



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**Commerce**

**A CONCEPTUAL STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN MANAGING WORKFORCE RISK – AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE**

**KEY WORDS:** Employee Workforce, Covid-19 Pandemic, Managing Risk.

**Manjula R**

Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, Karnataka State Open University.

**Dr. Sukanya R\***

Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Karnataka State Open University. \*Corresponding Author

**ABSTRACT**

Covid-19 pandemic became a severe threat to the world economy including the Indian economy. This pandemic had an adverse effect on the entire population and unpredictable attacked the life of the people. When progressive approach was shown in India, the first wave of the global pandemic resulted in the complete lockdown further this resulted in a bigger hit on the industry performance Workforce was also severely affected as there was separation of workplace and the workforce, wherein the contribution was made virtually. Basically this has created deterioration in workforce quality and the operations of various businesses were also stagnant. On the other hand the government's decision to lockdown also resulted in financial instability, job loss, and individual financial crisis, lack of job opportunities, economic imbalance and loss of assets and also showed illness, medical and health issues and even deaths. This shows directly or indirectly it has affected the individual and their families. As a result, this slowdown in the operations resulted in depression among workforce. The present research study is conducted to evaluate the impact of pandemic on managing the risk of the workforce and to find the measures taken for the recovery and planning done to prepare for continuous activity which made to protect at any situation like second wave of corona virus. An Extensive review of literature has been made to collect the sufficient data for analyzing the issues related to management of workforce. Based on the reviews identified for the study, findings and conclusion has been drafted to throw lights issues related to the workforce in Indian perspective.

**INTRODUCTION**

India is heading towards a developing nation, because of its workforce strengths. People who carry competitive advantage are capable of handling any crucial situation in the work place and are striving their best to contribute towards development. With the upcoming challenges people are acquiring the versatile skills for overall development of organizations and for the individual achievement of goals. Covid -19 has posed one of the serious threats to the entire world. In Indian situation the pandemic has severely hit the economy with great impact on ongoing progress and processes of organizations. Covid - 19 Pandemic has impacted the workforce to greater heights where there was job losses for many, some had so pay cuts, some had over work pressure and some had mental stress to work online.

Most of the people use to travel from remote places to workplace in order to perform their tasks and this has been considered taking from all dimensions. Based on this now the question is what responsibilities does a business take to manage such kind of risk of employee workforce including stakeholders? This has created a debate as well that whether the current situation will be executed if the workforce is imposed with any plans and processes for the betterment.

Due to pandemic situation the one best way of managing risk is by managing through virtual connections with the employee workforce. This has no doubt given a continuity in the work operations but has resulted in various other developments which impacted both employer and employee workforce. Further any risk cannot be completely removed because there are uncertainties which may comes in any way and in anyform, it requires to put for complete analysis and finally find out with some suggestions after considering all pros and cons.

**Statement of Problem:**

In the pandemic situation, for every organization it's a new phase of risk related to workforce where how to handle the risk, how to prioritize work, how it can be performed, when ,where and by whom and how to manage the overall performance without any disruptions were the issues which were to be addressed by the organization. This needs to be discussed and reached to the employee workforce in order to

convince them to perform their duties during pandemic by understanding the overall situation that is from the point of view of employer as well as the economy. On the other hand it should be handling employees to with lot of care and consideration as employee morale is very important.

**Review of Literature:**

**Jeffery Sanchez-Burks and Michal E. Mor Barak(2005)** is of the opinion that the interpersonal relationship in the organization especially in case of various industries is an important aspect to be focused as the values and perceptions and other behavior which is of major concern to focus. Communication with the entire workforce and their relationship is very important for achieving the objective of the organizations. But pandemic condition has not been taken in this situation as it was about interpersonal relationships.

**Hwang and Hopkins (2015)** as per their research work they are of opinion that if the employees feel that they are part of the organization, the inclusiveness mindset will always results in job satisfaction and the also increases the loyalty of employees if they feel that they are not included in the organization the performance will be low. This demands compulsory focus on the management of the company.

**Paul chiswick (2020)** states that most of the employee workforce related risk and issued are managed by the organization during the pandemic and overall new working environment has also resulted in the better working condition and connectivity is also maintained. This research has been done with getting connected with the people of different organizations to assess the pros and cons of the situation and organizations role in answering it.

**World health organisation (2020)** has opined that concerns should give importance for mental and physical health where concerns felt that psychological support to the workforce is a kind of analyzing and resolving the risks. This helps in addressing occupational issues and problems that will reduce the distance in understanding the entire employer and employee team.

**Research Gap:**

The previous research studies were focused on pandemic that

has affected the economy and overall industrial operations and further it has focused managing workforce diversity in this pandemic situation. After adopting the extensive literature review technique it has been found that the managing of the workforce risk during is pandemic in Indian perspective has on been focused by the previous research studies and many authors focused in different dimensions as well. This is deeply focusing on the Indian employee workforce risk management from various organizations for better understanding.

**Objectives of Study:**

1. To know the employee workforce risk that is associated with the working environment.
2. To identify organization's role in managing the workforce risk.
3. To analyze the impact of covid-19 pandemic on employee workforce of various organization.
4. To understand the workforce risk during pandemic and its impact on productivity and performance.

**Research Methodology:**

The research has been conducted to know the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on employee workforce risk of various organizations and their performance and productivity where the organization is capable of managing the risk and increasing the performance and effectiveness of organization's productivity with the same effort through virtual mode.

This is considered as a major focus during pandemic past (first wave of covid-19) and present scenario (2nd wave of covid-19) for which extensive reviews were made on the secondary sources such as books, journals, articles, newspapers and online websites even individual's opinions from various organization were taken informally to gather data from whom first-hand information was gathered in order to perform honest research work.

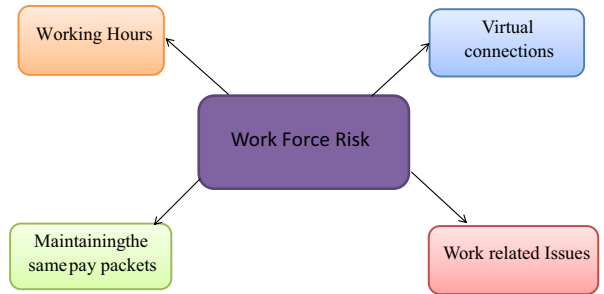
**Analysis and Discussion:**

People in the organization are working and continue to work towards the productivity of the organization. Employee workforce has a competitive advantage to perform well and contribute towards the highest outcome. Since the severe hit of corona virus on the people across the globe resulted in severe threat on employee workforce across the country.

The covid-19 pandemic existence created a technology dependence in order continue with the present work and move ahead to achieve the goals of the individual as well as organization. But organizations were put in such a situation to favor the culture, perceptions, behaviors and prejudices of employee work force towards the organization.

Many questions arise like people were coming from the remote place, what responsibilities does the organization has taken to sort their working condition problem and other work related problems during this pandemic? In this situation the organizations were in such a condition to see whether it is city or a remote the work should take place incredibly. At the same time organizations started relaxing the work related issues considering the convenient working hours of the workforce as such. Instead of demanding the workforce to perform towards outcome during pandemic, employee's safety and health were considered as a first priority so relaxation in work related issues like time provided for creative thinking were permitted by the business organizations.

Today's pandemic challenges and its disruptions into the working environment resulted in difficult situations for the organization. Further it's a responsibility of the organization as well to take necessary actions time to time for the sake of managing the operation's consistency.



**Figure: 1 Workforce Risk**

The above figure (Figure: 1 Work force Risk) shows that the workforce risk that has aroused during this pandemic among the employee workforce in whichever organization they are. But on the other hand with the unfortunate situation many industries were closed to due to severe hit in coping up themselves in this pandemic. This resulted in job losses were even organization were in helpless situation and couldn't help them by continuing with the operations. Many workforce employees resigned due to the unprecedented challenges that were raised by the organization during this time at one hand and on the other hand due to lack of financial stability the organizations had to cut down the cost of the employees where they felt that it is very unfair from the point of view of organizations. Further pay cuts also decreased the employee's morale during this situation.

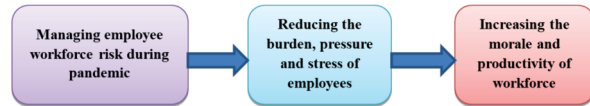
Further organization on the other side is asking for the relaxation or to have some flexibility in their obligations. Whether this resulted in changes in the enforcement and governance of the obligations was another thing to think for? Of course when we look towards government our honorable prime minister took a tremendous step that no country took for any situation. Thanks to the government for giving lot of relaxations in major issues relating to the industries. Firstly crores of rupees were also injected to the economy considering various sectors for the overall wellbeing of the economy during this pandemic situation where any country didn't even think of. Secondly relaxing the regulatory compliance were also provided to perform where employers ever given authority to make better decisions by considering all the decisions relating to it.

The organization should take some actions relating to suppliers and recruiters to know their experiences during pandemic. Even this has addressed through work from home options where there is no discontinue in the work, therefore even this kind of workforce is identified with better options and solutions. The workforces who were feeling in secured were also able to cope with to find jobs through recruiting agency where work from home options were offered.

Further the risk was, where exactly the workforce are located, what they are doing, and how they will perform and communicate to the people where the severity aspect felt by the employer with various levels had to be handled carefully. In this situation, thank to technology the employer and employee bondage could still exist as the various apps which were discovered during this pandemic situation helped both employer and employee at various levels to stay connected. This in one way resulted in that the better control can be done still through virtual mode where there is proliferation of face to face communications between two.

This kind of virtual transactions were taken easily on the other hand the technical workers had to stay back with no options during pandemic but that risk was also managed by reducing the percentage of workers to work in a particular day or a week. And the changing shifts resulted in the reducing work stress and pressures among workers and also relaxation in their performance and outputs during pandemic. This always

is an lesson to all the business organizations that how they can manage the risk of the business activity as well as the workforce to keep them in good spirit to have continued connections with the working environment.



**Figure: 2 Managing Employee workforce risk influencing employee moral and productivity**

Now let us consider figure -2 ( Figure- 2 Managing employee workforce risk influencing employee morale and productivity) which says that if the employer manages the employee workforce risk in any point of situation reduces their burden and pressure and also removes their stress, if at all it is managed well by the organization. As everyone knows that the job protection and satisfaction will always results in better performance similarly the increase in productivity is possible only when the entire workforce is satisfied with the employer.

As per the research done it was found that the employees where happy to get connected with the technology to perform their job where they feel a sense of security and also get a social gathering in the virtual mode. This is an actual fact when people are able to visually catch up with each other it's a kind of interacting with them presently without much disruptions and interruptions. At the same time if it goes for a long term the employees are exposed to health hazardous and also there will be question about the wellbeing of employees so this relaxation has been recognised. Many of us as employees are facing that risk as many workforce employees are giving complaints regarding the continuous use of the technology for the purpose of completing the task this has also changed the lifestyle of employees with no physical activity as such resulting in other kind of health issues.

Actually the Covid- 19 era has been cursed by many of the people due its adverse impact on routine activity that was moving on all these years with progress. But many of them are also giving the opinion that thanks to the Covid era where it has bought so much of advantages in one way or the other to the entire population.

Most of the employee workforce were comfortable and convenient through the online performance as this resulted in giving much more comfortable homely atmosphere for the high performance. Moreover the workforce employee were able to spend most of their time with the family and some used this time to focus much more on creativity and innovative in performing their task. This kind of satisfaction give some sought of benefits to the organization through productivity. Further the organization also felt that they were out of the sight of working team where there can be no control on them.

As we all know continuous connections and communications with the work team will leads to better performance through visibility and engagement. For this the organization faces distance issue which is addressed through online facility. Though the change of working condition created little disturbance at the beginning later on the situation became much better among themselves. Further even with the personal situation, lot of time was given to family as well were given a kind of relaxing mind and some desires were also addressed. This is because of the organization's timely decision taken for consideration of the situation from all the angles by taking a deeper interest and insight on workers this awareness of workforce and being real empathetic towards workers as resulted in more productivity and better performance.

**CONCLUSION:**

After taking extensive literature review, research gap was

identified where research focus is on the impact of pandemic Covid -19 on employee workforce and its influence on the performance and productivity of the organization. Based on this the objectives were also framed; accordingly it has been proved that the employee workforce was affected by the pandemic Covid -19 in t various ways and influenced their overall performance. Further as per the reviews done for the study it is proved that the organization is very much keen about the performance and managing the risk associated with the workforce were to be addressed by the organization. Organizations also took the various analytical trials and found that some virtual techniques need to be addressed for keeping workforce intact. In fact Government has also supported by providing amenities and relaxation.

Based on the above analysis and discussion done, the risk of the organization and the workforce were not an easy task at all to have a complete control but this was addressed by taking into consideration all the risk involved and also organizations effort to solve it. But it became very much inevitable in certain situation where there were closures of the business itself. This was in the result with uncontrollable situations.

But on the other aspect of the situation making use of technology to get connected with the people and workforce was leading to new era of working environment where there were a continuous task which as moving ahead with no obstacles and distractions. Further relaxation in the regulations of the organizations and its performance even workforce were blessed with certain relaxations in the working patterns where that resulted in the comfortable working condition and also keeping people safe and healthy and further innovative and creative working aspects were identified and introduced for overall well-being of both employer and employee. This situation has created a win-win situation where both of the risks (employer and employee) were addressed. Any pandemic situation the organization or people there should not fear and since supporting sectors too exist for performing task the situation tells us that perform the work the system is there to support.

**REFERENCES**

1. Cynthia D. Fisher, Lyle F. Schoenfeldt, James B. Shaw (1999) -Human Resource Management by Cynthia D. Fisher, Lyle F. Schoenfeldt, James B. Shaw Houghton Mifflin Company, - Goal setting in personnel management.
2. Jeffery Sanchez-Burks and Michal E. Mor Barak(2005) -Chapter 9: Interpersonal Relationships in a Global Work Context (online)
3. Paul Chiswick (2020)-Managing workforce risk during the era of Covid -19, June 8, 2020-Industry Insights & Trends
4. World health organization report online June 2020.

**Websites:**

- <https://www.cxcglobal.com/managing-workforce-risk-during-covid>
- <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease>
- <http://webuser.bus.umich.edu/>
- <https://core.ac.uk/download/>
- <https://books.google.co.in/books/>