Bakshi's claim that McDonald's did not validly terminate the JV. Bakshi challenged the LCIA's decision in the Delhi High Court.

**Losses, closure of units**

However, on December 26, 2017, CPRL had to shut 84 of the McDonald's outlets in eastern India as its logistics partner, Radhakrishna Foodland, discontinued supply chain services alleging uncertainty of future and non-payment of certain dues. Bakshi denied the charges, saying RK Foodland in collusion with McDonald's was trying to hurt his business. With the closure of these restaurants, CPRL reportedly incurred a loss of ₹10 million during the Christmas season. However, two days later, CPRL reopened 16 of the 84 closed outlets after roping in a new distribution partner, ColdEX Logistics.

McDonald's warned customers that they faced a potential health hazard by eating at the unauthorised outlets operated by CPRL. After termination of franchise agreements, McDonald's said it had not been able to verify if the CPRL-run outlets were complying with the applicable McDonald's standards, including those relating to supplies, operations, and safety standards and quality. In response to the allegations, Bakshi questioned the commitment of McDonald's to safety and hygiene at its Indian outlets. He alleged that McDonald's followed different food safety standards for India compared to its global standards and had continuously ignored the food quality concerns raised by him.

While McDonald's was facing problems with CRPL, Westlife Development, which owned the master franchise rights through its subsidiary HRPL, was performing well. It reported a 25 per cent increase in revenue between 2014 and 2017. While CPRL had added just 13 outlets and ₹1.13 billion in revenue during the period, HRPL had added 74 outlets and generated ₹1.92 billion in revenue *(See Graphic on franchisees' performance)*.




Adapted from http://www.livemint.com/



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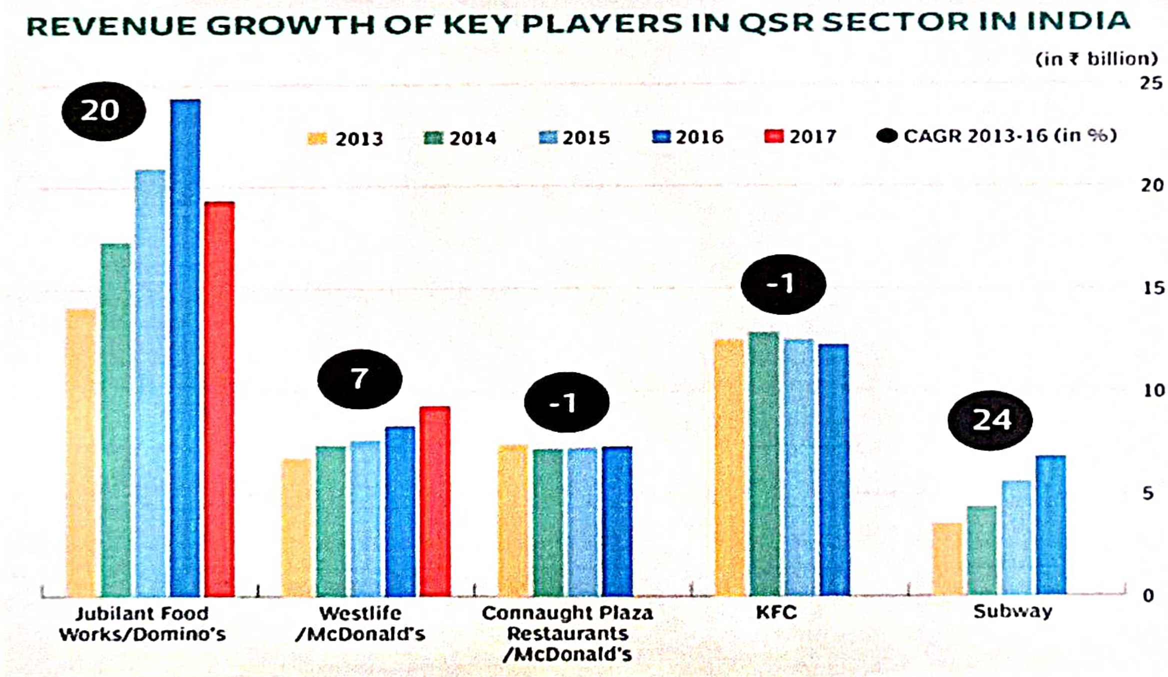
**Impact on business**

The closure of the McDonald's outlets in northern and eastern India was hurting the fast food chain's business in the country. In the year ended December 2017, McDonald's India posted a loss of ₹3.05 billion. Reportedly, the company had made a provision of ₹1.98 billion in its financial statements to cut back losses accumulated following termination of the franchise contract with CPRL.

The uncertainty hanging over the McDonald's franchise in India had helped its competitors in many ways. Rivals such as Domino's, Subway, and KFC quickly gained market share by offering exciting meal offers. According to market research firm Kantar IMRB, since the closure of the McDonald's outlets in Delhi, Subway and KFC had gained 5 per cent and 2 per cent market share respectively.

The dispute also impacted the market share of McDonald's in India. The fast food chain's overall market share dropped from 9 per cent in June 2017 to 3 per cent in July 2017. Expansion was hit as McDonald's opened just one outlet in 2017 compared to 27 outlets in 2012.
Since the termination of the agreement by McDonald's, some vendors had stopped supplying ingredients and packaging material to CPRL. This led to inconsistencies in the menu, with some popular products such as McFlurry and Soft Serve ice-creams becoming unavailable across some of its Delhi restaurants. Due to the shortage of supplies, these outlets were turning customers away. Analysts said this could create a negative impact in the minds of customers, who might move to rival brands.

**Rivals gain ground**



Adapted from http://ficci.in/spdocument/20969/foodzania-2017-report.pdf

Domino's had emerged as the biggest QSR chain in India due to a surge in online orders for home pizza delivery. Other competitors, such as KFC and Subway, were quickly gaining market

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share, eroding the hold of McDonald's in the country *(See Graphics on 'Revenue Growth of QSR Players' and 'McDonald's vs major competitors in India')*. Moreover, with new players like Burger King and Dunkin' Donuts making their presence felt, the fight for market dominance was set to get tougher.

Analysts said the standoff had not only dented McDonald's growth prospects in India but had also taken the fast food giant on a downhill ride in terms of quality of service and hygiene at its outlets. While the franchisee tried to keep several restaurants open despite the dispute, McDonald's faced notices on the quality of food served in these restaurants.

## MCDONALD'S VIS À VIS ITS MAJOR COMPETITORS IN INDIA

| | Year of entry | Number of Stores (as of 2018) | USP |
|---|---|---|---|
| McDonald's | 1996 | 430 | Cheaper food options that suit the Indian palate well |
| Domino's Pizza | 1996 | 1,200 | Leader in online and mobile ordering |
| Pizza Hut | 1996 | 500 | Premium positioning, vast range |
| KFC | 1995 | 380 | Specialises in fried chicken, quick service |
| Subway | 2001 | 600+ | Fresh and healthy fast food |

Compiled from various sources

For instance, in 2016, there were several instances of foreign objects, such as worms, fungus, and fried lizards reportedly being found in the McDonald's menu at some outlets in northern and eastern India. Moreover, the closure of the restaurants affected about 6,500 McDonald's employees in northern and eastern India, besides indirectly impacting 3,500 people working as suppliers and business associates, said analysts.

**Looking ahead**

In an out-of-court settlement that ended a six-year-long dispute, McDonald's India announced on May 10, 2019 that it had bought out Vikram Bakshi's 50 per cent stake in the joint venture. CPRL is now wholly owned by McDonald's India which, in the months following the buyout, has focused on reviewing the 160-plus outlets in the regions and getting many of the closed units up and functioning again. It is also actively looking for a business partner, or development licencee, for the northern and eastern regions.

Despite all these problems McDonald's posted a net profit of ₹6.52 million during FY17-18, compared to a net loss of ₹3.05 billion the previous year, according to its filings with the Registrar of Companies. The QSR market is projected to grow to $250 billion by 2020, and faster expansion in the region could help McDonald's capture this growth.

**Assignment**

Consider yourself **part of a team tasked** with solving the situation faced by McDonald's in India.

· ***What, according to you, led to this situation at McDonald's India?***

· ***What is at stake for McDonald's in an emerging market like India? Have its problems impacted the brand's overall image?***

· ***How can McDonald's revive its brand awareness and customer interest in the north and the east and, going forward, what should its franchising strategy be in those regions?***

· ***How can the fast food chain reinvent itself to drive long-term growth in the country?***

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### *Reorganizing HP:* The Problems

In the mid 1990s, global computer major HP[1] was facing major challenges in an increasingly competitive market. In 1998, while HP's revenues grew by just 3%, competitor Dell's rose by 38%. HP's share price had remained more or less stagnant, while competitor IBM's share price had increased by 65% during 1998. Analysts said HP's culture, which emphasized teamwork and respect for co-workers, had over the years translated into a consensus-style culture that was proving to be a sharp disadvantage in the fast-growing Internet business era. Analysts felt that instead of Lewis Platt, HP needed a new leader to cope with the rapidly changing industry trends.

Responding to these concerns, the HP board appointed Carleton S. Fiorina (Fiorina)[2] in July 1999 as the CEO of the company. Revenues grew by 15% for the financial year ended October 2000 (Refer Exhibit I), prompting industry watchers to say that Fiorina seemed all set to put HP's troubles behind for good. However, for the quarter ended January 31, 2001, the net profits were well below the stock market expectations. Soon there was more bad news from the company. In late January 2001, after forcing a five-day vacation on the employees and putting off wage hikes for three months in December 2000, HP laid off 1,700 marketing employees. By early February 2001, HP's share price fell 18.9%, from $45 in July 1999 to $36.

In April 2001, citing a slowdown in consumer spending, Fiorina announced that HP's revenues would decrease by 2% to 4% for the quarter ending April 30, 2001. She also said that HP would in all likelihood show no growth for the next two quarters. Many analysts and competitors were surprised at this announcement. According to some analysts, the major reason for the shortfall in revenue was Fiorina's aggressive management reorganization. They said that with the global slowdown in the technology sector, it was the wrong time to reorganize.

Things worsened when HP laid off 6,000 more workers in July 2001. The lay-offs came less than a month after 80,000 employees had willingly taken pay-cuts. The management also sent memos saying that layoffs would continue and just volunteering for pay-cuts would not guarantee continued employment. According to company insiders, though these changes were necessary, they had affected employee morale. Many employees had lost faith in Fiorina's ability to execute her reorganization plans.

Stanford engineers Bill Hewlett and David Packard founded HP in California in 1938 as an electronic instruments company. Its first product was a resistance-capacity audio oscillator, an electronic instrument used to test sound equipment. During the 1940s, HP's products rapidly gained acceptance among engineers and scientists. HP's growth was aided by heavy purchases made by the US government during the Second World War.

Till the 1950s, HP had a well-defined line of related products, designed and manufactured at one location and sold through an established network of sales representative firms. The company had a highly centralized organizational structure with vice-presidents for marketing, manufacturing, R&D, and finance. HP had 90 engineers in product development. To have a clear demarcation of

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goals and responsibilities, and to promote individual responsibility and achievement, HP began to organize these engineers into smaller, more efficient groups by forming four product development groups. Each group concentrated on a family of related products and had a senior executive reporting to the vice-president of R&D.

The product-development staff functions were so restructured as to allow a design engineer to concentrate only on the division's products and to work closely with the field salespeople.

As HP grew larger, it moved towards a divisional structure. By the 1960s, HP had many operating divisions, each an integrated, self-contained organization responsible for developing, manufacturing and marketing its own products. This structure, it was thought, would give each division considerable autonomy, and create an environment that would encourage individual motivation, initiative, and creativity in working towards common goals and objectives. In the words of Packard, "We wanted to avoid bureaucracy and to be sure that problem-solving decisions be made as close as possible to the level where the problem occurred. We also wanted each division to retain and nurture the kind of intimacy, the caring for people, and the ease of communication that were characteristic of the company when it was smaller."

In the 1960s, HP made organizational changes for the sales representative firms. These firms represented and sold the products of other non-competing electronics manufacturers along with those of HP. This arrangement was creating problems[3] in the 1960s due to HP's rapid growth. To get around these difficulties, HP set up its own sales organization, taking care not to break ties with the existing representatives who were encouraged to join the sales divisions of the company.

In 1968, HP adopted a group structure in response to the increasing number of operating divisions and product lines. Divisions with related product lines and markets were combined into a group headed by a group manager. Each group was made responsible for the coordination of divisional activities and the overall operations and financial performance of its members. The new structure had two objectives - to enable compatible units to work together more effectively on a day-to-day basis, and to decentralize some top management functions so that the new groups would be responsible for some of the planning activities and other functions previously assigned to corporate vice-presidents.

The group structure improved HP's field marketing activities by enabling sales engineers to understand and sell the entire line of HP products. Under this structure, the sales engineer became the representative of a specific group, selling and supporting only that group's products. Packard said, "As the company moved to a group structure, I stressed to our people that this change did not represent any deviation from our traditional philosophy of management. From the beginning we had a strong belief that groups of people should be given full responsibility for specific areas of activity with wide latitude to develop their own plans and make their own decisions. Our new organization did not alter this basic concept, but strengthened it."

**Tata Steel's blueprint for building a sustainable workplace**

*Stable post-pandemic model has a mix of on-site and remote working possibilities*

Amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the multinational steel behemoth Tata Steel Ltd decided to implement an 'Agile Working Model' policy for its employees that came into effect on November 1, 2020. The new working model will facilitate its employees to work from home (WFH) for up to 365 days a year. Even officers who were required to be based out of a particular location could WFH for an unlimited number of days a year.

The new policy intends to signal a shift in mindset of how a workplace should operate, and move towards a compatible model for the future. It was initiated as a pilot for one year, and it could allow a large number of employees to WFH even after the pandemic. Will Tata Steel's model be the future of workplace in the post-pandemic world? Would such a model help Tata Steel foster an organisational culture that offers its employees numerous benefits while making the company more competitive and agile?

**Agile model**

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Atrayee S Sanyal, Vice-President, HRM (Designate), Tata Steel

As per the new model, the selected officers at Tata Steel could choose to WFH, and once normalcy returned, opt to work from any location (work-from-anywhere) of their choice across India. Atrayee S Sanyal, Vice-President, HRM (Designate), Tata Steel, said that with its newly acquired experience with WFH the company felt that around 20-30 per cent of the roles could actually work from any location. Hence, they were making efforts to digitally enable people to manage machines and plants remotely.

Tata Steel planned to initially implement this policy across roles such as digital marketing, IT support, sales and HR, strategy and planning, and quality management. In the first phase of the pilot programme, 10 per cent of Tata Steel's officers would get the opportunity to work remotely. Going forward, up to 30 per cent of such employees would get this benefit. Tata Steel was aware that there could be problems cropping up related to salary structure, project deliverables, and employees misusing the flexibility. But the top management was clear that they would try to find solutions to such issues and continue the policy even after the trial period. With the initiation of the Agile Working Models Policy, Tata Steel anticipated a number of benefits not only for the company but also for its employees.

**Benefits to company**

One of the main objectives of the new policy was to cut costs. As part of the initiative, Tata Steel vacated its New Delhi sales office in upscale Connaught Place and moved to the head office of Bhushan Steel, which it had acquired in 2019, to save costs. The steel maker was also considering whether to vacate or consolidate its other offices in New Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai, Nagpur, and Indore.


Tata Steel plant, Jamshedpur - PTI

The top management was also of the opinion that the attrition rate would come down if it provided career opportunities at the location of the employee's choice. This new policy could

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help Tata Steel to retain talent pan India and become more agile and future-ready, and strengthen its employee value proposition.

**Benefits to employees**

The policy would help Tata Steel to move away from the traditional thinking of productivity being contingent upon fixed hours of work within its office premises. Flexible working would provide employees the freedom to select work locations of their choice and also help them make decisions pertaining to their personal life. This could help them to support ageing parents or working spouses with non-transferable jobs.

Tata Steel's new policy would also help ensure a better employee work-life balance. It would be beneficial to new parents who faced difficulty in managing professional life and childcare. The agile model would also ensure continuity of work for employees, especially those with disabilities, in their respective work enabled environment, presenting more opportunities for them.

**Creating a sustainable future**

Tata Steel was forward-looking when it came to introducing various policies for its employees. It had introduced a new human resource policy in December 2019 that allowed employees from the LGBTQ+ community to declare their partners and avail of all HR benefits permissible under the law. Tata Steel had also initiated a five-day week in 2016.

Tata Steel believed that investing in people and striving to be an employer of choice should be an area of its focus. It emphasised the need to focus on human resource managers harnessing emerging technologies to drive transformation within the company. The steel maker wanted the HR team to implement various tools and technologies so that it would be able to quickly tackle the unprecedented storm of changes coming its way on a daily basis. The company believed that it was no longer about just managing the present situation but more about anticipating and creating a sustainable future for the organisation.

**Analysis**

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented disruption in the way people live and work. Most people are working under completely new conditions and are experiencing many first-time challenges that require them to have flexibility to work differently. Continuous hours of uninterrupted work may not be feasible, as many employees need to deal with eldercare and childcare, health issues, and difficulties in securing essential supplies at home. Companies that are able to develop strategies to build trust between leaders and employees will see stronger work relationships as well as performance.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, many organisations including Tata Steel introduced the 'Work from home' policy, or remote work policy, where some of their workforce can WFH full-time while others telecommute part of the week or a couple of days per month. Apart from WFH, many organisations have also offered the 'work-from-anywhere' option to employees, offering them the freedom to work in libraries, coffee shops, or co-working spaces.

Finding the right person for certain high-skilled jobs is challenging for companies. Hiring them remotely allows organisations to look for talent beyond a particular region. Instead of hiring a semi-qualified candidate from a nearby locality, companies can look nationally or even internationally until they find a candidate suitable for the position, irrespective of gender and



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physical abilities. The agile model is also expected to attract employees, especially those with physical disabilities, presenting more opportunities for them.

Remote employees are likely to be happier in their jobs as they have a better work-life balance. Telecommuters appreciate being able to work when and where they want. Avoiding the hassle of a daily commute also saves employees both time and money. Studies reveal that remote employees feel more valued, less stressed, and better engaged, which could contribute to employee longevity. The benefits of working remotely, either full-time or part-time, appeared to encourage employees to stay with an organisation longer than they would have otherwise. Also, many organisations found that having a distributed team actually decreased staff turnover.

Tata Steel believed that the attrition rate could come down if it succeeded in providing career opportunities at the location of the employees' choice. The company's new policy helped its employees to maintain a work life balance, which contributed to employee loyalty toward the company. The retention of talent pan India also helped it to become more agile and future ready.

Earlier organisations were sceptical about the productivity of employees working remotely. But the Covid-19 pandemic forced companies to shift their working location from the traditional office set up to home. Many organisations have found that if employees manage to find a peaceful place in their homes and set up a mini-office to work remotely, they are likely to be more productive than in the usual office environment. Improved productivity helps organisations to gain more revenue. Besides, employees who are mildly sick can still work most of the time if it means not having to go into the office. This helps companies report fewer unscheduled absences from remote workers. Similarly, employees can take care of a sick child or make a doctor's appointment without taking a full day off work. Fewer absences create significant savings for a business.

And of course, for organisations there are huge direct cost savings due to reduced overheads — reduced real estate needs, renting out an office, buying office equipment and supplies (computers, phones, electricity, heating and air conditioning, and the overall preventive maintenance that comes with renting a space.

**Selecting a working model**

When companies re-imagine the post-pandemic organisation, they need to pay careful attention to the effect of their choice of working model on organisational norms and culture. It is important to opt for a 'hybrid virtual model' that has a mix of on-site and remote working possibilities.

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A company must look to select the best fit model that provides stability, social cohesion, identity, and belonging to all employees, whether the employees are working remotely, on the premises, or using a combination of both. In general, companies tend to make the decision based on the factors they intend to optimise, such as real-estate costs, employee productivity, access to talent, and employee experience. But, in practice it can be difficult to optimise one without considering its effect on the others.

**Partially remote work, large HQ:** In this hybrid model, company leaders and most employees spend the majority of their time at one or two large principal offices. The ability to access talent and the individual and team productivity would be high in this model. However, the real estate cost would also be higher.

**Partially remote work, multiple hubs:** In this model, there are multiple proportionate-size offices with leadership and employees dispersed among all the offices. The ability to access talent and the individual and team productivity would be high. The real estate cost would be relatively lower than the first hybrid model.

**Multiple micro-hubs:** Here, the leadership and employees are dispersed across small-footprint "micro-hubs" located in various geographies. In this model there is a higher possibility of accessing talent as there are multiple micro-hubs that are dispersed. Employee productivity and real estate costs would be similar to the multiple hubs model.

**Partially remote work, with flexible space:** There are no permanent offices in this model. The company would rent temporary (for example, monthly) rented space in select cities for periodic in-person gatherings and collaborations. This model offers the highest possibility to hire and retain talent. Employee productivity would be relatively similar to the other working models just described, but the real estate costs are the lowest or negligible among the four hybrid working models.

If a company has 80 per cent of employees working remotely for only one day per week and working on-site the other four days, then it is easier for it to create a common culture, generate social cohesion, and build shared trust. In such a scenario, the partially remote work-large headquarters model would be suitable. If a company has a third of its employees working remotely 90 per cent of the time, it becomes important to bring those remote workers into the office more frequently. In such a scenario, the multiple hubs, or multiple micro-hubs models might be the better choice.

No matter which model the company chooses for hybrid virtual work, the essential task will be to carefully manage the organisational norms that matter most when adopting any of these models.

Tata Steel's new policy gives us a glimpse of future workplaces. It's a promising model and the company seems to have the vision, resources, and management commitment to implement it successfully. And in doing so, Tata Steel has gravitated towards building a trust and outcome-based organisational culture that makes the company more agile, efficient, and better-prepared to face any future uncertainties.

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**Honda needs to end imbroglio and get production back on track**

*Tell us how you would sort out the industrial relations issues with contract workers at the HMSI plant*

November 5, 2019 started like any other day for the workers of HMSI (Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India) plant in Manesar, Gurugram district, Haryana. But as the workers headed towards the plant to report for duty, some of them were stopped at the gates. The management prevented 200 contract workers from entering the plant, and asked them to go on leave for three months. The workers started protesting and, soon, others joined them. A total of 2,000 contract workers went on a tools-down strike.

The Indian automobile market had been facing tough times and both the car and two-wheeler markets were adversely impacted by sluggish growth in the economy. The two-wheeler market had witnessed a decline for seven continuous months and, in the first nine months, it fell by 10 per cent. HMSI, the second largest player in the market, saw sales of its scooters fall by 21 per cent and that of motorcycles by 13 per cent. In October 2019, HMSI's sales dropped to 517,808 units from 521,170 units in October 2018.

The slowdown prompted the company to cut down production at the Manesar plant, which produced 3,000 vehicles a day. The management announced that: "Based on demand fluctuations and production adjustment, 200 contractual members whose term had been completed are relieved from their work. Necessary recruitment will be considered on the basis of future market requirements."

By November 7, the permanent workers also joined the demonstration against the management, and 1,800 workers remained inside the plant, holding demonstrations.

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Honda workers protesting against the lay-offs

**The workers' grievances**

According to the workers union, HMSI Manesar plant had 1,900 permanent workers and 2,500 contract workers. The workers union president said that many of the workers who were asked to leave were with the company for several years. The workers said that in August the company had removed 700 contract workers, and promised to reinstate them in November. But it failed to keep the promise, and only retrenched more workers. The members of the union reported that some of the retrenched staff had their contracts running till March 2020.

HMSI said that due to the economic slowdown and demand fluctuations, production had to be cut down, prompting it to reduce manpower. The head of the workers union argued that production at the Manesar plant fell by half, while the company's other plants were functioning normally. (The other three plants were located at Tapukara in Rajasthan, Narsapura, Kolar in Karnataka and Vithalpur, in Gujarat).

**Closure of assembly lines**

Meanwhile, the workers who occupied the plant refused to vacate it. Negotiations between the union leaders and the management failed to make any headway and, on November 11, the company closed down the plant, including two assembly lines for scooters and one assembly line for motorcycles, indefinitely. It issued a notice saying, "Due to the prevailing IR (industrial relations) situation, plant operations have been suspended and the plant will remain closed till further intimation."

Saibal Maitra, Head of the Manesar plant, said that the union was urging the contract workers to continue the strike and sit inside the premises, whereas the union had no role to play between contract employees and the contractor who employed them. HMSI employed contract employees from three contractors. Some workers reported that the private contractors were forcing them to rejoin work. The contractors asked the workers to get a clearance certificate and sign a new contract to rejoin work. This was the system prevalent among contractors, due to which the workers were not regularised and remained on contract even after working for several years.

**Stay order sought**

The management moved the court asking for a stay order on the strike and seeking police protection. The Gurugram-Manesar belt had been a hotbed of labour unrest for many years, and there had been instances of things getting out of hand in the past. Widely publicised instances of earlier violence include the labour unrest at HMSI in July 2005 that resulted in workers being severely beaten up by the police, attracting a lot of criticism for HMSI. Another escalation of violence at the Manesar plant of Maruti Suzuki India Ltd in July 2012 led to a rampage by workers, resulting in the brutal murder of a General Manager (HR), and left more than 100 injured.

The workers of HMSI vacated the premises of the plant on November 19, after they were given certain assurances from the leaders of the central trade unions. On the same day, the company suspended the HMSI employees' union chief along with five others for allegedly instigating the contract workers.

With the suspension of employees and with no signs of settlement emerging even after ten days, on November 20, 2019, workers from other automobile units in Gurugram joined the workers from HMSI to protest at the office of the Deputy Commissioner. They alleged that HMSI and other companies were using the pretext of economic slowdown and slump in demand as an excuse to fire the workers. They also contended that the government was not paying heed to the plight of contract workers.

**Future of contract staff**

On November 22, Saibal Maitra served a notice to all the permanent employees asking them to join back their duties between November 25 and 28, after signing a good work/ good conduct undertaking. The workers joined duty, but lodged a complaint to the labour department about being forced to sign such an undertaking. The notice from the company did not mention anything about the contract staff. Many workers opined that the contract staff should not have been evicted from the plant, as it had helped the company resume production without resolving the issue.

On November 26, HMSI restarted operations, with the permanent employees rejoining work. Union members, however, claimed that it was not possible to resume production only with the permanent staff. While the future of the contract staff remained in a flux as they continued their protest at the gates of the plant, Saibal Maitra needed strategies to put the plant back on track.

**What you need to do**

*You are entrusted with the responsibility of assisting Saibal Maitra in the smooth running of the Manesar plant.*

1. Could the labour unrest and subsequent stalemate at HMSI have been prevented? How?

2. What would you suggest to Saibal Maitra to ensure smooth production? Should he reinstate some of the contract workers? Should he reinstate the union leaders whom HMSI had suspended? Or should he stick to the original decision?

3. If you were asked to reinstate only those contract workers who are necessary to resume production, how would you go about the job? How would you attend to the challenging task of convincing the irate contract workers who are protesting at the gates? How would you persuade the union members? What would you do to improve the morale of workers at the plant?

Send in your answers to the above questions to *blcasestudies@thehindu.co.in* not later than midnight of **March 2**. You can work in teams of maximum two students, though solo entries are accepted too. Entries should be a maximum of 800-850 words long. Read the detailed **contest rules** on the Case Studies page.

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## Workshops:


**Profile of the Speaker:**

Senior Quality Analyst with over 5 years of experience in to Data Analysis, Analytical Reporting and areas of interest in research and applying mathematical or statistical techniques to address practical issues in finance, such as derivative valuation, securities trading, risk management, or financial market regulation and currently serving as a Assistant Professor at Sanskrithi Group of Institutions.

**Title of the Work Shop:** Analytics Using MS Excel

**Date of the Event:** 10.04.21

**Venue:** SSE Computer Lab

**Chief patron:** **Sri Vijay Bhaskar Reddy**

**Presiding chair:** **Dr. Bala koteswari**

**Convener:** **Dr. T venkatesan**

**Chief coordinator:** **Mr. Ranganatham V**

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**Introduction:**

The use of Excel is widespread in the industry. It is a very powerful data analysis tool and almost all big and small businesses use Excel in their day to day functioning. This is an introductory course in the use of Excel and is designed to give you a working knowledge of Excel with the aim of getting to use it for more advance topics in Business Statistics later. The course is designed keeping in mind two kinds of learners - those who have very little functional knowledge of Excel and those who use Excel regularly but at a peripheral level and wish to enhance their skills. The course takes you from basic operations such as reading data into excel using various data formats, organizing and manipulating data, to some of the more advanced functionality of Excel. All along, Excel functionality is introduced using easy to understand examples which are demonstrated in a way that learners can become comfortable in understanding and applying them. Data Analytics enables business firms to continuously drive innovation and make the best possible decisions. Business Managers, Data Analysts, Data Managers etc. can conduct data driven experiments to interpret data and create data models by using the most versatile tool like MS Excel for identifying hidden data patterns from historical data and formulate data models to empower effective decision making. MS Excel allows participants to realize the power of advanced statistical analysis to understand data characteristics, identify trends and relationships among data, build, and deploy data models. This Training is organized as an interactive session to provide an understanding and effective application of advanced tools for Data Analytics like MS Excel.

**Objective :** The objective of this training is to provide Hands-on practices training in the space of data management and use of MS Excel for rapid analytics.

**Target Participants:** Faculty / Professors / Research scholars/ Technical staff Members of Engineering Colleges and Universities/Students.

**Takeaways by the participants:**

- Visualize, manipulate, and evaluate the data.
- Create an easy-to-read set of data that can be used by upper management to analyze current projects or situations in the company.
- Maintain, organize, and balance complex financial and inventory accounts.
- Create tracking systems for different departments and operations, including various workflow processes.

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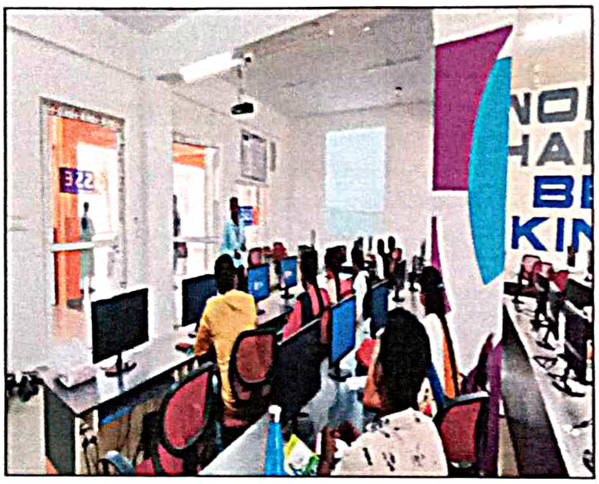
**Photos of the event:**

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**Awareness on Cyber Security**

**Date of the Event:** 03.04.21
**Faculty Coordinators:** Dr. Bala Koteswari, Mr. Ranganatham V, Dr. T Venkatesan
**Venue:** Mangalakara Degree College - Jagarajupalli
**Target Audience:** Staff & Students of Mangalakara Degree College
**Number of Participants:** 13

**Objective of the Program**

The objective of cyber security is to prevent or mitigate harm to—or destruction of—computer networks, applications, devices, and data. Now, from social media to online banking to digital hospital records, every piece of our lives are available on the internet. Hackers and other nefarious characters can fight to gain access to this information and use it for their own purposes. In essence, everyone needs cyber security.

**Take Aways to the Staff & Students:**

- Educate staff & Students on the **cyber** threats faced.
- Raise **awareness** of the sensitivity of data on systems.
- Ensure procedures are followed correctly.
- Provide information on how to avoid Phishing emails and other scam tactics.
- Reduce the number of data breaches.
- Creating Strong Passwords
- Social Media Dangers
- Phishing Attacks
- Visiting Unsecure Or Torrent Websites

**PHOTOS**

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