Identifying Measures to Protect Businesses and Human Resources from Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic

Fatemehzahra Ziaeian, Ph.D. Scholar at Aligarh Muslim University, India

Abstract - COVID-19 pandemic made significant effects on small and big businesses in the world. Corona Virus Disease or COVID19 is a new virus disease that originated in Wuhan, China (Wanget al, 2020). Now the virus has spread all around the globe, and almost all the countries are battling against this virus and are doing their best to curb the spread as much as possible (Jain sh, 2020). The World Health Organization has declared it a Pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020). There are not many academic studies (barring a few, e.g., Boldoget al, 2020; Goyal et al., 2020; Bhat et al., 2020) that can guide researchers to study the impact of this pandemic that has different effects on Businesses and Human Resources worldwide.

Due to this situation, many techniques, goals, and values, and trends need to be revised to adjust to new conditions. In this study, the researcher tried to find the best Measures to Protect Businesses and Human Resources From the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic. In addition, the researcher found the main Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic on Businesses and Human Resources.

keywords: COVID-19, Pandemic, Business, Human Resource

I. INTRODUCTION

It is around nine months that the COVID-19 pandemic started, and it caused a significant effect on every aspect of humans. Now the virus has spread all around the globe, and almost all the countries are battling against this virus and are doing their best to curb the spread as much as possible (Jain sh, 2020). The World Health Organization has declared it a Pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020). The economic effects of COVID-19 or, in other words, COVID-19 recession, on businesses were so significant in which the majority of the businesses around the world made to change their structures quickly. In addition, these economic effects may not be reversible for years, especially for small businesses. Many start-ups around the world faced thoughtful challenges in managing and controlling their working conditions. One of these challenges is business and human resource management in these companies, which, due to the complexity of the situation, may cause severe damages. In June 2020, the World Bank has released the Global Economic Prospects report, which describes "both the immediate and near-term outlook for the impact of the pandemic and the long-term damage it has dealt with prospects for growth. Many emerging and developing economies were already experiencing weaker growth before this crisis; the shock of COVID-19 now makes the challenges these economies face even harder. Another important feature of the current landscape is the historic collapse in oil demand and oil prices. Low oil prices offer an opportunity for oil producers to diversify their economies".

Now the whole world is in an unprecedented crisis caused by the outbreak of the coronavirus on all continents. This crisis has affected not only governments and medical institutions, but also organizations in all sectors and industries. There are many questions in which the world economy tries to find an answer for them like What role can the human resources sector play in the Coronavirus crisis? How can organizations save both their employees and their business during this crisis? What is the capacity and role of the human resources to support organizations in this tough time?

Purpose of the study:

- Identifying Measures to Protect Businesses and Human Resources From Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic
- Identifying the effects of COVID-19 on Businesses and Human Resources.

Research hypothesis:

There is a significant relationship between COVID-19 Pandemic, Businesses, and Human Resources.

Research Question:

- What are the Measures to Protect Businesses and Human Resources From Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic?
- What effects COVID-19 has on Businesses and Human Resources?

II.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is an analytical-descriptive research. After studying and reviewing previous research works and last reports from international and intergovernmental organizations, measures to Protect Businesses and Human Resources have been created by the researcher.

Effects of COVID-19 pandemic crisis on Businesses

Today, managers face severe challenges in the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, such as business closures, supply chain disruptions, and employees' health concerns. This epidemic has caused unprecedented problems. In such situations, most business leaders and managers have focused on urgent needs such as supporting employees, customers, and business partners, disrupting the supply chain of goods and services, income consolidating, and synchronizing their business with the new situations.

One of the main issues most businesses front onto is how to reopen. This reopening requires a review of previous plans and innovation. Most companies wish they had invested sooner rather than later in cyberspace, data-driven approaches, automated adjustment, and their agility of business investment. However, there is still an opportunity, and new conditions and needs can be used to make a difference in the business. At the same time, organizational leaders and holistic decision-makers are looking to the future quickly. An unpredictable future with slow economic growth and new competitors. The challenges of the coming decade are not limited to the COVID-19 pandemic. Cultural and social developments, along with rapid changes in technology, the need to be updated, harmonizing values and goals of organizations, make the situation more complicated.

Effects of COVID-19 pandemic crisis on Customers

COVID-19 pandemic has caused many changes in customer behavior and expectations. These changes have forced businesses to reconsider their customer attraction and marketing strategies. One of the most important tasks of customer care managers in the post-COVID-19 age is to determine a new mechanism for interaction and customer communication management. Managers must change based on customer's behavior change. The COVID-19 pandemic crisis not only has changed our experience as a customer but also as a human being; For example, some cultural habits such as shaking hands, hugging, and kissing have been forgotten.

On the other hand, the attitude and behavior of customers, such as how they buy, have changed a lot. With this new situation, businesses must look for new models to interact with their customers and consumers. In this new situation, using the capabilities of the virtual world and the internet to buy, sell, and interact with customers is one of the most important strategies for the survival of businesses. The development of electronic services and shopping experience without physical contact should be considered. The need and necessity of social distancing will accelerate the process of developments in the field of customer interaction.

Effects of COVID-19 pandemic crisis on Human Resources

Almost all businesses in the world have experienced unprecedented disarrangement in the process of administrative work. As communities seek ways to advance their daily affairs, Businesses are also looking for ways to keep up with their tasks. The role of human resource management in creating new approaches for the workforce is vital. In this, senior human resource managers play a significant role. By designing new processes, they make it possible to change the workflow into telecommuting. This telecommuting, along with reviewing the relationships between members of the organization, help maintain business processes. The experience and specialty of senior human resource managers in designing agile and flexible techniques for managing the workforce perpetuate the life of businesses and, in a macro view, save the economy of societies. Also, practical cooperation between small and large companies is essential. The workforce, institutions, and organizations all need new programs and plans that meet their current and future needs. Governments, citizens, and public institutions play an essential role in shaping new approaches to workforce management.

Effects of COVID-19 pandemic crisis on Business Executive Affairs and Smartening the Businesses

The COVID-19 pandemic crisis has given fundamental shocks to the structure and executive and operational processes of companies (such as the market and supply sector). In response to this crisis, leaders and managers of organizations must emphasize on new ways to advance the operations and Executive Affairs. A prerequisite for adapting to new conditions is smartening the business.

A smart business, instead of making top-down decisions, by empowering its staff, creating goal-oriented teams, and equipping these teams with the necessary technologies increases the flexibility and agility of the structure. In this way, the process of work is accelerated, and the crisis does not cause administrative operations to fail. In general, a smart business is a dynamic system based on self-management and a high ability to adapt to the situation. Automatically adjusting executive processes based on human-machine interaction is an essential step in making businesses smarter.

Also, managing the supply chain of goods and services is more critical than ever. Businesses need to find new ways to deal with current irregularities quickly; Also, by increasing their flexibility and responsibility, they should

look for a way to change the use and reshape the supply chain of stocks and services in the future.

Effects of COVID-19 pandemic crisis on Financial Issues

During the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, businesses experienced a sharp drop in their income. Thus,

Organizational leaders, besides analyzing post-COVID-19 opportunities, had to make more efforts to maintain liquidity and reduce costs. The most important immediate action in today's situation is to face a liquidity issue. Then, they need to focus on optimizing costs and increasing profitability in order to provide a basis for investing in future opportunities. To Cope with declining incomes and rising costs, managers need to invest in new technologies and increase employees' efficiency. Whatever businesses do today has a significant impact on their survival, return to growth, and improvement of macroeconomic indicators.

Effects of COVID-19 pandemic crisis on Information and Communications Technology

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, many small and large companies around the world had many issues with technology challenges. However, the COVID-19 outbreak exacerbated previous problems, along with new challenges in the mentioned field. Businesses are experiencing the widespread use of technology to manage their business and the continuity of corporate operations: an experience that has never been seen before. This increase in the use of IT technologies has provided an unprecedented opportunity for the mentioned sector to grow. On the other hand, people working in this field, along with businesses, must find new ways to meet the challenges and discover the new capacities of these technologies to make organizations more flexible and meet their needs. After overcoming the corona epidemic, it is necessary for the leaders and managers of the organizations, along with the activists in this field, to analyze and evaluate the performance of this sector at that time; Also, they should find long-term and sustainable solutions to deal with possible future events.

III.   MEASURES TO PROTECT BUSINESSES

All markets around the world are affected by the economic damage caused by the outbreak of COVID-19, but the strictness of the impact varies depending on the country and the onset of the virus. Also, depending on the business nature of the organizations and the extent to which they are directly or indirectly related to the Chinese market, their degree of influence varies.

In this part, the researcher has explained measures that organizations and human resources departments can do to protect their businesses and also minimize the impact of this crisis on the workflow:

Telecommuting:

In such a situation, coordination for telecommuting is one of the best and most common solutions. Let the employees work from their homes, if possible. This method is useful for jobs that:

- They do not need face-to-face interaction.
- No physical factor is influential in doing the work that requires the presence of the person.
- You can do things by phone, internet, or courier.

A balance between work and life:

Many employees in telecommuting may experience bad conditions. Lack of communication with others, lack of activity, and lack of adequate facilities in many cases affect their lives. To manage human resources, managers can provide facilities for employees to meet their other needs. Paying attention to a regular exercise program or staff nutrition can be helpful in these cases. Also, group meetings, assigning various tasks, and not reducing employees' salaries for sports activities can encourage them to make a balance between work and their personal life. Allocating financial resources to equip employees' home environment and making it possible to move equipment from the company to their homes (for example, a chair or computer system) can help employees to improve working conditions. For employees who have to be present in their workplace, observing the health of the workplace and the availability of health facilities can create a pleasant feeling for them.

Giving Leave, Stop Hiring New Staff and Layoff

If your business is experiencing a downturn, this is an excellent time to give your employees time off. This decreases the risk of the COVID-19 spreading and balances the amount of leave in your organization.

If hiring is not necessary, stop it immediately.

If the COVID-19 crisis continues for a longer time, layoff but as less as possible and make it clear for the rest of the staff that this may be a temporary situation. If you explain to them and make everything clear, they feel safe. Also, Governments need to support organizations in such difficult times, especially those directly affected by this crisis. One way to help is to eliminate the monthly insurance payment.

Creating job security

If you have a valuable team or staff in your start-up, the COVID-19 crisis is an excellent time to show them that they are valuable for you. This lets them feel more secure, and the result is exact. If you have staff, who feel safe in your business, they work better so your business will stay on the safe side. Paying attention to the employees' work situation and health, their insurance, and considering supplemental insurance and putting some strategies into

action to prevent them from diseases can encourage them too. It is better to share the company's economic strategies with employees in a transparent manner so that they do not have a fear of being fired. Instead of firing employees, think for an alternative, such as installments or reducing or eliminating some costs.

Using Web Platform and Internet

One of the leading human resource strategies for the COVID-19 outbreak is telecommuting. Many organizations sent their employees home for telecommuting. Of course, telecommuting does not apply to all organizational roles and activities, but companies seem to have found ways to do so. COVID-19 has transformed the face of the workplace forever. In start-ups, like other companies and organizations, telecommuting is a serious solution. In start-ups, like other companies and organizations, telecommuting is a serious solution. Most start-ups work in the field of technology and are developed on the web or mobile platform. That is why telecommuting is not a big deal for a start-up. Communication tools such as online meeting software or group chat can also be somewhat of a substitute for physical meetings for think tanks and brainstorming sessions.

Stop Promotions and salary increases and Manage Earnings and Pensions

Examine your current earnings outlook. Stop investing in unprofitable activities, such as plane tickets, membership fees, and new grants. Examine the amount of pensions that the organization currently pays and identify areas where saving is possible and what costs can be reduced. For example, in cases where staffs work from home, the commuter pension can be eliminated until the situation returns to normal. Suspend salary increases and promotions as much as possible.

IV. MEASURES TO PROTECT HUMAN RESOURCES

Employees spend more than seven to eight hours at work five or six days a week interacting with tens and sometimes hundreds of people. This makes it necessary to anticipate the necessary actions in the workplace to save the lives of employees, customers, and the community. There are numerous things that organizations can do to reduce the risk of coronavirus spread in the workplace. In this part, the researcher has explained the measures that organizations and human resources departments can do to protect their employees. The researcher divided these measures into three steps.

Step One:

- Create awareness of the COVID-19 symptoms through Internet channels.
- Ask the staff not to show up for work and go to the clinic if they have any of the cold symptoms.

- Ask staff who are in direct contact with people with cold symptoms not to show up for work until the person has a negative COVID-19 test.
- Create awareness of the health care and prevention that each employee must follow when using organizational equipment.
- Front-line staff and those dealing with customers should wear special masks, gloves, and eye protection.
- Workspaces where several employees work, should be disinfected at the end of the shift or at the end of each employee's work.
- Putting sanitary and disinfectant liquids next to ATMs and banking machines

Step Two:

- Replace tools that require direct contact with tools that do not require direct contact, such as a fingerprint recorder.
- Distribution of disinfectant gels and liquids throughout the organization.
- Smoking rooms are susceptible points. The amount of access and the number of people allowed to enter these rooms must be controlled, and the necessary precautionary measures must be taken when disposing of garbage in these areas.
- Use disposable utensils, such as glasses, spoons, and forks, plates.
- Encourage staff to drink plenty of water.
- Reduce business trips as much as possible.
- Ask employees to take vitamin C supplements.

Step Three:

- Reduce paper consumption and use online and email data transfer methods.
- Cancel meetings as much as possible and replace them with video conferencing and calling.
- Reduce classroom-based training programs and replace them with e-learning solutions.
- Eliminate open foods in the restaurant and distribute packed food among staff.
- Disinfect the organization's vehicles after each trip and ask staff to observe personal hygiene.
- Spread positive energy throughout the organization.
- If your organization provides staff kids daycare service and gym services, temporarily cancel these services.

V. CONCLUSION

All businesses, from the smallest to the largest industrial companies, have been more or less affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some are more resilient, and others are severely affected. Customer behavior and needs are changing. The worldwide supply chain for raw materials and supplies is severely disrupted. Each sector of the world economy responds to this crisis in its unique way.

Businesses have to adapt to the new world; otherwise, they will face bankruptcy or inexistence.

SOURCES AND REFERENCES

[1] Jain Sh. (2020). A Study on Psychological and Behavioral Impact of Covid-19 Lockdown in Indore, 270-277.

[2] Yadav Ma. (2020). COVID 19 – Coronavirus disease Pandemic India, 251-252.

[3] World health organization (WHO) website, Naming the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the virus that causes it‖.

[4] World health organization coronavirus disease (COVID-19) dashboard.

[5] Asmika Bo. (2020). a study on artificial intelligence in the times of COVID-19, 227-230.

[6] https://talk.ictvonline.org/

[7] https://www.who.int/

[8] https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/covid19_e/faqcovid19_e.htm

[9] https://www.worldbank.org/

[10] https://www.pnas.org/