

## EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: EVIDENCE FROM THE APPAREL INDUSTRY

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### Abstract

Owing to the persistent changes in the business climate, firms are progressively looking at their human resources (HRs) as a crucial resource that can help with harvesting competitive advantage. HRs are considered by numerous individuals to be the main resource of a firm for sustaining competitiveness. Drastic transformations brought about by COVID-19 have affected human resources significantly in many ways. Therefore, the study aims to explore the effect of COVID-19 on human resource management. Using a purposive sampling technique, the data were marshaled from Managers, HR managers, and executives working in the apparel industry. The findings demonstrate that organizations, along with the HR supervisors, must formulate precautionary countermeasures, rethink, and reform new HR strategies concerning their human resources for distant just as blended working frameworks as a reaction to current and future emergencies. Employees also require training and development interventions to reinforce their capability to concur the unprecedented situations. Firms have to reimagine and reform their jobs to improve productivity. Additionally, COVID-19 has changed the experience of work for by far most employees.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Competitive advantage, Human resource management, Business environment, Competitiveness

### Introduction

In a real sense, human resources are the heart of an organization. Firms now are operating in an uncertain turbulent environment. In response, the firm requires highly competent and vibrant human resources. According to Opatha (2019), all other resources make things possible human resources make things happen. Further, he defines HRM as the efficient and effective exploitation of human resources to accomplish a firm's goals. Therefore, human resources are inevitable in organizational life. Hence, it is the firm's responsibility to manage its human resources effectively and efficiently to reap organizational success. Mathis, Jackson, and Valentine (2015) stated that human resource management as a field is undergoing dramatic change. Human resource management is thus, designing management systems to ensure that human talent is harnessed effectually and efficiently to attain firms' goals and objectives. They help the firm to confront unforeseen circumstances and elicit business performance. Human resource management (HRM) claims significant accountability for the success or failure of a firm (de Waal, 2007; Haslinda, 2009). HRM refers to the process of managing human talent and expertise to attain an organization's objective (Haslinda, 2009).

Many studies highlighted that the efficient management of employees' skills knowledge and abilities can help to reap a competitive advantage that results in a firm's superior performance (Kengatharan, 2019; Rauch & Hatak, 2014). If human resources are a pivotal element in effectively confronting the rivalry in the marketplace, unique thinking about HR management is vital. Undoubtedly, today, there is no doubt that the swift spread of COVID-19 is pressing an effect on business firms around the world, and remarkably the relationship with human resources as well. An outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has created dramatic threats to international health and the economy as a whole (Huang et al., 2020). According to World Health Organization (WHO), Coronavirus is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus, and the COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Consequently, this has resulted in unforeseen consequences per se. From the perspective of HRM, the emerging threat for the business firm is the coronavirus. Therefore, the study aims to investigate the effect of COVID-19 on human resource management in the apparel industry.

Many countries have shown initiative by executing crisis measures to forestall the disease spreading. In this specific circumstance, schools and colleges, kindergartens, films, exhibition halls, and eateries have been shut, public occasions and events have been canceled, individuals isolated, travel limitations, closed borders, and dropped departures from and to nations with a significant degree of defilement (for example China, Italy, France, Spain, US, Canada). The COVID-19 pandemic can be identified with numerous stressors that may deplete workers' emotional well-being, during and after this pandemic. In this segment, they have made the differentiation between the stressors during the COVID-19 pandemic and those that can develop after this pandemic. The pain that an individual feels isn't the issue. It is rather the result of the issue (Mirowsky & Ross, 2017). Along these lines, it is essential to comprehend the issue to have the option to recognize solutions that will help workers and firms to diminish the danger of emotional well-being issues. This is the primary target of this article.

For sure, it appears that during a pandemic outbreak, particularly on account of an obscure new infection, people's psychological wellness issues can now and again be to a great extent disregarded. The objectives of the current paper were twofold. Firstly, COVID-19 severely influenced businesses and its operations, more specifically the human resources of the firms. Therefore, it needs to be studied the effects of COVID-19 on human resource management. Secondly, to assess the primary firm interventions, from a human resource management viewpoint, which may relieve this effect. As we write up this paper, COVID-19 is spreading so quickly. Thinking about its oddity, studies, which have investigated its effect on people's emotional wellness, are inadequate. Additionally, there are not many studies that have analyzed this epidemiological fiasco from a managerial point of view.

## **Theoretical underpinning**

### **COVID-19**

COVID-19 is a new infection that has been found with its outbreak in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. Presently, it has spread at a fast pace to affect a few nations (Liu et al., 2020). As per WHO (2020), on March 31, 2020, this infection spread over 202 nations, or areas with 693,224 affirmed cases and 33,391 deaths. As cited in Hamouche (2020), 'COVID-19 presents the worldwide economy with its most serious threat since the monetary crisis. 'Indeed, even in the most ideal situation of restricted outbreaks in nations outside China, a sharp stoppage in world development is normal in the first half of 2020 as supply chains and products are hit, the travel industry drops and certainty vacillates. Worldwide economic growth is seen tumbling to 2.4% for the entire year, contrasted with a generally feeble 2.9% in 2019' (OECD, 2020). As indicated by the world health organization (WHO) Coronavirus illness (COVID-19) is an irresistible infection brought about by a newfound Covid. The vast majority contaminated with the COVID-19 infection will encounter gentle to

direct respiratory disease and recuperate without requiring special treatment. Older people and those with basic clinical issues like cardiovascular infection, diabetes, persistent respiratory sickness, and disease are bound to foster serious ailments. The best way to deal with preventing and frustrating transmission is to be particularly educated about the COVID-19 disease, the ailment it causes, and how it spreads. Safeguard yourself just as others from being infected by washing your hands or using an alcohol-based rub frequently and not contacting your face. The COVID-19 disease spreads basically through dabs of spit or delivery from the nose when a polluted individual hacks or sneezes, so it's critical that you additionally practice respiratory behaviour (for example, by hacking into a flexed elbow). At present, there are no specific antibodies or prescriptions for COVID-19. In any case, various consistent clinical primers are surveying potential meds.

Opatha (2020) embodied that COVID-19 is a plague that can spread from a tainted individual to an individual. Spreading happens between individuals who are in close contact with each other (inside around 6 feet) and through respiratory drops delivered when a contaminated individual hacks or snuffles (these drops can land in the mouths or noses of individuals who are close by or conceivably be breathed in into the lungs) as indicated by the understanding data given on the Website of the UC Davis Health Experts. Further, the Website gives that at present it is accepted patients are at their most infectious when they are generally suggestive, and some spread may be conceivable before individuals show side effects. Zhou et al. (2020, p. 34) express, "the prevailing variable deciding if one gets contaminated or not is the opportunity of openness. Thus, it cannot be essentially presumed that better resistance will bring down one's danger of being contaminated. Kids have fewer odds of openness and in this way a lower likelihood of disease. Be that as it may, at a similar openness, senior individuals.

*Status of Coronavirus Impact - the World*

Coronavirus Cases	173,711,819
Deaths	3,735,990
Recovered	156,583,426

*Source: worldometer, up to date June 06, 2021*

*Status of Coronavirus Impact in Sri Lanka Coronavirus Cases*

Coronavirus Cases	202,357
Deaths	1,656
Recovered	166,132

*Source: worldometer, up to date June 06, 2021*

Symptoms of coronavirus can include runny nose, sore throat, headache, fever, cough, and shortness of breath (UC Davis Health Experts). Zhou et al. (2020, p. 34). The novel coronavirus is newly emergent in humans. Thus, the overall residents are susceptible since they have a deficiency of immunity against it. 2019-nCoV can infect people with normal or compromised immunity. The quantity of revelation to the virus too controls whether you get infected or not. If you are visible to a big quantity of viruses, you may get sick even if your immune function is normal. For people with poor immune function, such as aging, expectant women, or people with liver or kidney dysfunction, the disease grows comparatively rapidly and the indications are more critical.

**Human resource management**

Resourced-based-view (RBV) and Ability, Motivation, and Opportunity (AMO) theory give off an impression of being the most mainstream speculations applied in the investigations that link HRM and performance (Kengatharan, 2020; Paauwe & Boselie, 2005). RBV contends that human resource is one of the firm's assets, a subset of which empowers them to accomplish competitive advantage, and a subset of

those that lead to unrivaled long-haul execution (Barney, 1991). The AMO theory represents that when workers are persuaded, they are probably going to perform better, prompting higher firm execution (Paauwe & Boselie, 2005). Globalization and a competitive business environment have reinvigorated manufacturing-based firms to be vigilant in their HRM practices to produce new products and new technologies (Shipton et al., 2005). Effectiveness and efficiency hang on to how the HR system is being organized and managed in organizations. According to Armstrong (2020), Human resource management implies a strategic and coherent approach to the management of a firm's most valued assets – the individuals working there who individually and together led to the attainment of its objectives. Story (1989) posits that HRM can be viewed as a 'set of organized approaches with an ideological and philosophical background. The general purpose of HRM is to guarantee that the firm can make progress through individuals. As Ulrich and Lake (1990) comment: 'HRM frameworks can be the source of organizational capabilities that permit firms to learn and capitalize on new opportunities. Human resource management (HRM) is the way toward utilizing individuals, preparing them, remunerating them, developing policies relating to them, and creating procedures to retain them. As a field, HRM has gone through numerous progressions throughout the most recent twenty years, giving it a significantly more significant part in the present firms.

In all firms, human resource management can assume a critical part through its processes which allude to the profoundly ingrained, firm-explicit, and dynamic capacities. These become to some degree routines by which a firm draws in, socializes, trains, propels, assesses, and repays its HR so that firm will accomplish its hierarchical objectives through its capabilities. Storey (2001) outlines HRM as "an identical way to deal with employment management which tries to accomplish competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of an exceptionally dedicated and proficient labour force, utilizing a coordinated cluster of social, primary and individual techniques". It aims at improving the performance and productivity of the organization by finding out the effectiveness of its human capital. To be a source of competitive advantage, human resources must create organizational value. Resources are valuable if they allow the organization to develop strategies that improve efficiency and efficacy (Barney, 1991). One of the elements of HRM is health and safety management which alludes to every one of the exercises engaged with ensuring and advancing the physical and emotional well-being of the employees so they can perform jobs productively and effectively (Opatha, 2009). Advancing working environment safety and health is a basic HRM movement and the advantages of a protected and solid workplace incorporate (1) greater productivity attributable to fewer lost workdays, (2) expanded effectiveness and quality from a more dedicated labour force, (3) diminished clinical and protection costs, (4) bring down specialists' remuneration rates and direct installments in light of fewer cases being filled, (5) more prominent adaptability and versatility in the labour force because of expanded cooperation and an expanded feeling of proprietorship, and (6) better determination proportions as a result of the upgraded picture of the association (Jackson & Schuler, 2003). There is a tremendous contest in the market organizations need exceptionally developed individuals with the applicable knowledge, however more critically with unique abilities who can adjust rapidly to the climate, who can dominate new capabilities, are open to innovations, can learn, and have imaginative inventive abilities. Also, the labour force should deal with self-development. Companies should expound business coherence plan, and foster their HR, opening up inner assets and capacities, assemble adaptable cycles, embrace new advancements, and make situations for business measure congruity.

### **COVID-19 and Human resource management**

Moreover, financial misfortune and job insecurity might be considered durable stressors identified with COVID-19. Truth be told, COVID-19 has led to firms' disruption of certain organizations that will require time to recuperate from the monetary outcomes of this pandemic. This may make an overflow impact on the employment market with a likely dependable adverse consequence on workers' finances which may prompt an adverse consequence on their psychological wellness. For sure, those debacles that outcome in major

monetary issues for people are related to undeniable degrees of serious and tenacious mental impacts (Norris et al., 2002). Besides, the effect of the pandemic on organizations would essentially expand one's inclination toward job insecurity, which can contrarily affect the psychological wellness of employees who are influenced by the organizational changes of closure and decrease in working hours during COVID-19. The adverse consequence of job insecurity has been broadly reported in the literature on emotional well-being in the working environment (Strazdins et al., 2004). The expenses for the firm are extremely high when its high-performing individuals become contaminated. If an exceptional worker passes on attributable to Coronavirus, the cost of death is uncountable. The misfortune is enormous. At the point when an employee is distinguished as a Coronavirus patient by the pertinent clinical authority, the whole unit, office, or firm should be closed down. The term of closing down might be three weeks or more. During this time frame, the firm will get endured attributable to diminished productivity, declined market share, increased medical claims, and decreased profits. Subsequently, the level of intensity of danger of Coronavirus is extremely high or might be colossal humanly and monetarily (Opatha, 2020). Corona significantly affects individuals. No employees are working in any firm that is safe for Corona. Adversely and straightforwardly or by implication all workers in all firms on the planet were affected, are being affected, and will be affected by Corona. It can influence supervisors just as non-managers at all levels of the firm. Some employees got captured by Corona. They endured and some passed on and some got restored.

As of late, the COVID-19 pandemic has made demanding conditions for human resource supervisors. With regards to emotional changes throughout the planet because of the pandemic, firms need to react and adjust to the modifications and appropriately deal with the labour force (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). Sheppard and Thomas (2021) contend that organizations need to plan for additional progressions and volatile times. They ought to receive innovations that are stage-based and foster novel plans of action (Sheppard, 2020). HRM has a huge job in assisting employees with conquering the challenges brought by the unforeseen changes in the working environment just as in the general public (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). In addition, the advanced and communitarian abilities of the labour force are needed to move to virtual work. The found literature claims an adverse consequence of COVID-19 on a person's emotional wellness. Stressors incorporate the impression of security, danger, and hazard of disease, infobesity versus the obscure, isolation and restriction, disgrace, and social avoidance just as monetary loss and job insecurity. Employers must secure their employees and guarantee a work environment liberated from dangers that may truly hurt them or cause their demise. The current circumstance brought about by COVID-19 is trying for associations everywhere in the world. In this situation, managers should work intimately with human resource specialists and health institutions to foster a safety and well-being plan which will forestall the danger of disease and Covid spread inside the firm. The firm's approaches assume a significant part in this setting in limiting the spread of the infection. Training is fundamental during and after the pandemic. It is considered a defensive factor against psychological well-being issues. It assists with instructing employees about the essential practices and their significance in the anticipation of viral spread. General schooling about COVID-19 and the explanations behind isolation can diminish belittling (Brooks et al., 2020) in the working environment. Training additionally needs to include managers. Coronavirus is a startling emergency, supervisors should be instructed and prepared on the best way to appropriately oversee it, which may decrease their degree of stress. They additionally should be prepared on how they ought to oversee virtual groups, thinking about the setting of teleworking, to have the option to help their colleagues. Co-advancement projects ought to be executed in this specific situation, to foster representatives' and chiefs' capacities to adapt to the COVID-19 effect on the work environment.

## **Methods**

To attain the aforesaid objective, this study relayed on a qualitative approach. Enchantingly, ideal qualitative studies enlighten the real problems at hand through the application and or development of conceptual analysis

(Fine, 2010). Schein (1990) disclosed the significance of harnessing a qualitative approach to glean observations about organizational cultures between individuals of organizations. Qualitative research is a situated activity that navigates the observer on the planet. It comprises a bunch of interpretive, material practices that make the world apparent. These practices change the world. They transform the world into a progression of portrayals, including field notes, interviews, discussions, photos, recordings, and updates to oneself. At this level, qualitative research includes an interpretive, naturalistic way to deal with the world. This implies that qualitative specialists study things in their common settings, endeavouring to figure out, or decipher, phenomena through the implications individuals bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The purposive sampling method is a kind of non-probability sampling that is best when one needs to examine a specific social domain with knowledgeable specialists within. Purposive sampling may likewise be utilized with both qualitative and quantitative research designs. The inherent bias of the technique adds to its efficiency, and the method stays robust even when tested against random probability sampling. Picking purposive sampling is a key to the nature of the information assembled; thus, the reliability and competence of the informant should be guaranteed (Tongco, 2007). A total of nine (N=9) executives were chosen for the study, based on the infer that they have the theoretical knowledge and understanding of the concepts of Human resource management and COVID-19. It is pertinent and imperative for the accomplishment of such an investigation to utilize specific people with unique knowledge and comprehension of such a problem (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

### **Instrument**

The expert interview approach was adopted to glean the data for this study. The expert interview method an exploratory research tool is recognized as broadly utilized in empirical studies for data acquisition (Bogner, Littig, & Menz, 2009). The utilization of expert interviews has for quite some time been famous in social research. The real job of the expert interviews in individual research design, their structure, and the strategies used to dissect the outcomes may change from one case to another, yet there are as yet various common, practical explanations behind their popularity in research (Bogner, Littig, & Menz, 2009). It is also clear that expert interviews offer researchers a powerful method for rapidly getting results and, indeed, rapidly gaining incredible outcomes. Often, the way that the interviewer and the interviewee share a regular logical foundation or importance system can grow the level of motivation regarding the expert to partake in an interview. A shared comprehension of the social importance of the exploration can then regularly be expected, generally taking out the prerequisite for additional justification.

### **Mode of Analysis**

Qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis are two frequently harnessed techniques in data analysis of nursing research (Vaismoradi & Turunen, 2013). Both content and thematic analysis techniques are appropriate for responding to queries such as: what are the concerns of individuals regarding a situation? What explanations do people have for using or not using a service or procedure? The scope of content analysis is to define the features of the article's content by investigating who speaks what, to whom, and with what effect (Bloor & Wood, 2006). Thematic analysis as an independent qualitative descriptive approach is principally labeled as "a technique for classifying, evaluating and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analyses transcend tallying apparent words or expressions and attention to recognizing and depicting both implicit and explicit ideas inside the data, that is, themes. Codes are then ordinarily created to reflect the distinguished themes and applied or connected to raw data as rundown markers for later study. Such analysis might incorporate the accompanying: comparing code frequencies, distinguishing co-occurrence, and graphically showing connections between codes inside the data set. As a rule, reliability is of more prominent focus with thematic analysis than with word-based analysis since more understanding goes into elaborating the data items (i.e., codes) just as applying the codes to lumps of text.

This issue is considerably more articulated when working in groups with numerous experts (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2011).

## **Findings and Discussions**

A firm should possess the capability to run its operations in any crisis in terms of a solid methodology of production, management information systems, technology, highly talented, trained, and well-educated employees. A firm's ability to recover from difficulties quickly is an important consideration to reap success. Therefore, firms need to be consistent with the sophisticated technologies and the employees they work for.

According to one informant; *"In the absence of our employees, we can't run our operations smoothly. However, due to the threat of COVID-19, all our operations have been interrupted. Recently, as per the government declarations operations have been commenced and we strive to manage our operations with the support of our employees"*. The idea of working from home or distant working is more famous now and it has become the new typical practice since, given the danger in the public arena, this is the most ideal way as opposed to voyaging and working with other individuals. Nonetheless, this strategy is not powerful for each situation. It is particularly impractical for assembling firms' operational staff and some different fields. Notwithstanding, the world is transforming towards digitalization. A portion of the HR capacities can be digitalized, contributing value to the firm. Further, it is feasible to rethink a portion of the HR capacities too. Notwithstanding, organizations need to distinguish between value-added HR services when making such choices. One executive manifested that: *"Inevitably, employees are our critical resource; they determine our firm's success. The coronavirus has significantly posed a threat to our employees and all the industries as a result, the financial stability of the firm dramatically diminished. However, we take great efforts to look after our employees' health and well-being...we believe we can ensure our survival. Unfortunately, work from home does not work out in our firm"*. HR heads should take the responsibility to patronize the business due to the outbreak of COVID-19 with the help of its employees. In addition, to do that, the HR department should formulate and implement proper mechanisms that should encapsulate the psychological and phycological well-being of employees.

Another informant disclosed; *"In our factory, there are more than 1500 employees currently working. It is difficult to manage a huge gourd of employees. For example, if one employee got affected by the coronavirus then the entire firm should be forced to shut down, However, we take necessary actions to make our employees cope with the epidemic through training, educating, and conducting awareness programs"*. Notwithstanding the results are insufficient. It is impossible to use online systems like zoom, Microsoft teams, and go-to-meetings in manufacturing firms like garments. The physical presence of employees is indispensable. Relationships and the teamwork of employees have been ruined due to the government declaration (e.g., government-imposed curfew to control and prevent the spread of virus) "work from home" and "stay home". An informant disclosed; *"Since we are a manufacturing firm we directly link with the production of cloths. Therefore, we cannot operate without our employees. We run the factory concerning the government rules and regulations. We have developed certain specific countermeasures to protect our employees. However, our employees are stressed due to the pandemic as a result we lost our productivity and performance. We provide transportation to our employees and we honestly care about our employees"*. The endeavours and valour associated with individuals the executives during the COVID-19 pandemic ought not to occupy us from looking to comprehend the job that human resource management (HRM) theory and practice has played in the inconsistent manners by which the pandemic's expenses have been circulated inside societies. It would be exaggerated to credit obligation regarding large numbers of the pandemics adverse economic and social results to individuals the management practice.

It is said that; *“Firms have been extremely affected unprecedentedly. Employee health and safety is our priority. Therefore, we guide them to maintain social distance and we provide hygienic and organic foods to our employees to reinforce the immune system”*. And also, *we provide counseling, coaching, and consulting facilities. We are now in a position to formulate several crisis management interventions*. Corona has a severe impact on employees’ health. The costs to the organization are very high when its high-performing employees become infected. If an outstanding employee dies owing to Coronavirus, the costs of death are uncountable (Opatha, 2020). He further illustrates if a worker is identified as a Corona patient by the pertinent medical authority, the holistic department, or the organization will have to be closed down. During this period the organization will get suffered owing to reduced productivity, declined market share, increased medical claims, and reduced profits. Hence, the degree of intensity of hazardousness of Coronavirus is very high or maybe enormous humanly and financially. One of the informants revealed; *“We have adopted a routinized practice of medical care of our employees because of the pandemic issue. We provide medical facilities and we check our employee’s temperature before they enter the factory to prevent the spread. And we maintain social distance in the production plant. Further, we provide free masks every day, and hand sanitizers. Despite, our employees are negligent about the bad outbreak.”*

Owing to the coronavirus employees are afraid of getting affected by others. And they are refusing to work or even attend work because of the epidemic. The well-being of the employees specifically in manufacturing firms is a fundamental requisite. Thence, proper and smooth facilities of health care are vital to ensure the well-being of employees. Surprisingly one informant said; *“People can work flexibly/from home in many roles. Our company is not flexible. And it is difficult to transfer all the activities online so quickly. Before COVID-19 this may have been denied as an option for employees. Employees are afraid to talk with their colleagues because employees are scared of the possibility that Corona catches them. As a result, the teamwork and the team spirit have been devastated. Specifically, those aspects are critical for our production and to elevate efficiency*. Typically, all types of employees are at a greater risk because there is a high possibility of the attack of COVID-19 on any employee. The HR department can take necessary initiatives to prevent the spread of coronavirus and fear of the epidemic through seminars and mindfulness programs. Misguided thinking concerning strategy makers (Hanratty et al., 2021), public health authorities too delayed to even consider responding to quickly arising scientific evidence, and the idea of the actual infection is altogether obviously more critical. Nonetheless, it is significant for those of us engaged in investigating, educating, and practicing HRM to think about the ways by which what we do has added to exacerbating an awful circumstance so we can improve in the future. The current processes happening in the organizations as a reaction to the pandemic are intricate, prompting many negative yet additionally certain results. Employees and firms are adjusting to the new reality to accomplish results. In such a manner, accentuation ought to be set on the internal communication to adjust rapidly. Thus, team spirit, fellowship, joint effort, and participation are fundamental to getting by in this evolving climate.

HR management makes a critical commitment by presenting on the web HR process, preparing workers not just in abilities needed for performing current positions, yet additionally for fostering those abilities important for what’s critical in the future. The specialists suggested that top management and HRM by joint exertion should plan techniques to manage the emergency zeroing in on adaptability and flexibility. To create consider the possibility that situations can be valuable for an organization too in planning for future vulnerabilities. Moreover, organizational culture assumes a focal part during the pandemic. Consequently, HRM needs to have continuous communication and close association with workers. The organization can conquer challenges brought by the emergency simpler when HR leadership supports the specialists, connects with them, stays up with the latest, and considers their opinions.

## **Conclusion**

Small and medium-sized enterprises contribute greatly to economic growth, regional and rural development, employment generation, and the eradication of poverty in Sri Lanka (Kengatharan, 2012). Due to the rapid spread of COVID-19, the whole world has been paralyzed. As a result, the country's economic growth, economic development, and prosperity have been devastated. Moreover, it is tremendously negatively affected many business firms in terms of loss of productivity, performance, loss of customers, profit, market share, well-being and health of employees, and so forth. Employees are now encountering a high level of stress and anxiety due to the fear of the pandemic since it spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Therefore, employees' well-being and safety become a question. Lucidly, it has a tremendous negative impact on employees' teamwork and happiness. Human resource management ought to organize mindfulness meetings to instruct staff to forestall the transmission of the infection COVID-19. Sharma et al. (2020) state the rundown of needs, that the Human resource management expected to seek during the pandemic COVID-19 flare-up which is overseeing adaptable work plans, employee communications to expand mindfulness, tending to worker grievances on working environment strategies, carrying out preventive measures, and exploring current well-being policies. The endeavors of HRM ought to be sufficiently genuine to assist workers with defeating their distress and vulnerability to assist workers to elevate their assertiveness. A significant number of the issues have happened because of business and performance drops. Without having adequate interest and benefit in the business, it is hard to care for an organization's employees. It has been recognized that a few organizations have even shut down and some have diminished their operations. Some have additionally been constrained to decrease staff individuals. Consequently, large numbers of learners and fixed-term contract workers lost their jobs. The majority of the outsourced workers have been laid off. In any case, they need to take care of their perpetual employees as firing permanent workers is a long process for an organization. A portion of the organizations cut their compensations as a system to diminish staff costs. To construct a culture of adaptability, a firm should empower imagination and dexterity without a formal policy guide, and consider the individual requirements of every worker. Adaptability implies a more joyful and productive labour force. In this way, HRM should start to lead in assisting firms with exploring vulnerabilities, thinking about the requirements of creating abilities, and keeping up the mental prosperity of workers. Organizations anticipating the future need to change their emphasis on business coherence just as supporting hierarchical wellbeing.

From one perspective, organizations ought to foster their HRs, as workers need to improve abilities and gain knowledge to the more likely to adapt to vulnerabilities. Notwithstanding, crisis management directs organizations to reduce expenses on instructional courses and other improvement exercises. Subsequently, it is significant that the HR management tracks down the correct harmony between reducing expenses because of the downturn and fostering the staff. Something else, adequacy and proficiency can't be accomplished (Gigauri, 2020). All types of organizations and employers are required to take precautions to ensure employee protection from this pandemic. HR department took fundamental remedial actions to confront the epidemic but are new to them and insufficient. To prevent the risk of the corona, HR should integrate their strategies with other departments, and asking for support would be meaningful. Employees' support is vital to stop the spread of the virus. Therefore, it is pivotal to educate the employees and support them to eradicate the fear. Only then firm can achieve the expected level of success. Ensuring employee health through the prevention and control of the pandemic is imperative to the smooth running of operations in organizations.

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