Post COVID-19 – Review of Human Resource Management Practices

Chandrakant Varma* and Yesha Mehta**

ABSTRACT

Since the beginning of the epidemic, human resource management has faced a number of obstacles and roadblocks. In the wake of a pandemic, human resource management may have to deal with fresh problems and altered work patterns. The study offers knowledge on organizational responses to the epidemic and its impact on worker sensitivity. It also outlines the organization's problems and the steps needed to solve the pandemic-related problems. The report outlines the difficulties and a solution to employee-related problems caused by the epidemic. The organization's capacity to adapt and develop personnel management techniques will determine its potential to endure and prosper. It goes beyond simply digitalizing operations or using new technology. The firms are attempting to implement new working practices and trial various tactics because there is no set framework to cope with the current scenario. The report makes an effort to analyze organization and employee concerns over the COVID-19 Pandemic and offers workable solutions to the difficult issue.

Keywords: Human resource management; Organizational practices; Work from home; Hybrid workplace; Covid-19.

1.0 Introduction

Unquestionably upsetting the globe, COVID-19 presents problems to nations by endangering the health system, economy, and politics. The world health organization has consistently guided the effects of this epidemic, stating that it will last longer than anticipated. Every aspect of life has been affected by the pandemic phenomena internationally. Organizations are confronted with the challenge of accepting the new normal and lessening the effect in this unique scenario, which comes with no experience, a depleting bottom line owing to a decline in sales, and uncertainty. The business environment could not remain untouched, as everyone worried about life has to think of lively hood. The stages of lockdowns imposed on businesses in the service sector and severely hurting the manufacturing sector have been experienced by the whole world. Since uncertainty is a risk that all businesses must manage, organizations must develop information sources, integrate processes, and implement them with flexibility.

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*Associate Professor, Department of Human Resource, N. L. Dalmia Institute of Management Studies and Research, Mumbai, Maharashtra , India (E-mail: chandrakant81@gmail.com)

**Corresponding author; Associate Professor, Department of Marketing, Thakur Institute of Management Studies & Research, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India (E-mail: yesha.m@gmail.com)

Since survival is more important than competition, a proactive approach is required. Organizations can replicate ideal organizations and work together to control, avoid, or reduce uncertainty (Simangunsong, Hendry, & Stevenson, 2012).

There is a serious influence on employees' mental health, which makes it difficult for firms to manage the goal-achieving use of this fidgety resource. Since the pandemic's exponential ascent, the level of uncertainty has increased, affecting daily operations inside the business, and reducing employees' ability to travel from their homes to their places of employment. The industries affected by the pandemic, as per a report by McKinsey, analyzed the sectorial impact of Covid – 19 shows the highest affected sectors are Hospitality, Entertainment/Arts/Recreation, Wholesale Trade, Transport & Warehousing, and the least affected are Financial & Insurance, Professional Services, Real Estate/Rental/ Leasing and Management Companies. The very nature of business proceedings has taken aback by the shock; organizations will have to rethink their strategy and day-to-day conducting of businesses. The steps taken by the organization in these trying and testing times will characterize the organization's future. Organizations will have to safeguard the business priorities and, at the same time, develop strategies to recover back.

Workplace Today's workplaces have found it difficult to form relationships and communicate, especially when dealing with a wide age range (Kamboj and Garg, 2023). Because a person is simultaneously an employee, a family member, and a parent when they work from home, it puts much emotional strain on them. Organizations will need to understand this (Sanders, 2020). Because it is challenging for firms to forecast how long the current epidemic will last, it is crucial to be ready in every aspect of the business.

An comprehensive review of the literature reveals major areas where organizations have failed in the present work-from-home (WFH) scenario, as not all employees were able to handle the work-life conflict, shifting expectations, and new technologies associated with WFH to perform without reporting wellbeing difficulties. Organizations that are accustomed to face-to-face communication and require a physical presence are in a unique position. A thorough examination of the issue reveals the need for a new standard for work-from-home policy that incorporates virtualization, functional integration, decentralization, and employee development. Corporate HR will need to develop effective and efficient methods to combat the epidemic (Arora and Suri, 2020).

If COVID is no longer required, organizations will require more time to adjust and expand (PWC, 2021). Working from home or in an office will become the norm in the future. The Coronavirus outbreak has had an effect on HR policies and processes. Changes that are poorly managed may reduce productivity. As an HR manager, you should be prepared for anything that comes your way. Following the COVID-19 epidemic, organizational practices and methods will be heavily influenced by how people live their lives, how work is organized, and how technology is utilized.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic's abrupt onset and quick response, research on post-pandemic remote working has increased considerably, yet; the literature remains fragmented (Ranjbari et al., 2021). While trust was mentioned in many research studies, it was rarely

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measured and examined. According to a study that examined employee trust during the pandemic, managers' and employees' mutual trust is positively related to better WFH outcomes (Vyas & Butakhieo, 2021).

Human resource managers have a critical role in enabling employees in navigating the obstacles brought on by unexpected events in the workplace and community (Biekowska et al., 2022). Autonomy, control, and flexibility are important components in a safe workplace that can improve or degrade workplace well-being (Guest, 2017). While certain job tasks will soon become obsolete, there would be a greater need for new ones. In this situation, human resource managers must decide how to leverage present abilities in a variety of beneficial ways to fill those advanced responsibilities (Gaikwad, 2020).

To maintain worker capacity after the COVID-19, regular warnings, conferences, and coaching sessions should be held in addition to stronger worker commitment action. Organizations must implement their ideas, assess them, and develop the adaptability to alter their strategies as needed. The company will become stronger and more prepared for the future due to the maturity gained. This is possible if businesses learn to accept and adapt to the situation. Organizations will need to grow and learn from their errors.

Thanks to all their lessons, they can plan and execute more effectively in the future and create lasting advantages. Organizations must thoroughly analyze their change initiatives and take them into account, it is emphasized. Organizations may locate and use the best change management techniques by classifying these projects. The purpose of this article is to explore the most critical issues that HRM faced during the pandemic, to look for patterns, and to propose viable solutions and actions for HRM in the post-pandemic period. HRM should investigate strategic human resource management, employee retention tactics, and remote work, taking in mind that the COVID-19 outbreak has transformed how organizations structure their work.

As the number of employees working remotely grows, the study investigates the HRM difficulties associated with building flexible work organizations, alternative work arrangements, and hybrid models of working. Our study undertakes a broad literature search in human resource management to understand the main concerns and probable outcomes related to the pandemic. They must be able to develop an action plan tailored to the requirements of their organizations and individuals in the potential field of human resource management using the concepts discussed in this article.

1.1 Objectives of this study

The research paper aims to investigate and comprehend how the pandemic affects organizations and provide a model for them to use to meet the problems they confront. The following are the goals:
- Examine the HRM challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To propose effective solutions to the COVID-19 Pandemic's challenges.

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2.0 Literature Review

The Coronavirus pandemic has impacted everyone, society and industry. Recession is affecting the economies, which may not be simple (WHO, APRIL 2020). WHO recommended actions for companies to adopt to lessen the effects and stressed the significance of preventative steps to safeguard enterprises and employees worldwide. According to the suggestions, fewer people should work in offices and more people should use a work-from-home strategy (WHO, March 2020). COVID-19 has had an impact and will continue to have an influence on enterprises and the labor market in terms of job quality (ILO March 2020). The novel coronavirus-caused global pandemic has changed how we think about work and daily life. Significant modifications to work terms and circumstances have increased voluntary and forced employee turnover. The major resignation incident is rapidly approaching and is quite real. In today's corporate climate, all employees may be obliged to work from home unexpectedly due to a lockdown. According to study issued in April 2020 by Bain and Company, the safety and security of employees and customers, as well as resolving emotional concerns, are organizational objectives.

According to the US Department of Labor, 11.5 million workers will change occupations between April and June 2021. According to Kajarekar (2021), attrition in this business will reach an all-time high of roughly 23%, necessitating a 52% increase in employment for the IT and ITES industries (Kothari, 2022). It goes on to state that companies should examine and assess the effectiveness of their employee compensation, work-from-home, and successful engagement policies, and practices. According to a June 2020 analysis by Bain & Company, most businesses have adopted partial or full work-from-home policies and practices. According to OECD data, out of 20 million workers from 38 countries who returned to their occupations, 70% were looking for new jobs or jobless (Taylor, 2021). Considering this, research by Kane (2021) concluded that the resignation phenomena are on the rise and are likely to last. Staff must feel safe in order to deal with difficult situations. It was also emphasized that open lines of communication between employers and employees are critical (Weingarten et al., 2020). Employee turnover is at an all-time high (Cohen & Roeske-Zummer, 2021). These difficulties enable an organization to be extremely flexible and, as a result, adaptable to successfully organize, manage, or govern its workforce by posing significant risks to its viability (Atkeson, 2020).

A million or more ITES and IT workers in India may lose their employment as a result of the pandemic, according to estimates. According to the literature analysis, it is evident that organizations have difficulty changing work habits and lowering employee turnover. It must choose whether to adopt the hybrid strategy or keep working from home. According to Khudhair et al. (2020), even amid new forms of organizational management, such as working remotely, some organizations are still unfamiliar with the best approaches for making working remotely more efficient in terms of boosting employee productivity. Leaders can also help reduce social isolation by enabling and encouraging their employees to take use of communication and information sharing opportunities (Contreras et al., 2020).

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Organizations must provide the necessary infrastructure to support work-from-home practises. Tools, online resources, and necessary hardware may be included. They should concentrate on creating a framework for collaboration that encourages communication and debate (Meenakshi & Neha, 2020). Many firms, including those in the hotel, transportation, retail, and other industries, would suffer, according to a recent Patel research (2022). According to Baldwin and Weder (2020), most managers are working hard to help their staff adapt to, and thereby cope with, significant changes in the workplace and social environment. Human resource management (HRM) and leadership can assist businesses in supporting employee well-being. In fact, it is well known that different HRM procedures and management approaches have an impact on workers' general well-being and their ability to telework (see, for example, Guest, 2017). Because HRM performs a wide range of human relations and work management tasks in tandem with organizational strategy decisions, it plays a significant role during times of crisis and ambiguity (Gulua, 2020).

Human resource management (HRM), according to Armstrong and Taylor (2020), "is how people are employed, managed, and developed in organizations." COVID-19 has had a tremendous impact on it, providing significant challenges for managers and human resource experts. This section discusses the impacts and difficulties related to strategic HRM, working conditions, and HRM functions, notably staffing, performance management, training, and development, pay management, safety and health management, and employee relations. Employers rarely choose to lay off employees, but in an emergency, situation like as COVID-19, it may be unavoidable. The main challenge for HRM practitioners in this situation is guiding managers and employees through this process and providing suitable information. Given the current state of ambiguity, it may not be simple. HR experts were unprepared for such a dramatic shift. Furthermore, the use of virtual selection procedures may damage candidates' and employers' ability to assess a person's fit with their work environment, reducing worker productivity and retention (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). However, it is critical to note that organizations all over the world are still feeling the effects of this pandemic, which does not look to be going away anytime soon. Increasing organizational resilience is unquestionably vital. In this case, organizations must be able to develop creative solutions to effectively absorb and handle the disturbance that threatens their survival (Ngoc Su et al., 2021).

(Ulrich 2020) emphasized the significance of thinking about the following step in dealing with the epidemic. In the future, following the disruptions brought on by the Covid-19 epidemic, it will be crucial to examine how human resource management (HRM) practices may affect organizational competitiveness. Additionally, according to Toscano and Zappalà (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic may make social isolation worse. Because of the Covid-19 issue, the use of remote working, e-working, and other work management technologies increased during the Covid-19 pandemic (Dlamini & Ndzinisa, 2020). However, over time, HRM procedures like hiring, training, and long-term career planning may prove to be essential tools for creating a workforce that is flexible and resistant to the problems associated

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with teleworking (Caligiuri *et al.*, 2020). The current work responds to the problems identified by a literature review.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Research design

The study is exploratory and descriptive in nature. A self-administered questionnaire is used to gain a better understanding of the organization's problems. Cronbach's alpha is used to assess the reliability of the received data. Cronbach's alpha coefficient has a range of 0 to 1. A number closer to one is supposed to predict internal consistency. The data set shows good internal consistency, according to the data collected and the reliability test, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.89.
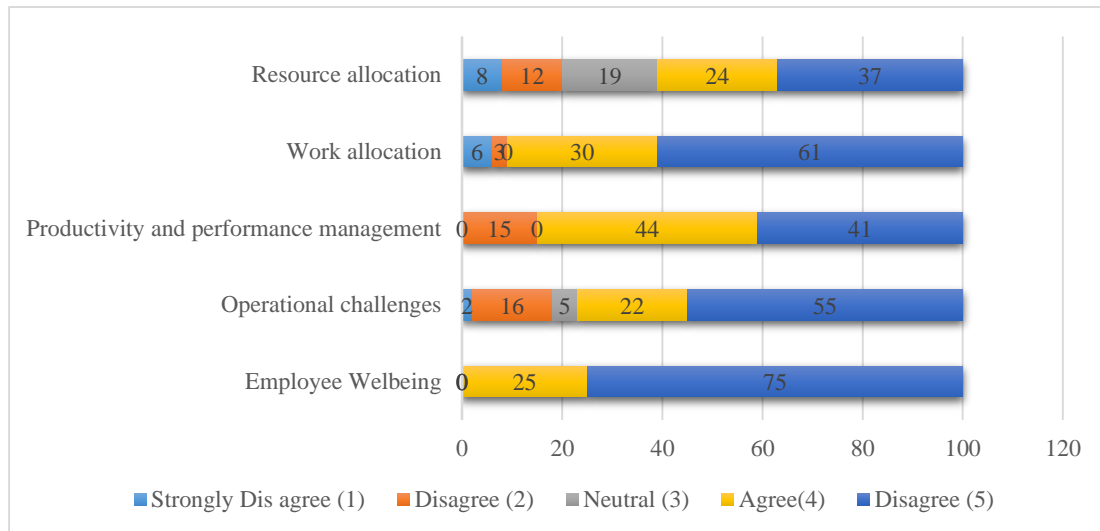
4.0 Data Analysis

The people working in the IT and ITES industries in the Mumbai region are the ones who provide the data. We got 110 responses in total. The information gathered is provided in three parts: the first part describes the issues corporate HR faces; the second part outlines workplace practices that can be adopted or preferred; and the third part outlines measures recommended for designing future workplace practices. The compiled replies are listed below. The distribution of the responses gathered to examine the organizational problems encountered is displayed in the table below. It has been noted that every respondent openly acknowledges that the organization's biggest difficulty is maintaining employee wellness. 77% of respondents said they were willing to handle operational challenges, 18% said they were not, and 5% were neutral. 85% of workers believe measuring productivity and monitoring performance is difficult. Similarly, 61% and 91% of respondents believe allocating resources wisely is a major difficulty.

Table 1: Challenges Faced by the Organization

Particulars	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Employee Wellbeing	0	0	0	25	75
Operational challenges	2	16	5	22	55
Productivity and performance management	0	15	0	44	41
Work allocation	6	3	0	30	61
Resource allocation	8	12	19	24	37

Source: Primary data

The below chart presents the respondents' view of challenges faced in their organization.

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Figure 1: Challenges Faced by the Organization

Employee perspectives on working from home and working in the office are explored in further research. Responses that were given from this perspective are shown in the table below. It has been shown that 86% of employees support working remotely, and 81% are open to adapting to the firm's hybrid model of workplace practice. They consent to either a hybrid workplace or a WFH of WFO. The study shows that employees prefer to work from home and agree to work from the office or hybrid model.
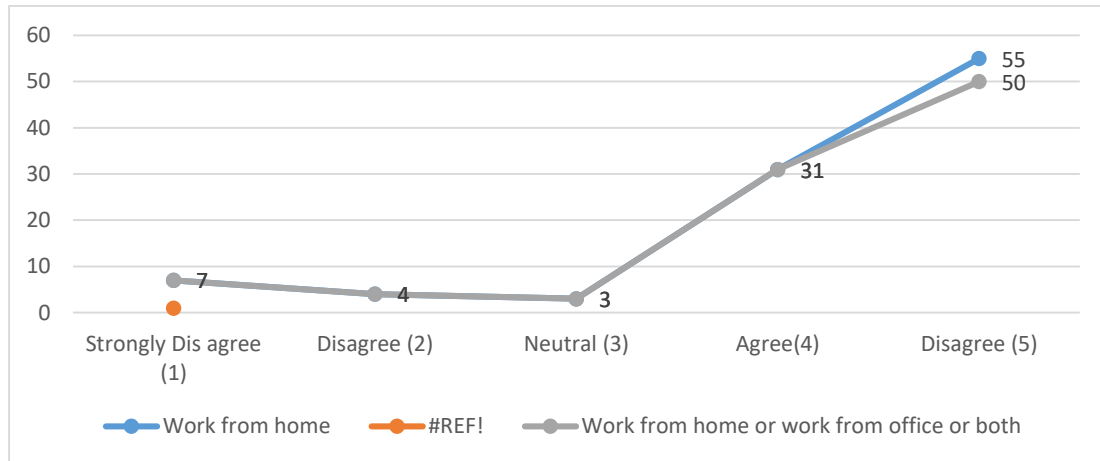
Table 2: Workplace Practice

Particulars	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Work from home	7	4	3	31	55
Hybrid workplace practice	7	4	3	31	50

The below chart presents the respondents' view of Work from home or hybrid model.

The distribution of the responses gathered to research the actions organizations may take to enhance the existing situation is displayed in the table below. According to 78% of workers, employee engagement and satisfaction need attention, while 79% believe workers need organizational assistance to resolve current issues. Notably, 90% of employees believed there was a need for review and change in organizational policies and practices for employee management.

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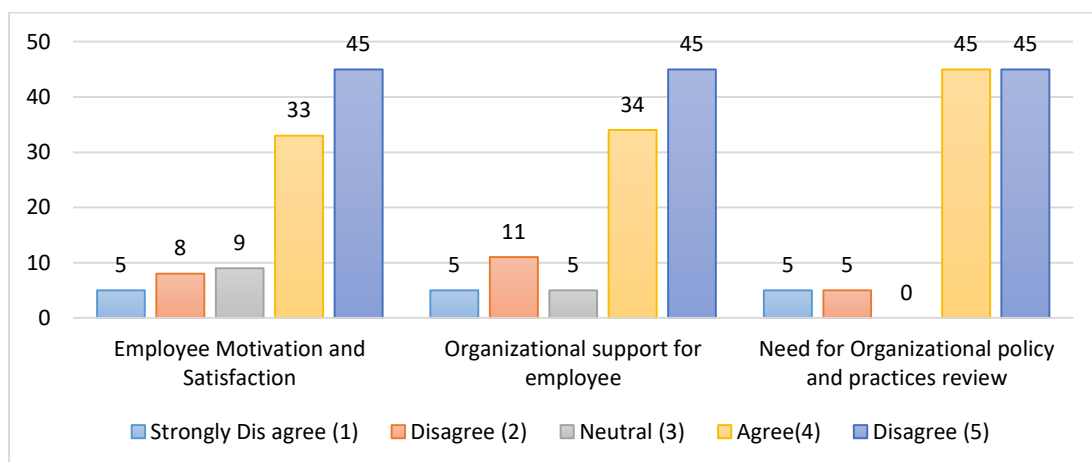
Figure 2: Workplace Practice

Source: Based on authors' study

Table 3: Employee Response Suggested Measures

Particulars	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Employee Motivation and Satisfaction	5	8	9	33	45
Organizational support for employee	5	11	5	34	45
Need for Organizational policy and practices review	5	5	0	45	45

Source: Based on authors' study

The chart below presents the respondents' suggestions to overcome the organization's challenges in the current environment.

Figure 3: Employee Response Suggested Measures

Source: Based on authors' study

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5.0 Challenges Faced by the Organization

Companies around the world are grappling with questions of sustenance and survival in these tough times. The information acquired helps us to understand the various aspects of the problems that must be tackled. Achieving objectives while keeping employee safety and security in mind; redefining employee-related policies; planning for uncertainties; developing a virtual communication network; developing flexible work arrangements or work from home; achieving objectives; and developing cost-cutting measures other than using organizational capability, i.e., employees. The issues that must be addressed are simply a small portion of the already discussed concerns. The difficulties created by the epidemic could not be readily solved; organizations would need to revise their short- and long-term plans. Suggestions on overcoming obstacles

- The main focus of the stage is on comprehending the phenomena and their effects on the industry. The problems will need to be understood by the organization.
- Rethink your strategy and create a new model with new priorities, as well as a structure for the resurrection process. Recognize what is essential for survival and sustainability. The available and required resources, their application, and the results should be highlighted.
- The organization's leadership must create plans while considering external influences and internal perception at all levels. It is crucial to realize that for the strategy to be carried out accurately and provide the desired results, the business must adopt it.
- Organizations must develop realistic goals and a well-thought-out plan to attain their aims. The same sense of purpose and passion for addressing the welfare of human resources must be articulated. The highest level of commitment will ensure a similar level of reciprocation. The workforce will profit both in the short and long term from this by learning to adapt and adjust to the new environment. To reconfigure and redesign the organizational model for fostering both individual and organizational excellence, people involvement and interventions are required (Logasakthi et al., 2022)
- The organization is profoundly conscious of its potential and current capacities. An organization's primary focus must be on the resources required to survive. Comprehending the resources needed to develop and implement plans accurately is crucial.
- Create focused efforts for the greatest resource utilization to secure your business: The study's emphasis on human resources will require the organization to revamp its personnel planning, role description, and goal-setting processes. Any uncertainty or ambiguous behavior at this moment will steer the organization on the wrong path.
- It is common knowledge that things will change in the future. There have been unknowns everywhere. The company must prepare to endure the present phenomena and thrive in the new environment. Since there will always be unforeseen circumstances in business, a plan can never be guaranteed to work. Organizations must implement their plans, evaluate them, and cultivate the flexibility to change their tactics as necessary. The maturity

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attained will make the company stronger and more equipped for the future. This is feasible if companies learn to adapt to and accept the circumstances.

- The organizations will have to learn from their mistakes and develop. They will be able to plan and execute better in the future and develop persistent advantages thanks to all the lessons they have learned. It is emphasized that organizations must properly analyze their change initiatives in addition to considering them. Organizations may find and implement the best change methods by categorizing these initiatives. (Samal and Chatterjee, 2020).

6.0 Conclusion

This article aims to look at the most current modifications to human resource management methods and practices during the Covid-19 outbreak and identify new difficulties and top concerns addressed by HR specialists and workers. The pandemic has changed how the world works; businesses and nations feel its effects. Organizations must take proactive measures to deal with this phenomenon's uncertainties, develop crisis management methods to deal with the strategically important concerns relating to immediate organizational performance and modify their working practices. Help and encouragement are urgently needed to help employees who are afraid and upset (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020).

COVID-19 has undoubtedly presented HR practitioners with greater hurdles than anticipated. Employees are dealing with difficult situations, the economy is suffering from uncertainty, and HR professionals are doing their best to preserve perspective and coordination. Is it really as simple as it appears? Because of the abrupt transformation in workplace culture, HR is confronting new issues. Future studies should examine workers' attitudes towards using telework during or after the outbreak and assess the current condition of teleworking in firms. Future research will conduct a longitudinal investigation to learn more about these potentials and restrictions. It will also assist legislators in modifying current legislation to satisfy the demands of the altering corporate environment and prosper in a cutthroat market. Additionally, the study contributes to the body of literature by recognizing the new HR challenges in the post-pandemic new normal. Although these statistics indicate some of the challenges in HR, further investigation may potentially reveal additional grave issues.

Employees were concerned about their mental health as a result of the unpredictability and the rising unemployment rate, especially those who were unable to work because of the Coronavirus outbreak and displayed the most severe health issues. As a result, by simplifying HR procedures and enhancing flexibility, the employee retention strategy should be tailored to workers' primary concerns and the fresh challenges posed by the Coronavirus while taking into account employees' psychological contracts. An organization must establish simple reporting methods, demonstrate a clear commitment to employee health and safety, and keep track of the number of workers present at the workplace in order to ensure employee security and safety (Service Now, 2020). According to the study's findings, HR managers made steps to assist accompanied employees by arranging flexible working

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hours. Many employees worked from home, necessitating regular communication from management and less stringent performance management standards. Furthermore, HRM assisted the workers in updating their skills required for remote working. The organization's capacity to adopt policies and procedures that affect business quickly and effectively while meeting medium- and long-term demands is crucial for the organization's survival (World economic forum, March 2020). The organizations must concentrate on creating secure standards and the infrastructure required for providing care during a pandemic. In order to reduce the risk of viral transmission, they must keep promoting workplace flexibility (United Nations, June 2020). According to Kniffin et al. (2020), a much better understanding of the pandemic's effects should be viewed as a window to analyze and identify the crucial issues that need to be addressed.

Human resource departments aim to resolve conflicts between employers and employees, so they must carry out their duties without leaning toward the employee or the company. However, rather, they must safeguard the well-being of both parties to the contract. Learning, creative thinking, and adaptation would be required to overcome the situations. Because the impacts of COVID-19 are long-lasting, it is necessary to change present human resource practices to ensure a fair distribution of responsibility between the organization and the individual. To appropriately adapt to the volatile business climate, the empirical study must focus on the impact of COVID-19 on major HR policies, processes, and actions across industries.

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