

## **ROLE OF HR IN PANDEMIC MEDIATED ECONOMIC RECESSION**

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### **Abstract**

Human resource management has undergone tremendous changes in the past couple of years. The paradigm shift in the outlook and functioning of HR managers have evolved over time to suit to the current business models and create value. However, CoVID-19 pandemic mediated economic slowdown and change in working methodologies that evolved along with it, will have significant impact on how future businesses will be run and the role of HRM in it. In this brief review, we evaluate the current situation and do a comprehensive analysis with comparison with past recessions. We investigate the evolution of HRM over the years, especially 2007-09 crisis. Finally, we integrated past experiences and present trends to postulate the role of HRM in the post-CoVID-19 world.

**Keywords:** HRM, economic recession, Indian economy, COVID-19, CoVID-19 and HRM

### **Introduction**

In the last few years, a lot of changes have taken place in the global economy and as a result of which organisations all over the world had to keep up with the changes that were happening around in order to survive these times. The rate at which these changes are happening globally have demanded all the organisations for uninterrupted travail and readiness to transform as a result of these profound changes.

On 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 World Health Organisation formally declared COVID-19 pandemic worldwide, leading uncertainty into the lives and livelihoods of billions of people into this crisis that was still unfolding itself. Just four months have passed and daily reports of outbreaks, waxing and waning infection and mortality rates continue to increase anxiety, stir grief, and are casting in various questions relating to the social and economic future. Never in the modern history a country has asked its citizens to stay home, avoid travel, and maintain physical

distance in public areas to protect oneself and others as well in the community. And neither have we seen the job loss spike so fast nor the distress in the economy. This uncertainty of the spreading of corona virus has instilled fear in people regarding their health and lives. This cause chain of events, uncertainty about people's livelihood makes them cautious about spending that in turn affect the economy. Even in the business world, business leaders are unable to make reliable plans regarding investments. Thus, CoVID-19 induced global and economic pandemic has become one of the challenging issues at present.

In the current situation we are also witnessing a complete reform of social as well as economic order that is leading to the rise of a new era, or to say the "new normal." Due to this fast-changing business environment and inexorable effect of the current global pandemic that has resulted in global recession is demanding constant preparedness and effort to acclimatize to these changes. The pandemic has now evolved into a constantly increasing crises for the economy as well as global financial system as well. The temporary retreat in the economic activity and the current necessity to prioritize health of the people simultaneously is affecting the economic health of people and institutions. Consequences of CoVID-19 triggered health crisis on economic factors and indicators remain uncertain which has the potential to plunge the world into financial crisis. What remains important in such times is resilience. It is extremely important for businesses for now to act on prepare a broader resilience plan as this economic shock has begun upturning the established industry structures, resetting competitive positions forever.

In this review, we analyse key reports on impact of CoVID-19 on the world economy and how important is the role of HR is to help employees and the organisation to accept the new normal, highlighted our finding and presented our opinions about the next steps that can be productive to get things back to normal.

*Strategic decisions without proper implementation can prove to be counterproductive for a company*

Global analysis by McKinsey, a leading global management consulting firm, indicated that the shock from the economic impact of CoVID-19 on the livelihoods could be one of the biggest impacts of this century. In Europe and United states, this will most probably cause decrease in economic activity by 2.6% <sup>1</sup>and 4.8% <sup>2</sup>respectively in a single quarter, that will be considerably higher than the loss that we came across during the great depression of 1930s.

There are several ways through which an organisation tries to handle recession. Some take a backfoot and cut off all the unnecessary expenses. Others take a proactive approach, seize the opportunity and invest at a massive rate while rest of them combines both the approaches and adopt a hybrid approach. For example, during the recession of 2007-2009 recession, Sony which announced during this period that their target for cost reduction till December 2008 would be \$2.6 billion<sup>3</sup>, is the prime example of backfoot/prevention focused approach. They planned to shut many of their factories, delay various investment and even laying off 16000 people from their core electronics business. This is the same strategy that they manoeuvred during 2000 downturn as well, where over the two-year period they reduced its workforce by 11 percent<sup>3</sup>, capital expenditure was reduced by 23 percent and they reduced their research and expenditure expense by 12 percent<sup>3</sup>. The cut during the 2000 period helped the Japanese giant to increase its profit margin to 12 percent in 2002<sup>3</sup>, but their sales growth reduced to 1%<sup>3</sup>. Since that time Sony has battled to maintain its pace. It has ploughed in developing various new products such as gaming consoles, electronic book readers, and organic LED television sets, but in all the sectors Sony found itself outweighed by the Amazon, Microsoft and Nintendo and Samsung, respectively. This clearly shows that how making changes for short term for gains without long term can impact the market leaders in an industry.

Several strategies have been invented, adopted, tested, trashed, and finally applied by companies. A huge amount of capital and manpower went into researching strategic policies and implementations. However, a little fraction of the strategies was productive and helped companies flourish. Most of them simply did not work out. Why?

Most of the companies in a recession period take defensive stance. Cost cutting is given prime importance. Although, cost cutting is required but the extent of cost cutting, and the time of its implementation plays a key role in determining whether it will prove to be a successful tactic or not. Most of the companies go for reducing the number of employees. However, laying off employees without considering its impact in the long term for the company can prove to be a disaster. The companies which were able to implement cost cutting tactic to their advantage, coupled it to '**Operational Efficiency**'.<sup>3</sup>

Examining the details of the moves of these companies we can conclude that their defensive moves were selective. Rather than focusing on improving the operational efficiency they slashed the number of employees. The organisations that emphasise on operational efficiency

have done better than those who have focussed on reducing the head count of their organization. These organization also laid off the employees, but they do not resort to this approach far less than their fellow organizations do. If we look at the figures only 23 percent of these hybrid/ progressive companies lay off their employees- whereas 56 percent of the companies that are on their backfoot do- and they sacked far less people<sup>3</sup>. These hybrid organisations retaliate to economic slowdown by re-assess every aspect of their business models right starting from reducing the operating costs on a long-term basis and by configuring the supply chains. Hence, when the economy starts to revive, the cost will stay low, and their profits increase at a higher rate than that of their competitors<sup>3</sup>.

For example, during the 2000 economic slow-down, Staples and Office Depot engaged different approaches to their companies cost management structure. Office Depot was unable to reduce operating cost significantly rather it reduced its workforce by 6 percent. Despite creating an incentive plan to lure consumers and bolster the sales, it experienced a fall in its sales to 8 percent after the slowdown i.e., it was five percentage points less than Staples's post-recession sales growth rate. Amusingly, Staples increased their head count by 10 percent mainly to support their new high-end product range and services that were introduced and closed down few underutilised facilities. Simultaneously it accommodated its operating cost and emerged out of the recession with vigour, and more cost-effective than it had been in 1999. It doubled its sales, in 2003 (\$14.6 billion), while Office depot's sales increased by whopping 50 percent to \$13.4 billion. After three years of recession, profit margin of Staples was 30 percent more than that of Office Depot<sup>3</sup>.

As we see above, the offensive moves were comprehensive. Why Staples survived is because they developed new opportunities by investing in research and development and marketing. They invested more in assets that had a high rate of interest (ROI) than their archival. Their growth after the recession in their sales and growth in their earnings is the best in the industry. It is important to understand what strategies they used to do so well after recession.

The most common component during the recession is laying off people and most of the companies have proactively followed this path in last few recessions. It is estimated that by the month of April 2020, jobs more than 20.5 million will be lost in the United States itself rest alone other countries<sup>4</sup>. According to a McKinsey report, companies that rely solely on laying off people as a measure for cost cutting, they have as low as 11 percent probability of achieving back their performance level<sup>3</sup>. There can be innumerable reasons for this. The first one and

most important reason could be morale. Morale of the employees working at companies emphasising on operational efficiency tend to have high morale due to commitment by the company's top executives to them and hence they focus on reducing the costs. They do not have to worry about the layoffs as the employees of the other organisation that rely on downsizing does. Although laying off appears to reduce cost quickly, the recovery time for them is difficult. These companies run the risk of hiring new employees too late after recession, especially if recruiting right candidates is difficult than they anticipated. People usually think twice before joining such companies that tend to reduce their workforce in such difficult times. Moreover, when these companies plan to rehire their cost increase drastically. This not only damages the social image of a company but also makes it unsustainable in the long term<sup>3</sup>

### CoVID-19 and current scenario

Recent World Bank report forecasted that average income of a person working in India will be less than what it was in 2019-2020. There might be an enormous and unprecedented economic

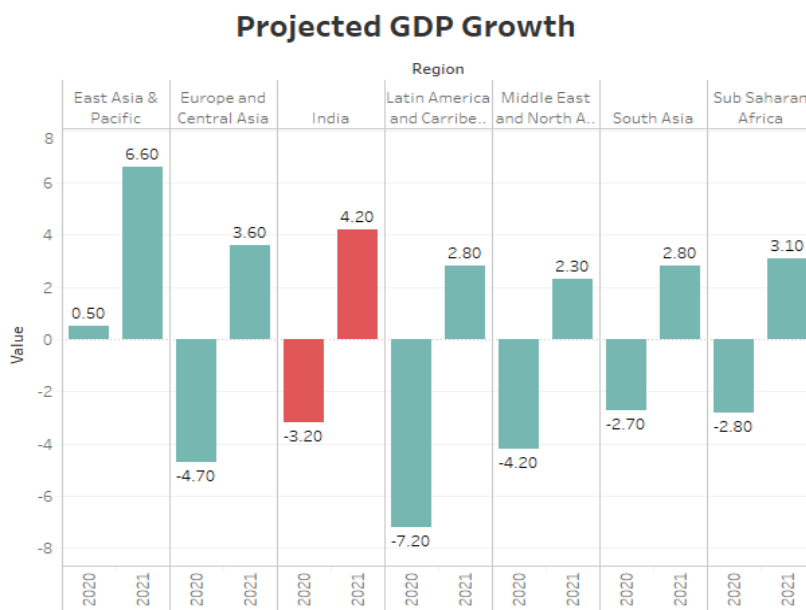


Figure 1. Projected GDP growth of various economies of the World. *Source: World Bank*

uncertainty ahead and to cope up with this, both policy and politics will have a major role. For example, bad policy can delay or even can derail the economic revival. The policy will have to be considerate for a huge and diverse economy India. According to the Global Economic Prospects report released recently by The World Bank, it is expected that the India's

gross domestic product will contract by 3.2 percent in 2020-2021 (Figure. 1) and a moderate recovery is expected in 2021-22 by 3.1 percent<sup>5</sup>. It is quite evident that the growth of the economy will be affected. At present most of the economies are reopening cautiously all around the world. Although rate of virus's spread is increasing, but businesses are surviving with the current need's and are looking ahead in time and planning a safe return of their employees. It

is necessary for the businesses currently to battle the situation and take steps to become resilient for future challenges. Small businesses are facing problems, in particular, as they depended mostly on the footfall of the customers, and this lockdown has raised a big question on their existence.

This crisis has brought focus on one of the most important lessons that is need for speed as there are no speed limits in pandemic, so business should be fast enough to adapt through quick fixes and workarounds and hence the importance of agile organisations cannot be emphasised enough.

Reimagining the workforce post pandemic would be a pressing task for the multinational companies. Executives are wondering how to bring back the workforce safely to the workplaces without risking their lives. On the other hand, they are facing challenges for creating vision and purpose within the workforce working from home and others are working in offices/factories. Hence, the role of HR is increasingly becoming important as the current situation demands extra attention towards the employees and workload is one of the main reasons. Workload has increased for employees to such an extent that employees are not currently working from home, but they are sleeping in office. Hence currently an actively involved role of HR is needed to cope up with this situation.

### **HR has changed a lot in past years since 2007-09 economic recession**

HR's function has changed a lot during last few years. Earlier it revolved around recruitment, onboarding, management and helping the people of the organisation. In other words, HR works is mainly associated with all the projects and operations of the people of the organization and all of that comes under the umbrella of HRM. The members of HRM department essentially aid the organization by coaching and training the employees, recruiting the appropriate talent and then managing that talent, provides legal advice to rest of the organisation to help operate it smoothly. Effective HRM and its policies help achieve organisational goals effectively and productively and help them work constantly towards the vision of the organization.

Over the years the role of HR is changing constantly. It is slowly moving away from the traditional roles such and moving towards more strategic roles. Most of the traditional roles have been automated or are outsourced to the third party<sup>6</sup>. The focus has now been shifted to other roles performing value added tasks and by utilising employees strategically to achieve

organizations long term goals. This can be done by making sure that various employee benefit programs are recommended and implemented affecting business positively. One of the best example for this would be Google<sup>7</sup>. It is known for its employee focused approach. Most of the people know them for their innovation and how strategically their HR team is working. Google knows it is their people that makes them great. They have innumerable amazing facilities for their employees. This includes multiple wellness centres, roller hockey rinks, seven acres sports complex and even subsidised massage. They understand that if people given prime importance and position in an organisation the company will definitely reap its benefit, retain them and achieve their goals as well. Knowing that HR is the crucial thread that ties their employees together senior management makes sure that they are tightly integrated hence, protecting employees as high-end investment.

Another great example would be Nissan<sup>7</sup>. They have blended effective manufacturing technique called Kaizen with that of productivity of British. Kaizen basically is a methodology that allows workers to constantly improve their work and make it more effective. While recruiting each employee is hired based on their skills and drive to learn new things and in organisation, they are further motivated to improve themselves. Their salaries are also according to the industry standards with no system of hidden salaries. Team leaders select their team according to what work they have been given. This approach of constant upskilling and transparent salary structure has worked in favour of the company. They also tend to put workers first while integrating HR and company goals.

With constantly changing working model of HRM, the typical role of human resource manager is constantly evolving. Focal point has changed with realisation of importance of HRM as a strategic player in the success of organisation. Ten years ago, in a survey conducted by SHRM Foundation (Society of Human Resource Management)<sup>8</sup> executives from top companies mentioned that some of the most important future challenges they might be facing would be succession planning and providing leaders with the necessary skills needed to be successful. Today, when asked the same question executives said their top concern currently is recruiting skilled worker. The change is clearly visible in the workplace. It is inclined towards being more individualized and is becoming more focussed on employees. This has pushed employers to search for out of the box solutions and employee focused solutions like flexible workhours, giving tuition to the entry level workers to help assist them move up the ladder in the organisations.

An employment attorney named Kate Bischoff at Thrive Law & Consulting LLC, based out of Minneapolis, said that now the role of HR is changing and focused on making sure that employees feel more valued. The work is becoming more “personalised” than before and focus is shifted to employees<sup>8</sup>.

With companies recognising the importance of employees, company leaders are appreciating HR departments value in help achieving those broad bottom line goals and are they are looking beyond the basics of payroll, personal management, and administration. It is quite evident that companies that focus on employee’s results in greater productivity and in turn help in achieving the major long-term business objectives of the companies. Hence, HR now slowly leaving their silo of doing administrative and personnel management work and is moving more towards strategic work that can eventually help companies help achieve their long-term objectives.

### **Focus of HRM Pre-CoVID-19**

HR department are now focusing more on strategic role and are trying to adopt the same, explicitly by using their talent to drive value rather than just catering to the mundane business needs. This is the transformation companies are trying to make in recent years and corporate leaders are trying to put the mantra ‘people are their biggest asset’ into practice.

Some of the organisations that have started on this are making progress. HR departments of such companies have created centres of excellence (COEs) in various strategic HR areas like Organizational development, talent acquisition and talent management<sup>9</sup>.

### **Focus of HRM Post-CoVID-19**

*Focus on work from home aspect, change in office dynamics and client interactions*



CoVID-19 has bought many challenges for economy as well as to the businesses. Many companies have risen to the occasion and have been acting swiftly to safeguard their workforce. They are migrating to new ways of working to minimise the loss. No organisation envisioned

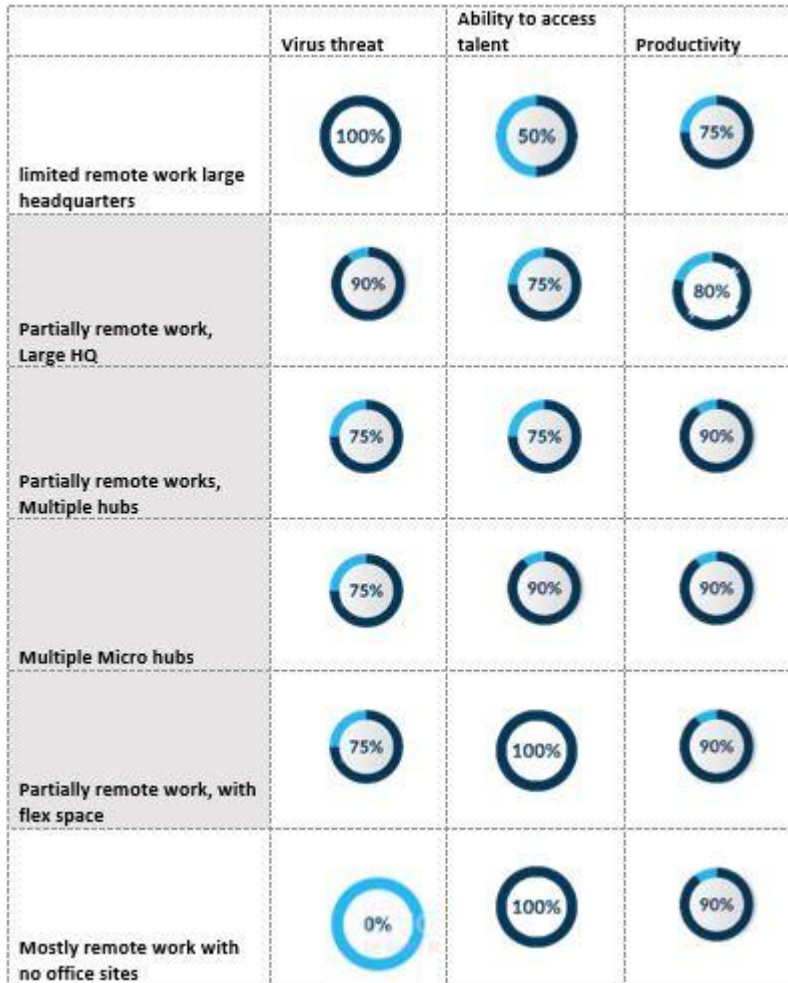


Figure 2. Various Hybrid models.

Source > McKinsey May 2020 report

these times and had not planned for it either. These times will be a great lesson for various organisational leaders from this massive experiment of work from home.

Now as the economies are opening up, organisations are planning to bring some of their workforce to the offices. There are several methods and combinations of remote and on-site working they are trying (Figure 2). McKinsey released a hybrid virtual model that elucidate that some of the employees are on the premises and some are

working from home. There are several advantages and disadvantages to each model, and they have highlighted a few. These new models can help organisations get greater access to talent, increase productivity of individuals and small teams, lower costs and can also help in improving employee experience<sup>10</sup>.

While there are many potential benefits from this model, but history says otherwise. Previously mixing in office and virtual working has been tried and it is harder than it appears to be – regardless of its popularity and success during the pandemic. In 2013, Marissa Mayer (CEO of **Yahoo!**) suddenly discontinued company’s work from home culture at the same time HP Inc<sup>11</sup> did the same. Although specific reason may have varied between the two companies but in

both the cases the downfalls of remote working were greater than its positives. We can find clues of that in the memo that was sent by Marissa at Yahoo!. In that memo it was asserted that speed and quality of work are most likely to be compromised in a virtual setting. The implication was that virtual working slows down overall productivity and decrease the output. It is also claimed that hallway is the area where best ideas are born<sup>11</sup>. We cannot deny the truth that remote work comes with its own set of challenges.

- *Productivity*: Most of the leaders feel that the people who come to office are more productive and gets more work done than others. It was observed in one dataset by **Enkata** (cloud-based analytics software company) that productivity of office-based employees differed by 50% to that virtual working employees. Now there can be several reasons like maybe people at office are leaning from their peers or maybe they just have an idea of what is expected out of them. At the end of the day the bottom line is they give more output per workhour<sup>12</sup>.
- *Idle time*: Either options, whether working from home or in-office working have their own set of distractions. Employees working virtually have their own set of challenges. It is evident in their work. **Enkata** (cloud-based analytics software company) found during a survey that home-based workers have 30% more idle time during their office hours than office-based employees<sup>12</sup>.
- *Break duration*: It was also found out that home-based employees take longer time to get their lunch from the kitchen. Or more accurately home-based employees take longer time to resume back to their work after the lunch hour<sup>12</sup>.

#### *Social ties/bonding between the employees*

When we talk about social ties it is believed that this setting is threat to that as well. Let's consider the example of **Skygear.io**<sup>12</sup>, an open-source platform for app development. Many years ago, when they hired new employees and tried to accommodate them through virtual setting, they soon had to abandon the idea. The employees themselves felt the disconnect and they were missing out on chances to strengthen their bonds with the fellow employees through impromptu team lunch and discussions around interesting facts. The cohesion and trust building activities weren't there anymore. Similarly, **GoNoodle**<sup>12</sup> employees were longing for their freshly remodelled offices to reopen after the lockdown. CEO of **Yahoo!** exclaimed in the memo that they need to be one **Yahoo!** She further said that it would only be possible if all of them would be physically together for impromptu team meetings or may be coffee break<sup>12</sup>.

Careful thinking about management in this remote working idea is required to avoid the pitfalls of remote working. Continuous interaction between leaders, HR and teams is essential for maintaining unity and creating a synchrony in this evolving novel virtual culture that is needed in this new normal.

Current working situations and its effect on culture and performance of employees requires thinking on basic aspect for e.g., which virtual model is suitable for the organisation? And it totally depends on which factors you are thinking of optimizing. Employee productivity? Employee's health? Or your ability to access talent? Employee experience? Each one of them is important and are important goals to consider. But practically we cannot ignore the effect of one factor on another. It is very challenging to address these dynamic factors.

#### *Need of physical spaces*

As the economies are opening organisations need to answer the question the need of physical working spaces and even if they need then how often employees are working remotely. For example, 80 percent of employees are working remotely, and they do so by only working remotely for only two days and rest of the three days they are on the premises. In these three days they are experiencing all that a in office working has to offer helping them build cohesiveness.

#### *Organizing work for a distributed workforce*

Remote working is not just about handing over a laptop to your employees and this has gained more importance in current situation. Some things of office life cannot be recreated. Some of these norms are important for example, traditionally when you left office you were done for the rest of the day. Now it is appropriately said that it is not working from home but rather it is sleeping at office<sup>12</sup>.

For making this virtual working sustainable, human resource staff needs to help their workforce create these boundaries; the hallway interaction can be recreated by a quick phone call rather than a video calling. It might also be helpful to set appropriate working hours for different, people can even share ideas on how to track time, and declaring that email would not be answered after a certain hour would be helpful to maintain this balance.

*Promote best practices in organisations*

For past many years, organisations are trying to inculcate the best practices for collaboration, flexibility, inclusion, and accountability.

Life at the offices is well defined. There are various formal and informal actions that take place in offices. Networks at work are built spontaneously and these can be close circuit networks or keeping people completely out kind of circuit. This is difficult to achieve in virtually, but many companies are doing it for example TED Conferences, conference organiser and webcaster, they create separate virtual rooms where it appears that people are separated but they actually are not. Similarly, Zapier, it is a software company that sets up people randomly in video conferencing just like people bump into each other in hallways. These informal interactions can be built as hence can help organisation in several ways<sup>12</sup>.

*Speeding the process of transition to agility*

Agility can be defined as capability of an organisation to reform and reassess continuously according to the dynamic business environment. Organisations design stable elements that serve as their backbone and also have the capability to slowly evolve according to the constantly changing market environment. McKinsey showed in 2017<sup>12</sup> that agile workforce significantly did better than those who were not agile enough, despite this very few organisations were actually performing agile transformations. Today, due to this current crisis many more organisations are forced to move towards agile transformations, and they have seen positive results.

When corona virus pandemic erupted, transition of companies gained speed. Many businesses-as-usual methodologies to serve customers, working with suppliers, and collaborating with colleagues or basically completing most of the tasks failed. They had to speed up the decision-making process, started using technology and data wherever they could and accelerated the scope and scale of innovation. The companies who were actively involved before pandemic in making their units agile for them this transition was less difficult than others.

*Companies can build crisis management teams*

Crisis management teams are required in emergency like these. The main goal of a crisis's management team is to actively manage the crises level issues. Organisation should also be ready with the crises management plans to address various issues related to well-being of employees as well as company well operations that this situation might trigger. McKinsey in

its recent report have mentioned a new concept of what is called Nerve centers<sup>15</sup>, a flexible structure for guiding the work. These nerve centres work when there are unfamiliar crises such as COVID-19 outbreak. This centre concentrates on crucial leadership skills and organizational capabilities and helps leaders get ahead of the situation and prepare for any scenario that lies ahead. Nerve centre is not essentially solution to every crisis. It is basically effective and efficient way of coordinating organisations active response towards major crises. It helps leaders and experts to get enough time to test various approaches fast and then preserve the solution and implement that in the time of crises and help them move ahead in these constantly changing environment.

In times like these they also make sure that employees take responsibility of visiting to healthcare centre on regular basis. In crisis management mode, right mix of technology, strategy and agility is required to ensure business continuity.

*Local HR managers can be given the rights to take decisions*

The outbreak of the coronavirus can be a major disruption that can affect global operations of a company for months. Still, outbreaks affect some regions more rapidly and severely than others, so giving local HR managers leeway to act and react independently would be a sensible step at this point.

*Use this time to upskill and reskill the employees*

Reskilling can be defined as learning of new skills to help people move into new role, whereas upskilling is training people that enables them to become better at their current job. Even before this crises, it was estimated that 375 million workers will be required to perform job switch or need to upskill to continue with their job by 2030 because of new technologies like automation and machine learning coming in<sup>16</sup>. According to a recent survey by McKinsey global institute<sup>17</sup>, 87 percent of executives experienced skill gaps with few years of joining an organisation and more than half of them didn't have clear idea of how to approach this problem which was only worsened by this pandemic. These challenges should not only be addressed by employees but also by the organisations.

To meet these challenges, organizations should carefully draft strategies that will help employees develop their cognitive and digital capabilities. These strategies would also help workforce to develop their emotional skills and help them work on their adaptability and resilience. One way of handling agility could be to identify the workforce than can be upskilled

quickly and hence building a companywide strong foundation of data-savvy workforce. There are various trends that are emerging these days such as AI, IoT, Robotics, Machine Learning and Blockchain that needs a digitally strong workforce that can lead the data-driven transformation. Working on this muscle would definitely help the organization dealing with untimely disruptions like CoVID-19. Now is the perfect timing for the leaders to invest on reskilling the employees by investing more on the learning budget. This would help the organizations to build, test and implement unique and novel business models in the post pandemic period.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

More than ever in these unprecedented times, the role of HR is undeniably important as appropriately said “employees are not only working from home, but they are actually sleeping at work”. Also, many companies are planning to bring significant amount of workforce back to the offices soon<sup>10</sup>. Hence, bringing back employees with all the safety measures with proper reassurance would also be a major task for HR Manager.

One of the most important aspects is companies need to start upskilling/reskilling their employees as that would help them emerge stronger after COVID19 crises. Even before the current crisis technology was constantly changing and there was a constant need of reskilling as jobs were constantly disrupting. As we are moving towards new era of hyper-digital world investing in employee reskilling and upskilling will give big returns to the companies. Employees too, including new grads and mid-level managers, are looking for a sharp growth curve and the skills that they learned in colleges or on the job are not wholly relevant to the changing tech landscape. It is first the responsibility of the workforce to work out ways to adapt with these constantly evolving technologies and secondly it is the responsibility of the companies on how to blend these employees to the new positions and activities. This is not just about AI or automation or remote working it is beyond that. Hence, importance of reskilling and upskilling cannot be emphasised enough and this lockdown during the pandemic would be perfect timing for investing in upskilling and reskilling of the employees.

As the lockdown is getting eased and companies are now planning to call their employees to the offices it is important for the organisations to take all the necessary steps to ensure the safety of the employees. Continuous monitoring of epidemiological situation and evaluating continuously changing public health will be play a key role in reopening process of the

economies. Both clients and the employees will be needing assurance for products/services workplace safety. While there are still debates going around as to what will be the best timing for the workforce to return on site but consideration regarding how to establish work place and products/services safety would be a great start to reassuring the consumers and employees.

Some of the organizations also are planning change management practices to reinforce the behavioural change required for the safe return of the employees. The most common practice among them are models of communication and role of leadership to implement practices modelling the safe behaviours to help reinforce that in their workforce. Organisations are also trying to reinforce safe workplace practices and are planning to put forward the rule of taking disciplinary measure against those who fail to follow healthcare protocols mandated by the organisations. But most importantly according to a survey most of the companies are emphasising on implementing changes in practices, policies, and physical work environment. People also have mentioned that their organisations have either taken or are in the middle of implementation of these policies to safeguard their workforce's interests. Most companies are making changes across these four types of interventions: limiting person-to-person contact, identifying, and isolating potentially infectious people, increasing hygiene protocols, and using PPE.

Current situation of Covid-19 is posing as a challenge to many companies and its leadership. Companies also must figure out the long-term model they are planning to adopt to continue and move forward with this new normal. The role of the HR in both the conditions is extremely important. For example, talking about the videoconferencing that is lifeline for today's business life, can reveal parts of personal life. Online meetings can also prove to be isolating if dominated by the loudest vice. Here HR can help combat these challenges by establishing a direct communication with their employees and make sure that they aren't facing any issues and supporting them.

This was an overview of current business situation around the world and how this situation is affecting various businesses. We have also seen how role of HR is changing after 2007 recession and current growing importance of Human resource manager as most of the work done currently by the employees is from home and there is a major disruption in work life balance of the employees. We have shown some downsides of work from home model and how previously various companies reverted to traditional working from office. Lastly, we have

suggested various virtual models a company can adopt and threw some light on steps HR managers can adopt to get through these unprecedented times.

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