Human Resource Coping Strategies in 'New Normal' and their Impact on Work Places: Systematic Review

Dr.P.S.Manjula[1], Sindhura.K[2]

[1]*Assistant Professor, Department of Management Studies University of Madras, Chennai 600005*
[2]*Research Scholar, Department of Management Studies University of Madras, Chennai 600005*

Abstract

The pandemic COVID-19 challenged all the industries in their Human Resource Management systems. The impact was visible with the changing nature of work places and all organizations have to adhere to the lock down restrictions. Many of the industries except health managed their human resources for business continuity with the alternate strategy of work from home. It is interesting to observe that the changing strategy in the Human Resource (HR) practices was swift and creative. In the present study, the authors have reviewed considerable number of research articles published in various journals. The review aimed to understand the coping strategies of the Human resource practices and their impact in the phase of 'New Normal'.

The review questions of the study were a) to understand the concept of coping strategies in HR practices in 'New normal' after the pandemic, b) to understand the impact of 'New Normal' on HR, and c) to draw inferences from the available research studies. The systematic review was conducted in the following steps: Guiding review questions were framed, search for research articles published in the time period from April 2020 to November 2020, short listing of relevant articles, extraction of the data from the articles in a predesigned form, critical review of the study content by two independent authors and consensus were drawn. Twenty research articles were selected to find answers to the review questions. This paper documents the conclusion and inference drawn from the review. The review has documented the coping brilliance by reinventing new HR practices amidst unprecedented health threat, the progress of the HR from resistance to 'New Normal' and the lessons learnt during the new normal. The review reinforces the importance of further studies in this area of HR practices. This review study disseminates the HR practices which are documented and the findings will be useful for organizations to cope up in the post pandemic.

Key words: New Normal, Human Resource, Coping strategies, Post Pandemic

1. INTRODUCTION

Humankind has faced epidemics and pandemics starting from the prehistoric period. Some of the pandemics and epidemics which have left deep scar on human beings include Plague of Athens, Antonine Plague, Black Death Asia to Europe, American Plague, Great Plague of London, Great Plague of Marseille, Philadelphia Yellow Fever, Spanish Flu, Asian Flu, SARS pandemic, H1N1 Swine Flu pandemic, West African Ebola epidemic, Zika Virus epidemic etc, (Jarus, 2020). Currently it is the COVID-19 Pandemic which has jolted all spheres of life of human beings across the world. The speed of the contagious virus has induced fear and aversion to workplaces.

The pandemic posed challenge globally to all the industries in managing their human resources and ensure continuity of the work. The HR managers had to execute their role in a creative way to ensure the well-being of their human resources. Prevention strategies for the pandemic were not encouraging social contacts and human gatherings. Specific safe practices viz, social distancing, protective commodities like mask and sanitizers were recommended. This context of the pandemic had serious implications on the working practices and human resource management in different sectors. Healthcare and service sectors which focused on social assistance became very active as they were in the front line. The success of the other industries depended on the reappraisal of the HR practices which had to ensure effective functioning of the organizations and have high priority on the well-being of the employees. In addition, the Human resource managers had to handle other issues like needs of lay off employees, infected employees, death of employees etc. It is the swiftness in which the HR practices changed across different countries and industries learned from others' experiences.

The HR managers had to sharpen their skills to keep themselves motivated and connect with their employees' needs. The revised work strategies include remote-work policy, flexible working time, daily touch point meetings, virtual organizational meetings, capacity building of the employee's skills in handling technologies, providing the essential gadgets and net facilities, ensuring equitable policies between the remote working employees and those working in office, provide employee support solutions, periodic feedback from the employees, educating them on prevention of the virus and finally reward and recognize them. In addition to their responsibilities of handing the present work life of their employees, the HR managers have to handle recruitment, staff-induction and development etc.

The acceptance to the new work operations has become 'New Normal' and it is practiced across various sectors globally. The COVID-19 prevention practices have become the fundamental for the new normal work life. Many researchers and HR experts have documented their findings and impression on the coping strategies of the companies and work forces in the phase of new normal. In the present study authors have reviewed consistent number of research articles, analyzed and documented the inferences.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The authors used systematic review methodology for the current study. They include framing of guiding research questions, search for research articles published in the time period from April 2020 to November 2020, short listing of the articles related to the study, and extraction of data from the articles in a predesigned format. The content was reviewed critically by two authors and consensus was drawn

The precise contents of the research articles are presented below.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW – HIGHLIGHTS

Jessica Li et al., (2020) in their editorial board article have highlighted the challenges of the Human Resource Management (HRM) in the context of the pandemic and the changing roles of the Human Resource Development. The article discusses about the impact of the pandemic on the work force, lessons learnt from the altered strategies of work and how HR practices are building resilience through virtual connection. The authors state that the pandemic has presented multiple challenges which are not faced before in the history across the world. The main challenges are sudden changes in the work place, feeling of isolation and disconnectedness, pandemic will surely change the style of work in the future and new changes to the business organizations. Work from home requires specific skills, conflict between roles at home and work responsibilities, speed of the internet facilities available at home etc. The feeling of isolation has created stress and disturbance in mental health. Human beings have their resilience power to stay connected especially with the aid of information and technology. Some of the efforts include 'Cloud Clubbing', Home Karaoke station, workout groups functional online etc. The dependence on Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine learning, the tools used for work, etc, were changing even before the onset of the pandemic which caused uncertainty in the work. The authors conclude that the pandemic will change the work style of the organizations and the Human Resource professionals have to be creative to get better prepared for the future scenarios. The altered strategies in work like virtual meetings, virtual desks, e-learning etc, have been accepted by millions of people as reality.

Duomo et al., (2020) have studied the strategies adopted by hoteliers in Ghana during the pandemic. Hotel industry was very badly affected by the pandemic. The study has captured that the hoteliers' main coping strategies were employee's layoff, look forward for government support for their business, compulsory annual leave and early retirement. The authors state that the HR measures taken were negative in approach which affected the employees. They have not adopted any lessons from the other sectors or altered the strategies. The findings show that the Human Resource Management in the sector of hotels has failed to ensure sustainability of the work force.

Iza Gigauri (2020) in the research study on influence of pandemic on Human Resource Management and Companies' Response. The main aim of the research has been to understand the histrionic changes in the Human Resource management and how they are

coping up for better future in Georgia. The study findings highlight the need for HR managers to develop crisis management plans, alternate policies for continuation of work and mix of different styles of working. The HR managers have to gain more knowledge on crisis management though they have rich experience in their field of work. The author has documented that employees are adaptable to the new ways of working which are expected to be the style of work in the future. In this phase of change, employees are developing their competencies in the digital world. Employees with competent skills who can adapt to the new working style will be in demand. Companies have understood that remote working is feasible and the HR professionals are convinced to continue all activities on online. The author concludes that the companies are accepting and adapting the new reality as normal.

Caligiuri et al., (2020) have studied the navigating Human Resource Management internationally during the pandemic. The authors have highlighted the importance of business research to understand human resource management under uncertainty, the new strategies of the organizations and facilitation of new normal global work scenario. The study findings highlight the following: companies in multinational enterprises have focused on actions related to the management of distance; they have rethought about the boundaries at all levels of work, and new intra-firm distancing challenges and virtual workforce influencing the new normal. Uncertain factor which the pandemic has induced has brought in many health issues among people around the world. The employees are going through difficult times with stress which has to be mitigated by the Human resource management. In the new normal the employees are challenged in their mental health and safety. The HRM have to redress the health risks with their available health resources. The companies have to depend on employees who have cultural agility competencies on high tolerance to ambiguity, resilience and natural curiosity.

Carnevalea and Hatak (2020) have studied the employee adjustment and well-being in the era of COVID-19 with emphasis on its implications for human resource management. The authors have documented various challenges which Human Resource Management face during the pandemic and the alterations made for coping. The major challenges were to prepare the work force for remote operations, changing the work place policies, conflict between the work and family spheres etc. The employees who are not able to adapt to the limited interaction, virtual workplace, virtual recruitment and virtual training become misfit in post pandemic phase. It is the responsibility of the HRM to evolve ways to solve the employee's issues. It is believed that socialization practices will help the employees to come out of his perception of misfit. Some efforts which are presently taken include virtual tea breaks, virtual lunches and happy hours etc. The employees have to play their roles in family as child care takers.

McGuire et al., (2020) have studied the reshaping Human Resource Development (HRD) practices with emphasis on care approach. The authors have highlighted the pandemics drastic effect on organizations collapsing the consumer demand, supply chain and increased economic uncertainty. The organizations have to find their way out swiftly to cope up with the negative scenarios. Many organizations have made quick changes to fix the issues and

moved on to digital space and adopted remote working. The HR managers play a vital role in the crisis management. The authors state that the field of HRD is dynamic and it evolves mechanism from range of disciplines and respond to the new challenges. The authors in this article have laid emphasis on following ethics in care approach while readjusting the HRD. The authors have recommended suggestions that organization has to foster compassion in the work environment, to uproot the bias in the opportunities to all the employees, to put into action organizational values and provide psycho-social support for the employees.

Serrano and Kazda (2020) in their study have highlighted the difficulties in the civil aviation industry faced during the pandemic. The sudden halt in the operations of airlines and airports have challenged the Human Resource management of the industry. Some of the main changes which the industry faced were job redundancies lay off of the airport and airlines staff. After the economic disruption, the demand of the airlines could not be estimated. Employment opportunities and starting of airlines operations would be interlinked due to this disruption. While the aviation industry depends on passengers for their operations, the employees are valuable assets in times of emergency situations. The aviation industries had to take care of the front-line workers and team which connects with the customers. The HRM had multiple lists of things to focus on, the morale of the staff, policies in favor of their health safety, careful steps on cost cutting activities, redress pay roll problems, ensure that the staff have adequate resources to cope up, ensure social protection of the family and ensuring the psychological well-being. To continue the aviation business, new HR practices were put on place, work from home, quality IT professionals, crew logistic management, succession planning, auxiliary work force, staffing pattern, leave policies, work force reentry and training, health insurance and employees' compensation.

Pattnaik and Jena (2020) have studied the impact of mindfulness on the current work style of remote management and its effect on the employee's morale. The authors have detailed the necessity of remote management in business in the post pandemic period. The research findings highlight on what can make the new ways of effective work styles. They have elaborated on the concept of mindfulness. It is great potential of human beings to be aware of the current moment. The study has considered mindfulness as an intrinsic state of consciousness. It is believed that individuals with high level of mindfulness do neither brood on past nor about future. It is a state of mind in which the individual has awareness on internal experiences and external experiences. In the 'new normal' remote working means working outside the conventional work place. It has its set of challenges that the study has supported the engagement of the employee's mindfulness. It is believed to boost the work productivity and strong employee's experience.

Lai and Wong (2020) have studied the challenges faced by the hospitality industry and the crisis management techniques adopted. Crisis management strategies have been categorized into four stages such as priority, maintain, low priority and possible overkill. The study has documented how the hotel managers had hoped that pandemic will end quickly and their industries problems will be resolved. As a first step they reduced the price to increase the demand. When the pandemic peaked up, they realized that their promotional strategies were

ineffective. The managers opposed recession of the employees, they proposed reduction in the number of working days or hours, freezing or reducing pay rates, voluntary retirements and adopting cost cutting measures by restricting the hotel services. Some of the methods to counter-attack the challenges posed by the pandemic: Government assistance in the form of subsidies apart from Marketing, Maintenance, Human resource and Epidemic prevention strategies would be highly beneficial for hospitality industry. It can be inferred that human resource practices like replacing workers and outsourcing would not be of help during the pandemic. The situation must be managed using the existing employees effectively. Training of employees pertaining to pandemic is very essential for effective hospitality management during outbreak.

Frank Levesque (2020) in his article on new HR practices post pandemic has highlighted five areas for the HR managers have to re-strategize in the 'new normal' phase of humanity. The author states that it is important to take collective efforts in thinking about the Human resource practices in Massachusetts and New England. The areas which have to be focused by HRM are paid sick and family leave, employee benefits, going back to work, developing and updating employee policies and handbooks and emotional intelligence in leadership. In the post pandemic the employers have to keep the employees informed of their rights on Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and the salaries had to be paid for the qualifying employees. Leave forms and policies in the present context have to be developed. The other policies related to loans, retirement plan, penalties etc, have to be eased out. In the post pandemic when slowly the businesses are resuming their function, combination of approaches is required like work share, stand by, salary reduction and remote work. The policies have to be revised in the context of the post pandemic 'New Normal'.

Zhang et al., (2020) have examined the effect of safety leadership on safety behavior of hotel employees during the COVID-19 outbreak. The authors have studied the mediating role of belief restoration and moderation effect of perceived risk on the safety leadership and safety behavior in the current context of the pandemic. They authors have stated that involvement between leaders and followers would shape the course of the organization when it comes to safety during the pandemic. Safety behavior of the hotel employees can be promoted by safety leaders with the following strategies: role-modeling, decision-making, participation and emotional support. It encourages the employees to adopt work place safety behavior and learn new safety skills. Reward system is also encouraged to encourage the same. The findings of the study have highlighted that hotel safety leadership positively predicted the employee safety behavior and it has positive effect on the employee's safety compliance, participation and adaptation. Self-belief is the assessment of one's ability to channelize the attitude and emotion towards the management of the situation at hand. Assessing the extent of the risk involved in safety management is very essential. The relationship between safety leadership and safety behavior with belief restoration as mediator and perceived risk as moderator is established. The implication of the study is positive feedback and safety information to employees could increase the organization atmosphere in favor of the management with regard to safety leadership and behavior. Thus, it leads to correct

estimation of perceived risk and accentuates the self-belief among the employees. The human resource management of the hotel industry should strengthen systems to manage their employees' perceived risk during a crisis and training on appropriate risk information intervention.

Awan et al., (2020) have aimed to explore the 'new normal' for the customers' service and 'new designs' for hotel industry. Tangible like cleanliness and comfort is examined along with intangibles like interaction with employees. The data are collected through Snowball and Purposive sampling with history of travelling to Malaysia. Useful guidelines in relation to raising the safety standard were implemented like disinfection and sanitation. Few researches have focused on hospitality industry and tourist behavior. The study provided insights on the tourists' expectation of the safety standards and the proactive service innovations adopted by the hotel authorities like contactless check-in and check-out, touch less digital food menu and so on. In the new normal the industry has to build the trust of the customers. The industry has to take a balance between the business and the employees, since it is individual employees who make the change possible. More than the service innovation, if the well-being of the employees is taken care of and made a priority, then the employees would act in that direction and would receive positive feedback from the customers' end. The authors state that employers in the hotel industries should treat their employees as internal customers and they will take care of the 'new normal'.

Wong et al., (2020) have studied the effectiveness of 'working from home' in Hong Kong working population under COVID-19. The approach work from home has become normal during the pandemic. Globally all the companies have switched on to this strategy. There are many different views about this strategy based on work-family balance theory. The authors have studied 1976 employees working in Hong- Kong. The findings of the study highlight that effectiveness of work from home approach is improved by the personal and family well-being. But the environment and resource constraints reduce the effectiveness of the approach. The employees felt that their performance is effective with the altered approach work from home like to continue the same in the 'new normal' life. The level of preference for work from home is high among female employees. While the front-line workers and middle grade employees have high preference for the approach the management level staff have less preference. The authors state that the HR managers and organization have to design the various strategies related with the approach work from home.

Shareena and Shahid (2020) have studied the perception of the employees on work from home during COVID-19. The objectives of the study were to assess the willingness of the employees to work from home and to know their opinions towards work from home. All the respondents of the study were working from home. The finding of the study shows that employees working from home are willing to continue if good supportive environment is provided. It is the organizations responsibility to set up supportive and controlled work environment. This will increase the number of employees to like this approach of working and have job satisfaction. The study findings have also documented that willingness for work

from home was dependent on the presence of children at home, space, environment and internet facilities.

Faraz Khan et al., (2020) have done analysis on remote work in the post pandemic. The authors have discussed their analysis on the following themes: Need for remote working, rise in productivity, redefining organizational culture, environmental benefits of remote work, beyond the sunny picture, and unraveling mankind's future. The analysis has focused on the effect of the changing policies on talent strategy, productivity of the organization, culture, work environment and cost. The authors have also analyzed the potential risks of adopting the new work place policy. The new approach will engage a greater number of talented people since it provides opportunity for parents with new born, differently-abled people, women etc. The free lancers will contribute a lot to the business world since the work model is flexible. Remote working has helped people who have personal and physical constraints. This will also increase the 'talent pool' boarding the business. Many countries have reported increase in productivity during this pandemic. The absence of workplace distractions, travel time, and ensuring better family time is attributed to this increase. In the new normal work from home will have both positive and negative impact on the organizational culture. In this transition phase the companies have to take care of team culture, mental health and collaboration effectiveness etc. In addition, the companies have cost saving. The authors conclude that remote working can be applicable to everyone and companies have to design plans for sustenance for sustaining the altered approach.

Zeidmer (2020) has detailed on the technology travails, struggles working remotely, flexibility as key and practical advice for the new normal. The Microsoft Company has encouraged their employees to work from home. The priority of the company is on health and safety of the employees and their customers. The employees were able to manage the transition since the company has products to facilitate the technology travails. The staff were given refresher course on the technologies online. The article reinforces on flexible workplace to help the employee to have good motivation, and good work life balance. The HR managers have to take care of employee's feelings of isolation. The author has given certain advices for the HR Managers to be communicative to the employees, focus on safety and health of the employees in par with productivity, and reinforce security to the employees and the policies have be applied fairly and consistently.

Denning (2020) in his article on "Why a culture of experimentation requires management transformation" has documented how innovation is playing a great role during the pandemic and post pandemic. The innovations are just starting and it is facilitating reinvention of commerce. The organizations like amazon face book, Google and Microsoft have swiftly embraced the new technologies during the pandemic and many others were stuck. Globally digitization has become the necessity in the crisis period. Organizations are trying their best to get back to normal but the author states that it will not get back to the same way as before but it will be a different world. Some organizations are doing rapid experimentation to cope up but the transition is not easy. The reason for slow pace of innovation is because of the slow culture of experimentation. The role of leadership is important in experimentation. The

successful organization has different kind of management principles like operational and strategic agility. The article recommends large scale experimentation, different set of systems, values and attitudes.

Tuzovic and Kabadayi (2020) have developed a conceptual framework on social distancing and its effect on the organization, which in turn would affect the well-being of the employees. The business condition during the pandemic has led to the livelihood changes and it is a major concern for the well-being of business and employees. Well-being of employees in this context alluded to physical well-being, mental well-being, social well-being and psychological well-being. Suggestions are provided by the authors at macro, meso and micro levels with special reference to employee well-being. Macro level deals with the government interventions required for the pandemic situation such as travel restrictions, advisory measures like work from home, financial aids and health care benefits. Meso level interventions deal with how increased working hours have affected mental well-being of the employees and also examined the factors which will affect the social well-being of the employees like distancing from colleagues and friends. Micro level deals solely with the employee well-being and the influence of skill, support and self. The authors have recommended that it is important to examine holistically the various macro, meso and micro level factors which have affected the employees' well-being. The framework which is developed can be replicated in other disasters in the future with respect to employee well-being.

Diab-Bahman and Al-Enzi (2020) have studied the impact of pandemic on conventional work settings in Kuwait. The study gives insight on the pandemic impact on the primary employees which can be used by Human resource police makers to make policy decisions. The study explored what are the employee's thoughts about their work in pre-pandemic, how the new work from home approach affects their conventional duties, the sentiments of the employees who are virtual front-line workers and what are the hopes of the employees in post pandemic. The findings show that majority of employees want to review the old conventional way of working, majority of the employees were enjoying the alternate strategies which are flexible, considerable majority of the employees looked forward for a mixed method. The study concludes that the employees' expectation is changing with the post pandemic phase.

Dash Mohapatra (2020) has highlighted the post pandemic situation in India and its impact on human resource management. The objectives of the study are to assess the effect of COVID-19 in Indian industry and to highlight the challenges and opportunities of human resource professionals during pandemic. Vulnerability of frontline work force especially healthcare professionals and coping of post-traumatic stress was examined. Strategies of various governments like China that is Artificial intelligence (AI) enabled tracking and Quick Response (QR) code to monitor the movement of goods were helpful. Macroeconomic policies have an impact on the workforce. Impact on manpower especially the migrant workers and gig workers were severely affected. Various HR functions would be impacted like increased bias free recruitment, more humane and fair performance evaluation, Training would be advanced but the initial cost would be high, restructuring of job design that is flexi-

time have positive effect. Industrial relations would have problems in negotiations; Compensation would be more due to safety reasons; Leadership should be multidimensional and empowered for crisis; Engagement becomes difficult in the virtual environment; and International HR laws would be modified post-pandemic. These are the adverse effects of the pandemic in relationship with HR management. The study could be used in post pandemic scenario also.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The authors after the review of the articles have carefully documented the main highlights of the studies. The main review questions focused on to understand: a) the concept of coping strategies in Human Resource practices in the 'new normal' and b) the impact of 'new normal' on HR. The inferences drawn from the review were categorized into themes such as concept of new normal, challenges faced by Human resources and coping strategies in work environment,

Concept of New normal: The pandemic COVID-19 has run into humanity and crippled the normal ways of life and business. There is much debate on vaccine but it has to become reality till then all have to adjust to a 'new normal'. It means moving ahead in life, work and other important things in life in a new way of living. Humanity has learned to adapt itself in the absence of vaccine for many diseases and viruses. This adaptation is called the 'new normal' and it is expected that it will changing. 'New normal' is just what one was doing before in life but in a technological way in a virtual world like e-commerce, e-learning, virtual teams, etc. The 'new normal' in business and work becomes very important since it base for the economic survival of the humanity. It is interesting to understand how the companies have quickly changed things to accelerate their work. The 'new normal' things which has proven effective are put to practice swiftly.

The studies have documented that the 'new normal' will help many talented people to enjoy the benefits. It will address gender equality in the work force since woman in home would like to work from home. The change which has happened during the pandemic and in the 'new normal' is expected to become permanent in certain work sectors. Companies have learnt that new strategies have been productive and will surely like to board the strategy or approach in the future. The studies reviewed have supported the 'new normal' as the only way to cope up. The findings have also cautioned that 'new normal' should be applied fairly and consistently.

Challenges faced by Human Resources in the transition to 'new normal'

The pandemic created complex challenges on Human Resource professionals and companies. The fear and anxiety of the disease burden, economic needs, social needs, isolation, mental health needs all became the subject of concern. The path towards 'new normal' without vaccination was not very easy. The research articles capture the mixture of challenges which the human resource management faced. They have not even thought of such kinds of challenges which have made the HR managers now to focus mainly on crisis management.

Some of the main challenges were mental health and well-being, remote working approach, lack of agility, managing employees' communication, employees' engagement and uncertainty. The mental health of the employees and their safety turned out to be the subject of priority. The transition to work at home had many undiscovered problems. The HR managers had to build the resilience of the employees through virtual connects and redress issues like feeling of isolation and disconnectedness, the speed capacities of internet at home. The HR managers had to train their employees on specific skills for remote working.

Even before the pandemic the employees were facing uncertainty with the emerging dependence on Artificial intelligence. Training the employees on machine learning tool skills was a challenge and the pandemic made it severe. They played the major role for preparing the work force for remote operations. In addition to these challenges, they had other set of work load like working out the revised employees working policies, change in international laws in HR, change in leave policies, layoffs and related communication, attending to the health policy needs of COVID-19 affected employees, focus on safety and health of the employee in par with productivity. Layoffs was painful challenge in the phase of pandemic and the compensation packages should be dynamic and fair enough (Tom Starner, 2020).

Coping Strategies of the Human Resource in the 'new normal'

It is believed that the HR practices during the pandemic and in 'new normal' has been productive and many of the authors have stated that the practices will be continued in the future. The credit for this productive outcome of work force should be conceded on to the HR managers of the companies. To cope up with the challenges the HR managers have executed varieties of approaches. The approaches became their responsibility starting from addressing the safety of the employees till ensuring the productivity. They had to develop crisis management plans and gain more knowledge on crisis management. The organization which was not strong in crisis management had to close down their business. Hotel industries are quoted in the studies that they were not able to manage the crisis posed.

They had to develop flexible work policies, leave policies, compensation policies etc. and motivate the employees to function smoothly and show productivity. Agility in the human resource approach has helped the business industries to cope up with major challenges of the pandemic. Promotion of virtual work force was the pillar of the coping strategy. Many research studies have documented that virtual work force is the new lessons learnt which was thought of as coping the pandemic. Virtual work has become the approach in the 'new normal' phase. In the earlier days working from home was one of the methods which was promoted for ensuring work life balance (Crosbie and Moore 2004).

The HR managers had to develop more competencies in digital technology and also had to train the employees to acquire digital skills. The dependency on technology has become a coping mechanism for the HR operation and work. It is believed that new innovations will come in the 'new normal' to accelerate support to the business industries.

The employees have their own challenges in the 'new normal' work life. The have developed mental health issues like feeling isolated because of less socialization. Lack of supportive environment for working at home, balance between family and work life, increased hour of work etc, were the other challenges which the employees faced. In contrast research studies have also documented how the quality of work life and family life has become better, increased time of work has increased productivity etc. The HR managers had to be connected with the employees to redress the mixture of their challenges. Engagement with the employees was difficult in the virtual work style. Communication played a vital role and organization had to foster compassion towards their employees. The HR managers promoted mindfulness (focus on the present positive) as a coping mechanism among their employees. Research studies have documented that employees have started liking the 'new normal' work life which means they have got adapted. Some of the companies promoted 'virtual tea breaks', 'virtual dinner', 'virtual happy times' etc. to redress the psychological feeling of isolation of the employees. Anseel (2020) states that, companies have to reimagine the earlier work places and reinvent.

Employee characteristics for coping in the 'new normal'

It is a new world of work for majority of the employees. They had got swiftly transitioned to the 'new normal' way of work. They have to get adapted to their new work world. Certain characteristics of the employees play a vital role for this transition. Studies have highlighted that employees require cultural agility competencies which help them to perform well in cross- cultural environment. Further characteristics which employee requires for coping are high tolerance to ambiguity in the work style, resilience power to get back to normal, the natural curiosity to experiment the new normal. Employees should be able to cope up with limited interaction, comfortable in virtual workplace, recruitment and training. They have to develop potentials to focus on the current moment to move ahead. Employees' characteristics to embrace the changing work culture will be successful. In the 'new normal' the employees' have to acquire more skills in communication. Exchange of information becomes vital for smooth and successful execution of work in remote work setting. If employees have good oral and written communication, they manage the work very well in remote work setting.

5. CONCLUSION

The systematic review findings have apprehended how the human resource coping strategies in the 'new normal' impact on the work places. The pandemic has changed the future of work in many ways. It is the coping mechanism of the human resource personnel and companies which will help them to triumph and stand out among their competitors. The Human resource managers evolve as leaders by reinventing smart choices in the 'new normal'. Some of the visible coping strategies at present are remote working, technologies to monitor the employees, increase in contingent employees, building resilience of the employees, emphasis on critical skills in the new work environment, increasing humane approach etc. The other

strategies which are handled by HR managers are compensation for the laid off employees, insurance of the employees who are victims of the pandemic, ensuring social and health safety of the employees, bringing changes in policy decision in consultation with the organization head, etc. Human resource managers have great responsibility to reinvent new approaches in the 'new normal'. The visible inventions for the 'new normal' are only few changes in approaches and many more are on the way to help employees in the 'new normal' work life.

6. REFERENCES

[1] Anseel, F. (2020), Six important ways COVID-19 has changed the workplace for good Business Think. https://www.businessthink.unsw.edu.au/articles/6-key-ways-covid-19-changing-workplace.

[2] Awan, M. I., Shamim, A. and Ahn, J. (2020). Implementing 'cleanliness is half of faith' in re-designing tourists, experiences and salvaging the hotel industry in Malaysia during COVID-19 pandemic, *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-08-2020-0229.

[3] Caligiuri, P., De Cieri, H., Minbaeva, D., Verbeke, A. and Zimmermann, A. (2020). International HRM insights for navigating the COVID-19 pandemic: Implications for future research and practice, *Journal of International Business Studies*, 51, 697–713. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41267-020-00335-9.

[4] Carnevalea, J. B. and Hatak, I. (2020). Employee adjustment and well-being in the era of COVID-19: Implications for human resource management, *Journal of Business Research*, 116, 183–187. doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.05.037.

[5] Crosbie, T. and Moore, J. (2004). Work–life Balance and Working from Home, Social

[6] Policy & Society 3:3, 223–233. DOI: 10.1017/S1474746404001733.

[7] Dash Mohapatra, B. (2020). Managing manpower amid and post pandemic in India; An

[8] evocative study, *International Journal of Research in Human Resource Management*, 2(2), 1-8.

[9] Denning, S. (2020). *Why a culture of experimentation requires management*

[10] *transformation, Strategy & Leadership*, 48(4),11-16. https://doi.org/10.1108/SL-04-2020-0048.

[11] Diab-Bahman, R. and Al-Enzi, A. (2020), The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on

[12] Conventional work settings, *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 40(9/10), 909-927. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSSP-07-2020-0262.

[13] Dwomoh, G., Luguterah, A. W. and Duah, S.B. (2020). Hoteliers' human resource

[14] strategies for business sustainability during Covid-19 pandemic in Ghana, *JBRMR,* 14(3). https://doi.org/10.24052/JBRMR/V14IS03/ART-04.

[15] Faraz Khan, M. Bhaskaran, P. and Agrawal, A. (2020). Remote work post - pandemic – An analysis, Zinnov. https://zinnov.com/remote-work-post-pandemic-an-analysis.

[16] Frank Levesque (2020). The "New Normal" of Your People Practices, The Impact of

[17] COVID-19 on Your HR Policies and Procedures.

[18] Iza Gigauri, (2020). Influence of Covid-19 Crisis on Human Resource Management and

[19] Companies' Response: The Expert Study, *International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration,*6(6),15-24. DOI: 10.18775/ijmsba.1849-5664-5419.2014.66.1002 http://dx.doi.org/10.18775/ijmsba.1849-5664-5419.2014.66.1002.

[20] Jarus, O. (2020). Twenty worst pandemics in the world. [updated 2020 May; cited 2020

[21] May 15] . Available from http//:livemedicine.com/worst-epidemics-and-pandemics-in-history.html.

[22] Jessica Li., Rajashi Ghosh and Stefanos Nachmias (2020). In a time of COVID-19

[23] pandemic, stay healthy, connected, productive, and learning: words from the editorial team of HRDI, *Human Resource Development International*, 23(3),199-207. https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2020.1752493.

[24] Lai, I.K.W. and Wong, J.W.C. (2020). Comparing crisis management practices in the

[25] hotel industry between initial and pandemic stages of COVID-19, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management,* 32(10), 3135-3156.

[26] https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-04-2020-0325.

[27] McGuire, D., Germain, M-L., and Reynolds, K. (2020). Reshaping HRD in Light of the

[28] COVID-19 Pandemic: An Ethics of Care Approach. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*. 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422320973426.

[29] Pattnaik, L. and Jena, L. K. (2020). Mindfulness, remote engagement and employee

[30] morale: conceptual analysis to address the "new normal", *International Journal of Organizational Analysis,* 29(1). DOI 10.1108/IJOA-06-2020-2267.

[31] Serranoa, F. and Kazdab, A. (2020). Business continuity during pandemics – lessons

[32] learned about airport personnel, *Transportation Research Procedia*, 51, 56–66.

[33] Shareena, P. and Shahid, M. (2020). Work from Home during COVID-19: Employees

[34] perception and experiences, *Global Journal for Research Analysis*, 9 (5). Print in ISSN no 2277-8160. DOI:10.36106/gira.

[35] Tuzovic, S. and Kabadayi, S. (2020).The influence of social distancing on employee well-being: A conceptual framework and research agenda. *Journal of Service Management*. DOI 10.1108/JOSM-05-2020-0140.

[36] Tom starner, 2020, What COVID means to compensation, Human Resource Executive,

[37] https://hrexecutive.com/what-covid-means-to-compensation.

[38] Wong, A. H. K., Cheung, J. O. and Chen, A. Promoting effectiveness of "working

[39] from home": findings from Hong Kong working population under COVID-19, *Asian Education and Development Studies* © Emerald Publishing Limited 2046-3162.DOI 10.1108/AEDS-06-2020-0139.

[40] Zeidmer, R. (2020). Coronavirus makes work from Home the New normal,

[41] https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/all-things-work/pages/remote-work-has-become-the-new-normal.aspx

[42] Zhang,J.,Xie,C., Wang, J., Morrison,A.M., and Coca-Stefaniak,J. A. (2020). Responding to a major global crisis: the effects of hotel safety leadership on employee safety behavior during COVID-19. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management,* 32(11). https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-04-2020-0335