

Impact of Covid 19 on Human Resource Management (HRM) for Construction Project – A Review

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Abstract— The construction industry is one of the most important industries for national development in Asia. In India the Construction industry is a developing industry. It has gained a boom in the last five decades, especially in big cities. The growth of employment in this industry has been noteworthy. It is very difficult for this industry to implement and track the human resource policies than other industries. HR professionals' face a lot of challenges to enforce policies due to the nature of construction. It is an unorganized sector and most of the time human driven; a large number of people are working in this sector. In the pandemic of COVID-19 most of the construction sites are being halted due to fear about the infection of Coronavirus. The projects are already delayed in relation to completion and handover. The developers are not only facing the cost escalation risk but also afraid of the spreading of COVID-19 in project sites. In building and construction industry where workers work closely together there is a high risk of exposure to COVID-19 virus. During this epidemic situation all the employers and constructors should implement the control measures to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and provide a safe work environment to the workers. This Pandemic has grandly shaken all organizations, creating a complex and challenging environment for managers and Human Resource Management (HRM).

Keywords: Covid-19, Human Resource Management, Human Resource Management Strategies, Construction Companies

I. INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management or HRM is the process of managing people in a company/firm as well as managing their existing interpersonal relationships. These two processes are key in the success and growth of a business. Human resource management is the management process of an organization's workforce, or human resources. It is responsible for the attraction, selection, training, assessment, and rewarding of employees, while also overseeing organizational leadership and culture and ensuring compliance with employment and labour laws. In a few short months from January 2020 the corona virus that spread across the globe transformed the world of work. Millions of workers lost their jobs or were placed on government support schemes as businesses and consumers changed their behaviour in response to the risks of contracting the virus. During the pandemic, the situation drastically deteriorated by firstly shortage of construction material supply, which then impacted the construction industry. Following the spread of the virus, many countries started implementing several measures to reduce movement of people, and that has mainly obstructed the construction

because it requires on-site work and every project member must be available to work, check, and monitor all the work activities. Human resource managers who are in charge of hiring people, managing performance, salaries and benefits, and also developing and revising labour's classifications are looking for innovative, creative, and effective ways to solve the problems, maintain their health and support them by creating a reliable management strategy. The purpose is to identify unknown challenges, strategies, and unusual decisions related to human resource management other than clinical organizations during the COVID-19 crisis and to learn from current covid situation and take action in future if similar situation occurs.

II. FACTOR AFFECTING HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN CONSTRUCTION SECTOR:

- 1) Abhishek A. Sutar *et al.*, (2017) Overview of Human Resource Management System in Construction Industry was carried out. In which they discussed about various factors effecting HRM and found out that organizational, economic, psychological, individual, and moderating were the main factors.
- 2) Ana Majstorović *et al.*, (2019) the emphasis is on the importance of human resource management in practice through recognition of human factor as the key potential of a successful construction company. This paper deals with the importance of rewarding the employee as special practice of human resource management and presents a proposed model of rewarding the employee in real construction company.
- 3) D. Prasanna Kumar *et al.*, (2018) Human Resources Management plays crucial role in the construction industry as the work from starting to ending should be taken care by the people who are working in the construction industry. To execute a project Human resources needed to be focused. The findings revealed that Cost is majorly considered by the employees in construction projects with respect to profits of the projects, Time is the secondary thing that is important in construction projects and finally Quality is given least preference by the employees of the construction companies as it has importance in the construction projects.
- 4) O. J. Ameh *et al.*, (2017) assesses the current human resource management practices in the Nigerian construction organization and the challenges confronting it. Furthermore, training and development practices were superficial, involving orienting newly recruited employee on facilities for optimum performance rather than developing employee job related competences.

Provision of appropriate/modern working tools and equipment and provision of incentives and benefits to staff were the prevailing motivation and labour union practices. Challenges facing human resource management practice in the Nigerian construction industry include high labour turnover, interference at the selection stage, competitive wages and compensation issues among others. Further research is required to assess the impact of identified human resource practices on productivity and project performance.

- 5) S. Sharmila *et al.*, (2015) Human Resource Management is the process of attracting, developing and maintaining the talented and energetic workforce to support organizational mission, objectives and strategies. The primary objective of this paper is to study the impact of human resource management practices among laborers in construction and to identify the current trends in human resource management in construction projects and finally analysing the factors affecting human resource management system in the construction projects.
- 6) Renard Yung Jhien Siew while environmental sustainability has been the subject of much debate in the last decade, it was not until recently that attention started to shift towards human resource management as an enabler for sustainability. Suggested proficiency levels are then mapped to main construction related jobs based on the framework. An example is also given to illustrate the manner in which competencies should be assessed. This framework is original and of practical use to construction managers and human resource practitioners.
- 7) Malkani (2013) Workforce is the most valuable asset for an efficient outcome of any organization and this is especially true in case of labour-intensive industries such as construction. Therefore this paper mainly focuses on how to identify the different components of human resources management in the construction. A detailed survey has been conducted to identify HRM related issues within the construction company and result were analysed keeping main focus on the human resource practices that are generally pursued in the Indian construction industry, availability of skilled labour and formal or informal method or forms commonly adopted for the management of the human resource.
- 8) Jianjian Du (2014) the paper examines human resource management literature and identifies the application of the related management techniques to the construction industry. In addition, the paper uses the literature analysis to describe the nature of human resource management with particular reference to international construction projects. In particular, the research described in this paper identifies economic performance factors in the implementation human resource management in international construction projects. This paper also identifies the social effects of human resource management practices.
- 9) I. Othman *et al.*, (2012) he covered the problem concerning human resource management in the construction of a sustainable development project needs to be identified and methods for improvement need to be formulated for the success of the project. A case study

was undertaken at a construction site in Kuala Lumpur. The results of the study show that there was awareness among the contractors in Malaysia about the importance of human resource management on the success of construction of a sustainable development project.

III. FACTORS AFFECTING HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN CONSTRUCTION SECTOR DURING COVID-19:

- 1) Apurva Pamidimukkala *et al.*, (2021) challenges were identified and classified into five categories, and the results revealed that the lack of a safe environment in the workplace, heavy workloads, home situations, and concerns about job stability often contribute to anxiety, depression, and even suicide. Eleven strategies were identified to overcome these challenges, and the results demonstrated that redefining worksite safety by placing signs, ensuring a safe distance between workers, providing sanitizers and washing stations in the fields, and utilizing effective technologies would enhance project productivity while keeping workers safe.
- 2) Van Tam Nguyen *et al.*, (2021) this study aims to assess the impact of pandemic on the construction industry through an investigation in Vietnam. The implications of COVID-19 on the construction industry were examined based on simple percentage analysis and Relative Importance Index approaches. The findings highlighted the multilevel, multidimensional nature of the epidemic consequences on the construction sector.
- 3) N. Suresh Kumar *et al.*, (2021) this study aims to determine the impact of COVID-19 on the human resource policies and practices in the Indian service sector. For this examination qualitative analysis has been conducted based on 10 HR managers of IT and hospitality industry in Bengaluru, India. Herein, it was observed that HR managers struggled to engage their employees in disciplined manner and there was high resistance in employees to cope up with the newly developed remote working culture of the firms. The interviewees affirmed that several online opportunities like hybrid approach or people centric working style can lead to better management of employees' wellbeing and derive effectiveness.
- 4) Mohammad Reza Azizi *et al.*, (2021) gives detail information about unknown challenges, strategies, and unusual decisions related to human resource management other than clinical organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study applied a narrative review approach dissection based on organizations' human resource management strategies to combat the COVID-19 impacts. Then study developed a conceptual framework of human resource management strategies based on the literature findings to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. They concluded that appropriate human resource management strategies implementations would increase employees' mental well-being, satisfaction, productivity, motivation, and health safety at the workplace.
- 5) Stavros Kalogiannidis *et al.*, (2021) this study was based on survey data collected from a total of 150 participants that included 50 HRM experts and 100 marketing

professionals. The data was collected using a well-designed survey questionnaire that was posted online for the different HRM experts. Additional data was collected from different secondary sources such as journals, textbooks, and government documents having information relating to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the HRM practices as well as marketing in different organizations across the world. Data analysis and results were presented in form of tables and charts.

- 6) Salima Hamouche (2021) it was seen that the COVID-19 has grandly shaken all organizations, creating a complex and challenging environment for managers and human resource management (HRM) practitioners, who need to find ingenious solutions to ensure the continuity of their companies and to help their employees to cope with this extraordinary crisis. Studies addressing the impact of this crisis on HRM are sparse. This paper is a general literature review, which aims at broadening the scope of management research, by exploring the impact of the COVID-19 on HRM. It identifies the main challenges and opportunities that have arisen from this new pandemic and it offers insights for managers and HRM practitioners into possible future organizational directions that might arise from these opportunities.
- 7) Aron Hagos (2021) the Primary study stated that workplaces have a major influence on people's quality of life and the ability to impact employee wellbeing. The COVID-19 has created a challenging environment for human resource management (HRM) by causing employees who formerly spent all or most of their time working inside their organization's physical boundaries now have to adjust to remote work environments. The dominant models within HRM theory and research continue to focus largely on ways to improve performance, with employee concerns very much a secondary consideration. However, there is a strong ethical and biblical case for focusing on employee's wellbeing. Therefore, in this unprecedented time, HRM should focus on the wellbeing of employees and devise an alternative route that enhances employee wellbeing and at the same time improve performance.
- 8) Shammy Shiri *et al.*, (2021) described that there has been a world alarming and warming situation due to global outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic taking along most important the human cost, mentally, physically with economic cost too. The sudden work culture shift has created new challenges for Human Resource (HR) professionals and in this time of global critical condition, the companies and organizations need their HR professionals to help the employees out of this badly driven health and economic crisis. The HR Professionals has been actively partnering with Business to solve some of the trickiest questions the business world faces today. This article discusses some of the priorities and challenges faced by HR professionals in helping the employees to adjust and cope with their changed work environment during COVID-19 pandemic.
- 9) Mark Butterick *et al.*, (2021) found that the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic has exposed deep labour market inequalities. Partially underpinning these inequalities are human resource management (HRM) theories and practices which encourage and legitimize the commodification of labour. Workers whose jobs have been commodified have suffered disproportionately during the pandemic. While HRM is not wholly responsible for this suffering it is important for those of us involved in researching, teaching and practicing HRM to reflect on the ways in which what we do has made a bad situation worse so that we can do better in the future.
- 10) Jihad Fraji (2021) examine the impact of COVID-19 on Human Resources Management (HRM) practices in a developing country (Jordan). This study examines, in particular, the impact of the COVID-19 on employee Recruitment, Training, and management of performance and compensation. In the study, e HRM has been recommended to minimize physical interactions between individuals, as well as to engage employees in crisis-management strategies.
- 11) Sylwia Przytuła *et al.*, (2020) research method was a review of the most recent research findings from business practice and from scientific literature concerning the impact of the pandemic on various fields of human resource management. Due to the growing flood of media information, the authors wanted to select the most updated HR practices implemented in organizations from the reliable and acknowledgeable sources. This article is becoming an important voice on the impact of a pandemic on the HR practices. The emerging and current results of research on HR trends will allow targeting education systems and equipping employees with the most predictable competences which will be useful in the era after the pandemic.
- 12) N Sulaiman *et al.*, (2021) study emphasizes on identifying and overcoming Covid-19 challenges, faced by human resource management (HRM) while managing personnel in organized retail stores. Data for this study were drawn from a review of secondary sources on practical insights about Covid-19 challenges, suggesting tangible solutions to solve them, which should be addressed at the earliest to ensure successful retail operations avoiding unexpected chaos created by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 13) Yaser Gamil *et al.*, (2020) this case study aims to investigate the effect of COVID 19 on the construction industry's survival. The impacts and fallout have been determined and evaluated through the recruitment of construction experts and practitioners. The impacts have been classified into different groups which include economic, human resources. The study implied two methods include exploratory interviews and questionnaire surveys. The study found the most prominent impacts of COVID 19 are the suspension of projects, labour impact and job loss, time overrun, cost overrun, and financial implications. The findings also help project stakeholders to realize the sequences of the sudden epidemic and prepare for the worst-case scenario during the planning stage of the construction projects.
- 14) Iza Gigauri (2020) study adopted two methods to collect the data. The first method was by conducting an exploratory interview with ten selected experts from the construction industry sectors to share and express their insights and opinions on the current state of the

construction industry in the mid of pandemic freely. Additionally, the experts were asked to share the impact of the pandemic on the construction industry. The interviews were conducted remotely using Skype due to the restriction of movement in the mid of epidemic. The second method is quantitative data by associating construction practitioners to assess the level of impact using a five Likert type scale. A total of 129 respondents participated in answering the questionnaire survey and the result where given in tables.

IV. CONCLUSION

It is obvious that COVID-19 as a global external factor made the Human Resource Management practices difficult in construction industry i.e. introduce new rules, policies, tools to adjust employees to the new situation and still to continue business purposes. This study documents the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on construction workforces and proposes strategies to effectively mitigate the challenges. Various challenges were identified through the existing literature and were classified into five categories: organizational, economic, psychological, individual, and moderating. while expressing the challenges of the COVID-19 crisis we came the strategies of human resource management that should be used by organization managers to increase satisfaction, productivity, motivation, adaptation to change, welfare, and health of employees in the workplace by creating better working conditions, talent management, and flexibility.

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