



## HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES DURING PANDEMIC

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### ABSTRACT

The research aims to explore how Human Resource Management Department has responded to Covid -19. The study speaks on how companies have responded to pandemic and the challenges they faced during the crises. It explores how HR department of Hubli Dharwad companies support employees and how they are looking at employee wellbeing during pandemic.

Quantitative Research was adopted. The data was collected through survey using Questionnaire as a research instrument. Questionnaire was distributed to the HR Managers of Hubli and Dharwad based companies. The data was analysed using Excel. The research concentrates on Challenges the HR department is faced during covid - 19.

From the research we understood that most of the organizations were able to create safe environment to employees during pandemic. Human resource and top-level management were able to guide and involve the employees in the projects even through remote work, but some organizations failed in doing the same. Overall the study shows us that it's important that the employees adhere to the rules and also the organizations should consider every aspect to motivate employees in the time of crisis.

**Keywords:** Corona virus, Pandemic, Human Resource Functions, Training, Work from home

### INTRODUCTION

Strategies implemented by government to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, have threatened businesses' survival on a global scale, unleashing an unprecedented economic crisis (Wenzel et al., 2020). As a result, companies must agilely adapt their HRM practices so as to remain competitive, both during and after financial crisis (Hong, 2020).

Under COVID-19 pandemic circumstances, HR policies are needed to promote flexibility and encourage the involvement of work teams in individual activities, so as to support employees who are fulfilling family roles while simultaneously working remotely (Christie, 2020a).

First, one of the changes in practices to improve human capital, under COVID-19 crisis, focuses on the need to recruit, select, and train talent to be proficient in information and communication technologies, because of the need to perform their jobs from a socially-accepted distance (Gurchiek, 2020).

Secondly, an important adjustment during the COVID-19 pandemic is the requirement that practices for human capital improvement, which have traditionally been carried out through human interaction, be carried out under the premise of social distancing (O'Donnell, 2020).

Thirdly there is the need to train managers and organizational leaders in crisis management.

Fourthly, since organizations must be effective in transferring the knowledge that allows employees to apply biosecurity protocols, with a low margin of error, to prevent COVID-19 contagion in their homes and within the company, appropriate and effective training design is necessary.

Finally, The role of HR Department is to keep the employees engaged, motivated and make them perform more than what is expected, this happens if the HR department is vibrant in knowing the needs of employees and the market needs.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

How do organizational responses to environmental disruptions affect employees job-related well-being? As the COVID-19 pandemic has led to new ways of working, increased health concerns, and added responsibilities, employees are facing important challenges in doing their work that can affect their job-related well-being. This study aims to understand how different types of work support (i.e., perceived organizational support and supervisor accessibility) in response to environmental disruption interact with personality traits (i.e., core self-evaluations and future focus) to influence changes in employees' affective commitment to their organization and in their job-related well-being (Mashiho Mihalache, 2021).

Organizations around the globe are currently experiencing significant decline in revenue, bankruptcy and job losses regardless of their size as a result of covid-19 pandemic. By implication, the travel bans, quarantine measures and boarder closures have also contributed immensely to the challenges of businesses. In order to sustain business operations, human resource managers need to embrace novel methods of operation to cope with the new challenges arising from the pandemic. The study provides an overview of the challenges of human resource professionals, especially managers face and their roles in filling the lacuna created by the covid-19 pandemic (Prof. Francis F. Nchuchuwe, 2021).

This narrow focus limits our understanding of key questions exposed during COVID-19. For example, the pandemic requires a shift in the understanding of how to work context, such as working onsite versus working from home (WFH), influences employee behaviors and actions. The pandemic has also exposed tensions among stakeholders and challenged the primacy of the shareholder view which has dominated thinking in strategic HRM. Finally, while HR has taken a strategic turn, tensions around its role have been exposed during the pandemic, high lighting the requirement for both strategic and tactical contributions. We consider each of these in turn (David G. Collingsa, 2021).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**Research aim:** The research aims to know-how organizations and human resource management, manage the pandemic situations and overcome the challenges.

**Title:** Human resource management in Pandemic times.

**Objectives:** To determine the challenges faced by organizations and HRs during a pandemic. The study focuses on the adjustments that the employees, subordinates and top management had to face during the pandemic.

**Study area:** The study area of the research is the HR Managers / Owners of Hubli-Dharwad based companies.

**Research type:** Descriptive Research

**Sample size:** 46 Owners / HR Managers

**Sampling method:** Judgemental Sampling method

#### **Data collection method**

**a. Primary data:** Standardized questionnaire was used for the research.

**b. Secondary data:** Research papers, articles and different books from Google scholar. We have reviewed articles that examined generally the relationship between covid-19 and human resource management. We met different HR of the organizations we collected the information on what challenges faced during a pandemic.

**Research Instrument:** Questionnaire - Questions regarding respondents' attitude towards remote working, work culture, perception towards organizational response to the pandemic crisis and the implications of the crisis on HRM, HR managers' evaluation of changes in the jobs, work-life balance, flexible working hours, communication, and attitudes of the top-management. To analyze the gathered data, descriptive statistics was carried out through MS Excel.

## **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from 46 HR managers of Hubli Dharwad based companies on the implications of Pandemic on HR Practices. The Data is analyzed and presented in the various sections, starting from reliability and validity of the scale, Descriptive Statistics. An internal consistency analysis was performed to assess the reliability aspect of the instrument.

**TABLE 1 - CRONBACH'S COEFFICIENT ALPHA**

<b>Components</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
HRM Practices	0.900

Source: Data compiled from the survey

It is found that there is good reliability of the questions related to HRM practices as their alpha values are more than 0.70. Hence, the internal consistency is found to be very high as their alpha values are more than 0.70 i.e.,  $\alpha = 0.900$ .

## OBJECTIVEWISE ANALYSIS

### OBJECTIVE 1:

To determine the challenges faced by HRs during a pandemic.

**TABLE 2 -CHALLENGES FACED BY HRs**

CHALLENGES FACED BY HRs	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Organization is negatively affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.	65%
There was Change in Work Culture	87%
Increase In Working hours	80%
Workplace Management	89%
Improving Employee Morale and Motivation	88%
Working remotely	94%
Reduced operations	76%
Mental health and productivity	94%
Continued remote hiring	95%
Digitalization of the recruitment process	86%
Evolving job skills	98%
Emphasis on internal hiring	92%

Organisations deemed it necessary for their employees to work from home. This imposed a huge workload especially on the information technology (IT) departments. Technical difficulties such as poor internet connectivity, overloaded servers and frequent crashing of software. In addition to transitioning to online work systems, organizations had to decide which essential administrative departments (human resources and finance) would continue to operate, and, subsequently, to implement measures to disinfect these facilities regularly.

For HR's virtual interviews and remote hiring are here to stay. While an in person visit is important, HR teams and hiring managers have found its impossible to assess prospects virtually. Besides video interviewing, HR teams will need to take additional steps to digitalize the recruitment process. Employers can no longer rely on reputation to attract the best candidates.

Evolving job skills Adaptability and independent problem- solving are more important than ever. The survey reports that adaptability as the new skill recruiters and hiring managers will need in a post Covid environment. As Companies are digitalizing more work processes and developing new technologies, it is creating new opportunities and new fears. According to the survey Employees need to upskill.

### OBJECTIVE 2:

To study the adjustments that the employees, subordinates and top management had to face during the pandemic, more specifically the Practices to the employees motivated.

**TABLE 3 - PRACTICES THAT CHANGED DURING PANDEMIC**

<b>PRACTICES THAT CHANGED DURING PANDEMIC</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES</b>
Improvised Communication Process	91.3 %
Crisis Management Practices	98%
Change in Work Process	86.7%
Counselling of Employees	91.31%
Flexibility in Working Hours	95.53%
Work Scheduling Practice	91.26%
Work-life balance Practices	82.26%
Employee Engagement Practices	91%
Values and Organisational Culture	98%
Support to employees in setting up a “Work from Home “Environment	98.43%
Improvised Employee – Manager Relationship	97%
Technical Support to the employees	94%
Co-Creation of Projects	90%
Projects to improve working of employees.	91%
Support from Top Management	82%
Training and Development Practices	90%
Flexi-time opportunities	99%

The research indicates that the factors which positively influence the working culture during pandemic times are Improvised Communication Process, Flexibility in Working Hours , Crisis Management Practices, Counselling of Employees , Work Scheduling Practice, Flexi-time opportunities, Training and Development Practices, Support from Top Management, Projects to improve working of employees., Co-Creation of Projects, Technical Support to the employees, Improvised Employee – Manager Relationship, Support to employees in setting up a “Work from Home “Environment, Values and Organisational Culture of the company, Employee Engagement Practices, Work-life balance Practices.

### **CONCLUSION**

To ensure business continuity, it is essential for businesses to act as fast as possible to lessen any negative impact while preparing the organization for future developments that may arise due to the COVID-19 outbreak. During this challenging time, the safety of employees is of utmost importance. Employees may face different health risks depending on the type of work they do, where they do it and their own health status. Considering the responses organizations could have worked more on the uplifting of the employees. The responses suggest that they could not take initiatives for the projects, which might have several reasons. Assuming that the organizations could not encourage the employees more we can suggest that they could focus more on employee morale.

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