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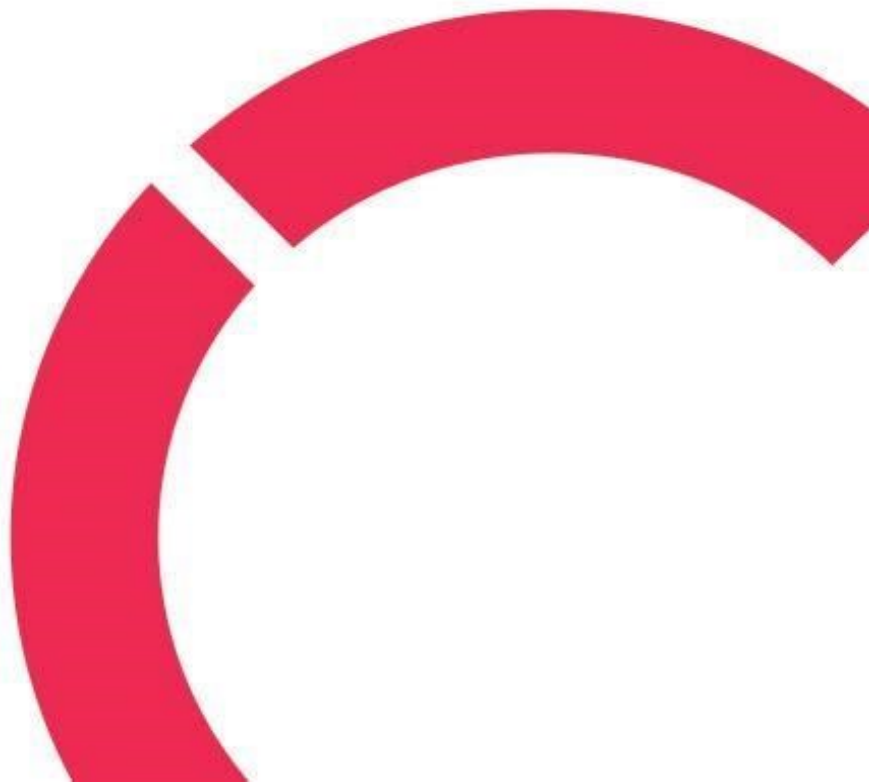
**HOW COVID-19 IMPACTS THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE  
INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OF  
BEXIMCO**

**Thesis**

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<p>The use of technology in human resource management has become increasingly important for academics and professionals in the field- human resource management. When dealing with emergencies such as the COVID-19 outbreak, it is prudent to evaluate HRM performance efficiency concerning a business's overall performance.</p> <p>This study was aimed to identify the extent to which technology may be updated in the case of a pandemic to improve overall efficiency while making the most of limited resources of chosen company Beximco. In line with the aim, the thesis set its objective to assess how Beximco uses technology to manage its international human resources during the pandemic.</p> <p>The thesis found that human resource management’s key aspects of Beximco- benefit, compensation, training and development programs, supervision and performance management have been changed because of the pandemic situation. Moreover, HR professionals faced various challenges at the initial level of the pandemic; however, adapting digital technologies in the all aspects of IHRM helped the department to mitigate the challenges. As this matter of fact, it is clear that Beximco has updated its technologies to the extent where technological update could mitigate the challenges, and this finding shows the proof of meeting the thesis aim stated at the beginning of the thesis.</p>		

<b>Keywords:</b> COVID 19, Human resource management, Technology
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## Table of Contents

<b>1 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 COMMISSIONER.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.1 Importance of HRM .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3.2 Technology and HRM .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3.3 Workplace Transformation and HRM.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3.4 Digital Workplace Initiatives.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3.5 Hybrid Work Model and HRM.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3.6 Employee Involvement and HRM.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>3.7 Positive Impact of technology on HRM.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3.8 Incentives and Remuneration.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3.9 Redesigning Jobs with the Help of Technology .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>3.10 Digitization of HRM .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>4 INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>4.1 Development of IHRM due to Technology.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>4.2 Use of Technology on IHRM .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4.3 Impact of COVID-19 on the Use of Technology on IHRM.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4.4 Training and Development Done by IHRM.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>4.5 Recruitment of IHRM and the Use of Technology .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>5.1 Research Design .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>5.2 Data Collection Method for the Research .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>5.3 Validity and Reliability of the Research .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>5.4 Analysis of Data .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>6 FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>6.1 Analysis of Qualitative Interview Questions .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>7 DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>7.1 Discussions.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>7.2 Recommendations.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>8 CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>INTERVIEW GUIDE.....</b>	<b>39</b>

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Human resource management has always been the key to an organization's success. To ensure an effective workplace and a motivated workforce, human resource managers are always trying to implement new ideas and technology. Today, the use of technology in the international human resource management sector is becoming more and more prevalent. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, human resource managers have become more aware of the use of technology in various sectors of the workforce. Because of the fast rate of technological change, people and technology cannot simultaneously meet the company's specific needs. Because of the COVID-19 outbreak, companies must now worry more about their ability to effectively manage their people's resources as well as their ability to produce and supply services.

The thesis aims to identify the extent to which technology may be updated in the case of a pandemic to improve overall efficiency while making the most of limited resources. The objective of the research is to assess how Beximco uses technology to manage its international human resources. The second objective is to identify whether the use of new technology helps mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic. The third objective of the thesis is to make valid recommendations on how Beximco could utilize new technology to establish a technology-based HR system within its IHRM. In this thesis, these three objectives must be achieved to meet the overall aim of the thesis. For instance, if the thesis could not identify whether the new technology helps Beximco to manage international human resource management effectively, the thesis cannot identify the extent to which Beximco has updated technology to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on IHRM.

The main concern of this thesis is international human resource management. International human resource management always goes through various transformations because of paradigm shifts occurred in a business environment. COVID-19 is one of those paradigm shifters. As the pandemic has impacted the economic and business environment drastically, international business organizations and their operational divisions had to transform various processes. International human resource management follows these criteria hence it is the only way to survive the situation in this way, international human resource management basically depends on technological transformation and use of new technology. That is why, the theoretical part of the thesis limits its discussion to the use of technology in the IHRM influenced by the impact of COVID-19. Last but not least, the theoretical part of the thesis also discusses

various aspects of international human resource management and the change that IHRM has been experiencing since the pandemic.

The thesis intends to identify the impact of the use of technology in the international human resource management of Beximco and the thesis will be conducted under the supervision of Rabbur Reza. Rabbur Reza, Chief Operating Officer of Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd. is going to acts as the commissioner of the thesis. He has extensive expertise and understanding in the generic pharmaceutical sector, including marketing and brand management, sales, international trading expansion, business management & regulation, and business strategies. He has been in the field for more than 25 years. He has a track record of creating high-performance teams that increase business productivity and frequently surpass company objectives.

## 2 COMMISSIONER

In the 1970s, Bangladesh's giant conglomerate, Beximco was formed and Rabbur Reza, Chief Operating Officer of this company acts as the commissioner of the thesis. The company is based and headquartered in Dhaka and started its journey in 1972 by Salman F Rahman and A. S. F. Rahman (Beximco, 2022). The company, since then, became the biggest conglomerate in Bangladesh as it is listed on the stock market of the country with the highest capitalization of the market. It has extended its operations to include banking and finance, pharmaceuticals, garment manufacturing, media, and IT sectors, among other industries. The corporation has achieved worldwide growth in most of its business segments.

Beximco was hit hard by the pandemic, like many other multinational corporations, despite one of its areas – pharmaceutical - dealing with critical supplies (Beximco, 2022). Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd is one of the company groups of Beximco in the pharmaceuticals business also known as Beximco Pharma. It was formed back in 1976 and began its business operations in 1980. In the beginning, Beximco Pharma used to manufacture pharmaceutical products under the German Bayer AG and the American Upjohn Inc (Beximco, 2022). But in the present day, Beximco Pharma is in the both national and international manufacturing business of its own with branded generics for various diseases such as cancer, hypertension, AIDS, diabetes and asthma. Beximco Pharma became the first company in Bangladesh that exports and sells pharmaceutical products in the American market. Beximco is an international conglomerate with over 40 years of experience and expertise in both national and international business. The company became the first to export and sell pharmaceutical products in the American market through its pharmaceutical business group Beximco Pharma. Although the COVID-19 pandemic hit the company pretty hard with no way to operate its export and import business as for the lockdown situation, the company is trying to find its way in its international human resource division during the pandemic (Karim, 2021).

Beside securing a remarkable footprint in the international pharmaceuticals industry, Beximco is also renowned in the international textile industry for its sustainable textile manufacturing process. The main product that Beximco produces for the textile industry is yarn. Moreover, it produces high-quality fabric which is very demanded in the domestic and international textile operations. Another notable fact regarding Beximco is Beximco Industrial Park which is vertically integrated. This part has its own power generation system, water purification system, liquid nitrogen and other facilities; that allow the company

to manufacture products independently. It should be also noted that Beximco group is the largest private sector employer of Bangladesh and the number of employees, who are currently working there, is 70,000. Among these employees, 4523 employees are currently working in its international operations. Beximco always strives to support its human resources so that the work-life balance of every employee could be maintained along with utilizing human resources to sustainable growth of the company (Ahamed, 2021).

### 3 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Human resource management refers to the strategic approach of a system that effectively manages the employees in a company and aids in helping the organization to reach its goals (Kramar, 2013). Historically, human resource management is in charge of not only reaching an organization's goals and objectives but also helping guide and manage the employees to understand and capture those goals (Wayne and Martocchio, 2019). An efficient and effective human resource management system can help the organization to maintain its structure and meet the business demands and goals of the company on par with the latest demands of the industries (Wayne and Martocchio, 2019). HR also helps in managing the talents of the organization and helps them in their personal growth in the company. An effective HRM can help the employees understand and achieve the goals and objectives of the organization. It also helps in managing corporate relationships (Cotton, Cooper and Robertson, 2019).

In the wake of the COVID-19 epidemic, human resource managers face several difficult decisions, including whether or not to implement new rules and procedures to limit human contact in the workplace or train current employees to operate in distant locations (Gope, Elia and Passiante, 2018). Regarding technology investment, organizations have two options: reinvent their business processes or adapt the techniques and procedures they currently use (Gope, Elia and Passiante, 2018). For organizations, the ability to store and interpret vast volumes of information about human resources has been made much simpler because of computer technology and other scientific developments (Azizi et al., 2021). There are severe issues in the connected world that pose an immediate threat to the health and viability of businesses, which necessitates that companies remain adaptable and adaptive in building and managing workforces (Gope, Elia and Passiante, 2018). When COVID-19 was discovered in 2020 the United States, many organizations have been presented with a significant challenge of unprecedented magnitude (Hamouche, 2020). This dilemma forces them to enter into unknown terrain and actively handle it while simultaneously modifying their workforce in ways that have never been seen before from a technological, physical, and Socio-psychological viewpoint (Gunther, Hauff and Gubernator, 2022). Due to the global digital revolution, many companies have started using technology solutions to deliver HR-related services (Gunther, Hauff and Gubernator, 2022). In order to achieve economic success, these companies now have a way to influence and control the behavior of the people on whom they are reliant (Gope, Elia and Passiante, 2018). Because of technological developments, people from all over the globe may have a stronger sense of sharing everyday experiences, regardless of their physical vicinity. In a



world where the barrier between physical and digital encounters is becoming more blurred, we may now experience what has known as "timeliness in a given job" (Khudhair et al., 2020). In addition, the technology should be investigated since it can potentially cut expenses connected with various elements of recruiting, including selection, training, performance evaluation and incentives. Human resource management (HRM) at Ltd (Khatun, 2021). Many aspects of HRM were practically entirely replaced by technology during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **3.1 Importance of HRM**

The importance of human resource management principally lies in the productivity provided by the department to the organization. HRM is also responsible for helping the employees thrive by providing them with the tools and training they need in order to develop themselves. Through employee orientations, management training and leadership training. HRM can help the organization grow from the inside through the employees and their growth (Stone, 2017). HRM can also help restore the critical balance of compliance. By understanding the employees' demands, labor laws, compensations and workspace safety, human resource management plays a crucial role in creating a balanced and friendly workplace for the employees and the corporate personnel as well (Stone, 2017).

To support the organization's strategic goal, technology strategy must consider the links and interactions between technology and business operations (Bennett, 2021). Electronic HRM (E-HRM) refers to the use of new technologies in the organization's HR policies and practices that have been developed and implemented via technology (Ogbeibu et al., 2020). HRM activities include, but are not limited to, the use of the internet, social networks, and the intranet to find and screen new employees using current quantitative methodologies and information systems. Although most researchers have focused on the broad usage of technology, this is not the case here. The prior studies do not discuss the use of technology in HR to achieve organizational efficiency in the event of a pandemic. As a result, the research aimed to determine how's COVID-19 conditions may be improved by using technology. During the outbreak, organizations concentrated on routine HR tasks, halting hiring and selection efforts (Ogbeibu et al., 2020).

### 3.2 Technology and HRM

Human resource management is about managing the employees working for an organization based on the business objectives taken by the organization. It requires having a good understanding of the organizational culture and maintaining effective communication with the workforce. To accomplish efficiency, it is essential to have a clear and exact organizational strategy, with a significant focus on leadership style (Crise and Behary, 2021). Too much paperwork and a lengthy administrative procedure in traditional HRM made the whole process tedious. HRM has become more critical to supporting strategic goals and concentrating on value-adding activities to satisfy today's needs. The work content and expectations of HR professionals tend to alter drastically. A person's wants and goals may be fulfilled in their existing work environment (Gunther, Hauff and Gubernator, 2022). However, when that work environment is radically transformed to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, misfit experiences in various situations may occur from incorporating new technology. For example, automation and saving time were two of technology's most essential functions in the 1980s. As we entered the first two decades of the twenty-first century, technology's impact on business became a hot issue in management literature (Azmi, 2019).

The use of technology is considered to be one of the most important driving factors in the workplace transformation of many organizations that are working globally (Ahmad and Sharma, 2021). Workplace transformation refers to the re-modelling of work-spaces in order to accommodate the workers' needs and create a more efficient system where the employees are able to work along with the human resource managers (Fu, 2022). The recent COVID-19 pandemic made it obvious that organizations today need to work with the latest technology in order to increase their efficiency and to aid the employees understand and reach the organization's objectives (Ahmad and Sharma, 2021).

Today, the implementation of technology in human resource management systems has overbearing impact on the overall efficiency and management style (Ahmad and Sharma, 2021). Using technology such as web and mobile-based applications helps the employees to access the HR resources. It also helps the workers to communicate much easier. Using technology such as websites helps the employees to update, monitor and manage their benefits packages independently. The use of dedicated software helps the human resource managers monitor the job performance of the employees and also allows them to access information for personal reasons. Technology's Celsius cloud and analytic assist the human resource management in monitoring their HR systems and keeping data accurate and updated (Ahmad and Sharma, 2021).

### **3.3 Workplace Transformation and HRM**

As the globe has experienced great transformation in business, life, and the way things are done, the workplace today recognizes the importance of the human resource (Fu, 2022). People management, employee retention, incentives and compensation, strategic company planning, and other HR functions have evolved from their conventional roles of recruiting, dismissing, and payroll (Fu, 2022). For instance, human resource management system in both domestic and international level are now using online interview process. The online interview process is very convenient and effective in terms of cost and resources. Also, the human resource management department has to be updated in line of workplace transformation process in many other areas. Erstwhile, strategic competencies of human resource management was ignored very often, but the introduction of new technologies has influenced HRM to integrate strategic competencies. Also, the new types of skills, attributes and competencies are now manageable to a great extent due to the effectiveness of new technology. For example, cloud technology, an important factor for workplace transformation, allows HR officials to communicate with everyone in an integrated manner. Similarly, other aspects of workplace transformation influence HRM to make changes within the department (Fu, 2022).

Despite the massive changes in the HRM function, nothing could have prepared the workplace for such rapid adaptation and transformation as the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, HRM departments have expanded their capabilities further and started promoting workplace transformation. Vibrant HRM departments led their organizations strategically through the various changes that came with the epidemic and the need to adjust fast, while also dealing with the severe structural flaws uncovered in the aftermath of the pandemic, despite being unprepared (Fu, 2022).

### **3.4 Digital Workplace Initiatives**

The digital workplace initiative is a set of changes and implementation of new technologies within the workplace that can drastically increase human resource management systems' efficiency (Azmi, 2019). Through this initiative, HRM can include the latest technology in their workplace transformation and help the employees understand these changes and guide them in using the new technologies as well (Fu, 2022). A few examples of a digital workplace initiative may include the implementation of a paperless office which focuses on creating a digital workflow by reducing the use of paper and replacing it with digital solutions. The use of efficient communication tools such as a cloud file sharing service and an

electronic archive can also bring the employees closer to working in a digital workplace. Additionally, HRM can replace in-person conferences with video conferencing. Digital team collaboration tools and technology can also help the human resource management to work along with the employees far better than traditional solutions (Fu, 2022).

The most significant fact regarding digital workplace initiatives is that digital initiatives amplify workplace efficiency (Günther, Hauff and and Gubernator, 2022). Also, these initiatives have a positive impact on individual and team performance of employees. As these digital initiatives principally focuses on an integrated human resource system, coordination and intercommunication system within human resource department are also improved. As a result, the human resource function of any organization now can play the most crucial role for the growth of that organization. Not only that, digital initiatives like an intercommunication system, which is equally effective at office and remote places, allows employees to be integrated with the organizational system for a long-term period. Consequently, a business organization can now formulate a more rigorous plan which makes the organization more flexible. As well as, this type of digital initiatives enhances the productivity per employees. For example, digital collaborative tools like messaging, email or cloud storage allow employees to perform better in a team setting, which is not possible if these digital initiatives are not present in the HR function (Günther, Hauff and and Gubernator, 2022).

### **3.5 Hybrid Work Model and HRM**

It is no wonder that the workplace transformation process has incorporated various HRM models. The main goal of that incorporation is to make the process rigorous and timely. The Hybrid HRM model is one of those models that could be discussed in this context. The hybrid work model belongs to the latest trends of office management done by human resource management. This working model refers to the approach that is flexible in nature and employee-friendly that entails a mix of work-in-office and work-from-home systems (Rath, 2020). This sort of work plan allows the staff of the company to work some days of the week in the office and the other days from a place of their choice. The future trend that needs to be followed is flexibility in the workplace. Some major companies around the world have decided to adopt this work model. Some companies have already adopted it and the implementation of this model has been done already. This hybrid model of working has borne good results after the said implementation. It is the role of HRM of the company to handle this process so that the productivity of the employees is not hampered in any way (Rath, 2020).

Especially during the COVID-19 situation, those who had adopted Hybrid HRM policy had to suffer a lot less compared to those who did not adopt this policy to run the company. The pandemic has given a great acceleration to the popularity of remote jobs. Hence, after the pandemic, the human resource management could use this strategy to make the workplace more flexible for the employees of the company. And technology plays the most significant role in this hybrid work model. With the help of the modern and latest technology, the HRM could manage to do this task efficiently (Gunther, Hauff and Gubernator, 2022).

### **3.6 Employee Involvement and HRM**

Employee involvement is a new trend of human resource management which refers to the direct participation of the employees belonging to the organization. And the involvement is in fulfilling the company objectives, applying ideas and concepts, using individual expertise to solve problems and helping in making decisions for the organization (Cotton, Cooper and Robertson, 2019). This is a systematic process to ask the employees to give their input on the aforementioned factors. It promotes democracy within the workplace and also promotes a healthy workplace environment for the staff member of the company. This participation could happen through representatives or directly. The planning and the smooth implementation of this process entirely depend on the human resource management department of the company. Using this, HRM could boost the productivity of all the employees, and improve the decision-making of the whole organization (Cotton, Cooper and Robertson, 2019).

Technology plays an essential role in involving the employees of the company. As modern-day companies are very dependent on the information technology sector, the use of technology in this is also inevitable. The HRM needs the help of it to increase the participation of the staff of the company. For a get job satisfaction from the employees, the human resource management could ask for active participation of the employees through the websites that are designed for that purpose. A similar approach could be adopted by Beximco to ask for the participation of the employees to get approval for new ideas implementation within the company. This use of technological advancement will be needed to get the active participation of all the employees who are not from the home country (Cotton, Cooper and Robertson, 2019).

### **3.7 Positive Impact of technology on HRM**

Research on the influence of technology on workers indicated that top managers either had a technical science education or extensive technological experience (Azmi, 2019). In order to better organize activities, managers have been authorized to leave the office and go out on fieldwork (Kutieshat and Farmanesh, 2022). Technology specialists have distinct motivations and demands regarding human capital and the labor market compared to other experts (Vahdat, 2021). An increasing amount of research has proven that using technology in the workplace favors employee productivity.

Due to enterprise applications, HR and IT infrastructures tend to be increasingly centralized and integrated. Organizations must understand how the extraordinary changes in COVID-19 affect Performance-Evaluation (P-E) and how to address possible mismatches as they modernize their HR procedures (Galanti *et al.*, 2021). Companies, for example, must switch from traditional methods of recruiting, selecting, and training new employees to ones that use technology. If we want to know how these new practices will affect an organization's values and culture, it is crucial to know how they will affect its values and culture (Farooq and Sultana, 2021). In underdeveloped nations, there has been a lack of study in this area (Farooq and Sultana, 2021). A few numbers of people are researching to see how technology influences HRM performance. As more and more individuals throughout the globe have simple access to digital devices, the advantages and applications of technological tools are becoming more well-known (Saxena and Khandelwal, 2022). The COVID-19 epidemic restricts individuals from leaving their homes because they fear losing their lives (Farooq and Sultana, 2021).

### **3.8 Incentives and Remuneration**

People from both developed and underdeveloped nations may communicate with each other over the internet. Human resources performance does not constantly improve when emerging nations increase their investment in technology (Azizi *et al.*, 2021; Gunther, Hauff and Gubernator, 2022). Strategic human resource planning should be based on IT-related strategies, which lead to an IT-related human resource strategic plan (Novianti and Irawanto, 2021). Long-term planning can be supported with information on labor force planning, staffing with information on equal employment and separations and applicant qualifications and development of a training program with information on the cost of a training program and trainee work performance can be supported by a Human Resource Information System (Bennett, 2021). As a bonus, it may help with wage estimates, pay budgets and labor/employer

relations, as well as providing information for contract negotiations. Technology in human resources management has been overlooked (Gunther, Hauff and Gubernator, 2022). The three most recent developments that require more empirical study and application are information technology innovation, E-HRM development approaches, globally distributed engineering and international technology entrepreneurship, and professional service and customer relations management modelling. Although there is a growing usage of HR-related technologies by individual companies, there has been minimal theoretical development in this field (Crise and Behary, 2021). It is clear from these and other findings that IT's influence on HRM has been understudied in the literature. According to research, information technology (IT) substantially impacts the operations of a wide range of enterprises. During the COVID-19 epidemic, business organizations were nearly entirely dependent on technology.

### **3.9 Redesigning Jobs with the Help of Technology**

During the pandemic, job redesigning has been a very significant thing that has been done by the HRM of companies (George and Jones, 2020). It is a process that needs consideration of different aspects of the workplace as well as the employees. Factors like the management style, the use of technology and the condition of working influence this process a lot. The COVID-19 has created a lot of variables that compelled changes in the organizational setting, and this has been something that has happened in companies all around the world. It is the responsibility of the human resource management is that the designing of the job does not hinder the productivity of the employees and is adapted to the business operations of the company. It is also their responsibility that the employees are adapting well to the new changes that have been brought to them (George and Jones, 2020).

This whole pandemic situation provided a lot less time for the people of the organization to adapt to the new settings. They had to suddenly work under changes that they did not have to a month prior to that. Using new technologies to communicate and work either in the office or mostly from home. The usual trend of the workplace was never like this before the COVID hit. But the changes that have taken place already, will likely be permanent for the time being. If the said changes work for using fewer resources and getting better outcomes of it, then it is only natural that the HRM of the organization keeps this change as a part of the management process of the whole organization (George and Jones, 2020).

### **3.10 Digitization of HRM**

Digitization refers to the use of digital technology in the corporate sector, specifically within a business organization. It transforms the way an organization operates in different areas of it. COVID-19 has provided the opportunity to make almost every company management process digital (TROGER, 2022). This sort of restructuring has been accelerated by the pandemic situation, otherwise, for the companies to become almost fully digitalized would have taken a bit more time than this. It is among the positive impacts of the COVID that has overpowered a few of its negative aspects. The modernization of information technology has provided the expected changes needed for the digitalization of the company. Human resource management faced a lot of challenges during the pandemic, as they had to manage the entire organization sitting at home and support the staff who are also working from home (Troger, 2022).

The pandemic has proved that the work of human resource management is not getting easier anymore. Rather, it demands digitalization to keep up with the running and advancing world. Making human resource management more digitalized provides more opportunities for the organization that did not exist a few years ago and has helped it survive the hit of COVID-19 (Troger, 2022). Digitalization of HRM has the potential for a lot of improvement and makes the workspace a lot better than before. Therefore, making the HRM more digitalized is a great opportunity provider for organizations like Beximco. It has implemented this process like any other organization during the pandemic. And the digitalization of HRM was not ceased only there. It stayed even after the pandemic situation in the organization (Troger, 2022).



## **4 INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

International human resource management (IHRM) is not so different from HRM. It refers to the functions of human resource management hiring, selecting, training and developing, performance managing and the dismissal of the employees of the organization on an international level (Edwards and Rees, 2020). Usually, this term is used for the human resource management of different multinational companies that need to manage their employees who work in different branches of their organization. IHRM is the strategic approach for employment and employee development of the people who work for the company.

### **4.1 Development of IHRM due to Technology**

In this modern age of information technology, the enhancement of international human resource management is not something unnatural. As IHRM goes beyond the border of an organization's home country, the development of IHRM is helpful in this regard (Tarique, Briscoe and Schuler, 2019). Technology has helped and accelerated this development to a certain extent. In modern times, the use of technology helps in identifying solutions to the IHRM problems quickly. The recruitment process has developed a lot thanks to modern and advanced technologies. It connects the recruiters with the job seekers way faster than before. The job postings are domestic or international, post their hiring announcements on different social media platforms and on their official websites (Stone, 2017).

Technological use became more popular as SMES and multinational organizations began to use the virtual platform and information technologies to maintain communication with their employees and clients (Johnson, Carlson and Kavanagh, 2021). 31% SMEs and 48% multinational organizations started using online communication platforms. Many of the organizations began to use popular social media sites to run their promotional activities which increased up to 59% during the second phase of the pandemic (Johnson, Carlson and Kavanagh, 2021). Many new technologies were adopted by organizations to improve their operational activities at that time.

Thus, it has become less troublesome for multinational companies to make the announcements of hiring in their home country and in the host country. It saves time to a great extent. The HPM does not have to

spend time going through the resumes if the application acceptance happens using tracking systems. Due to the development of IHRM, applicants all over the world can keep an eye on the activities of the organization (Johnson, Carlson and Kavanagh, 2021).

#### **4.2 Use of Technology on IHRM**

The use of technology in international human resource management is of great importance. Technology usage is a must for IHRM. Otherwise, the MNCs cannot maintain proper communication with their employees and branches all over the world. They have to maintain regular communication with their local offices in different countries to manage human resource management better (Chalofsky, Rocco and Morris, 2020). The responsibility of HRM is to oversee the local personnel of the local office, but it is the duty of the HRM of the headquarters to maintain all the employees of the organization (Chalofsky, Rocco and Morris, 2020). And to maintain that, emails and different messaging platforms that are available over the internet are helpful.

This sort of use of technology provides an opportunity for IHRM to communicate with everyone at the same time. And this happens to save a lot of time which is a valuable resource for any business organization. Using an online platform is also helpful in asking for employee involvement, they can ask and answer work-related questions, and give their input on different ideas and innovations of the organization. It is very convenient for achieving the overall goal and objective of the organization which is multinational. Also, it makes the implementation process of definite HRM strategies for the betterment of the company a lot easier and less time-consuming. Hence, the use of technology in IHRM is very impactful, especially, in the pandemic situation (Chalofsky, Rocco and Morris, 2020).

#### **4.3 Impact of COVID-19 on the Use of Technology on IHRM**

If it is categorized what type of impact COVID-19 had on the use of technology in international human resource management then it could be said that it is more or less positive. It was a time of distress all around the world for everyone. Everything and everywhere had to be shut down due to the health risk to everyone. People could not go to the office to work therefore it could be said that technology came to the rescue for everyone. Work or even everyday communication would not have been possible if not for the use of technology. It was of great help to the HRM department of every organization, be it

multinational or local (Visvizi, Troisi and Saeedi, 2021). The management of the employees was possible only because of the contribution of the technology (Visvizi, Troisi and Saeedi, 2021). They could manage people and workspace virtually with the help of technology. For example, the remote job sector, which is impactful in hiring international employees has boomed.

There was the existence of remote jobs even before the pandemic. But due to the pandemic, normal physically functional companies also had to opt for remote job options. This has further developed the use of technology in IHRM as in most cases of remote jobs, the employees are from different countries and the workspace is virtual, that is all the work is done with the help of the internet (Visvizi, Troisi and Saeedi, 2021).

#### **4.4 Training and Development Done by IHRM**

Training and development of the employees are something that is done by the human resource management of the company (Edwards and Rees, 2020). In the case of multinational companies, the right term would be the international human resource management that handles the training and the development of the employees of the home country and international employees as well. As for the COVID-19 crisis, the training about certain issues and development in certain areas is significant for all the employees of the organization. And it is up to the human resource management department to provide this training and development program for the employees. The IHRM is responsible for making the staff of the whole company aware of certain aspects about health by hiring the suitable person for such training, and as far as the work is concerned, the employees are needed to be trained in various different technological skills to work better for the organization (Visvizi, Troisi and Saeedi, 2021).

The success of work-from-home depends on the IHRM's understanding of the significance of the use of technology (Bernardin, 2017). International human resource management should strategically plan the training and provide support to the employees in order to not hinder their productivity. The pandemic has posed a challenge to the career development of the employees. They are more afraid of losing their current job than developing their career more in the professional sector in general. Research has proved that this is the case with most employees in general. The IHRM has to motivate them to work towards the career development of the employees and influence them to work in this regard to make it into a successful implementation (Bernardin, 2017).

#### **4.5 Recruitment of IHRM and the Use of Technology**

The recruitment process for all companies has been greatly influenced by COVID-19. Due to this situation, this whole process has been reshaped. The impact has been different for each organization, for instance, some companies had to halt the recruitment process or even had to cut down the number of employees, whereas, some companies had to do just the opposite. They needed to hire more people to work for them as their business flourished and expanded (Johnson, Carlson and Kavanagh, 2021). After the situation normalized a bit, the employee activity also increased as the employees more or less returned to their workplace. But the business which expanded during COVID also had to face different problems (Johnson, Carlson and Kavanagh, 2021).

For example, COVID has created a lot of uncertainty for every business organization, therefore, now companies prefer to hire people on a temporary basis, and the gig economy got a huge boost too. And the face-to-face interview was out of the question for a while, technology was the way out in that kind of situation. Human resource management moved the recruiting process online (Wayne and Martocchio, 2019). Starting from the hiring announcement to receiving all the necessary documents of the selected employee, all of these had to be done over the internet. For MNCs, it is a good way to recruit people for their company, as they do business globally and people from different countries work for them (Johnson, Carlson and Kavanagh, 2021).

## **5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The thesis will employ a primary research method. Also, the thesis will use the qualitative research method to collect and analyze the data. The interview strategy will be applied to evaluate the impact of the pandemic on the international HR management of 6 HR professionals currently working at Beximco will be randomly selected. A semi-structured interview will be conducted through zoom. After all interviews are recorded, the recordings will be transformed into text and textual analysis methods will be applied to decode qualitative data.

### **5.1 Research Design**

A strong and coherent research design helps the researcher in addressing the topic efficiently and effectively (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2015). Research design paves the way to establish a strategy for the research in collecting, analyzing, measuring and presenting the essential data. But of course, the design of the research depends on the topic and the nature of the research study and its topic. As such, the research study here chooses the qualitative research process and design as the study topic requires a qualitative approach. As such, qualitative primary research has been used in this research and primary research refers to gathering information for research that has not been collected yet (Bodden and Smith, 2013). The method to collect information here is interviewing to get a better understanding of the research, the qualitative research process is used.

Qualitative research is used in research to get a descriptive and detailed insight into the topic that is in question (Silverman, 2011). As per the research question, qualitative research sets out to find that descriptive understanding by using different tools and methods such as interviews, artefact analysis and observation. These are the three main types of tools that are usually used in qualitative research to get that descriptive and detailed insight (Cooke, 2016). As for interviews, there are some types and tools also such as in-depth interviews and focus groups and one-on-one interviews. In terms of structure, the qualitative interview process can be differentiated into three types. Firstly, in the structured interviews, the questions are pre-determined and strict with no option for flexibility and the answers are strictly limited as per the structured question with time-efficiency. Secondly, in the unstructured interview, the questions are not pre-determined and allow as much flexibility as needed, being a time-consuming process. Finally, in the semi-structured interviews, although the questions are pre-determined, there is

an option for flexibility when needed. For this research the semi-structured interview process used to find a descriptive and detailed understanding (Goddard and Melville, 2014).

## **5.2 Data Collection Method for the Research**

The data collection method here is interviewing (semi-structured interview). Six HR professionals from the chosen company Beximco, currently working, will be randomly selected and will be interviewed. The participants of the interview are to be well-informed about the topic of the interview and it also needs to be ensured that they have given their permission to conduct the interview (Eiras, 2017). After the random selection of 6 professionals, 14 questions (sequential and according to the interview guide) are to be asked from them that require them to give descriptive answers regarding the research topic. The interview questions are to be selected in such a way that the participants of the interview will be able to answer them properly and in an elaborate way so that getting the necessary information and data is easier (Eiras, 2017). Thus, the questions were designed to get an understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on the use of technology in the international human resource management system of Beximco.

As such, the research program here will collect all the data necessary to find out the impact of the pandemic in its IHRM division and its use of technology to avert the pandemic problem with a primary data collection method. The designed questions will highlight the IHRM system and how it is being used in the company. The questions will also evaluate how the organization copes with the impact of the pandemic on its Human Resource and International Human Resource division. The necessary areas of understanding will be covered through the zoom interview of the participants.

## **5.3 Validity and Reliability of the Research**

Validity of research refers to how accurately the requirements of a research method have been maintained to generate the findings of the research (Krakower and Niwa, 2018). It is compulsory for all types of research that are conducted in any field. Validity consists of content, construct, and criterion. The part called content, deals with that all the aspects of the concept of the research are covered. In qualitative research, the collected data is descriptive and therefore unquantifiable. And so, it gets critical in measuring the validity and the correctness of the qualitative data. As such, measuring the validity of

this qualitative research means measuring its value appropriateness, tools and technique correctness, correctness in data collection and validation. Valid research is sound in its use of methodology, tools, collecting, sampling, analyzing and measuring data. In respect of measuring the validity of this qualitative research, another aspect is important which is the designated research philosophy that guides and lays the path for the whole research. This research falls in line with the designated research philosophy and so it can be said the research followed a valid path in all of its stages.

Reliability is the possibility of getting the same result using the same questions by different researchers (Krakower and Niwa, 2018). It is a necessary criterion when the observer of the data is a single person, and it is necessary because the subjectivity of the researcher could make the analysis of the data biased. So, both the validity and reliability of the research are necessary to prove its authenticity. Cronbach's Alpha and Kuder Richardson 20, are instances for reliability tests (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2015). Reliability is of two types, one is internal and the other is external (Chambers and Skinner, 2013). Internal reliability deals with how influenced the research could be by different factors or variables (Goddard and Melville, 2014). On the other hand, external reliability is how the result of the research is generalized to get authentic result. Overall, the reliability depends on the design of the experiment. Here internal reliability will be used for this research.

#### **5.4 Analysis of Data**

This interview process will help collect the qualitative and descriptive data that are relevant and necessary to conduct a further data analysis. In this qualitative research program, the non-numeric and unquantifiable data will be analyzed. These non-numeric and descriptive data include interview transcripts, notes, video and audio recordings.

The collection of data here uses the interview method to collect data from the selected participants for the research. And it uses the designed questions for the interview. The contents that are collected from the interview are transcribed and have been noted by the interviewer. This implies that the participants have clearly understood the questions asked by the interviewer. This sort of process provides a better understanding of the whole research process. The set of interview questions refers directs the researcher to reach at a rigorous conclusion. It also helps in understanding the point of view of the researcher. The

analysis process categorizes the information to get a proper understanding of the collected information and obtain results easily.



## **6 FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

The chapter 'Findings of the Research: Presentation and Analysis' consists of the results and findings of the research have found. The chapter will be descriptive and insightful as the method used for gathering information is qualitative research method. The presentation of the data and the analysis of the presented data will be conducted using the qualitative research method. The findings section of the research provides new perspective and patterns of the study and helps understand the phenomena and ongoing transition period of HRM practices within the settings of the international organization Beximco.

### **6.1 Analysis of Qualitative Interview Questions**

The interview process of the thesis is conducted using a qualitative approach and participation of the key persons of the organization chosen for the research 'Beximco'. The semi-structured interview with the pre-structured questionnaire contributed for the research largely. The participants for the interview were 6, including the Commissioner of the research Rabbur Reza, Chief Operating Officer of Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd. The interview process was designed to support the concentration process of the researcher and depending on the availability of the participants. With all the necessary measures and precautions taken, the interview sessions with 6 participants needed 2 days. Every interview session took 30 minutes. The total time for the interview sessions is 180 minutes. The interview session was purposefully designed to understand the perception of the participants on the research topic and creating a pattern of responses. The medium for the interview was Zoom, an online video conferencing application. The participants were provided prior questionnaire sets to get prepared for an optimum output during the interview sessions. The researcher took important notes and recorded the whole conversation using the built-in recording tools of the Zoom application. The interviews were conducted on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> October. The details about the respondent were added in the appendix of the thesis paper.

The interview questionnaire was designed to understand the perspective of the respondent as well as to understand the background of the participants which also reflects on their understanding. The first question of the interview was about the years of working in the Beximco. The question may seem simple and straight-forward but it reflects the affiliation of the participant with the organization and the inclusivity of the respondents to the organization. The more years an individual spent in an organization,

the more insightful that individual becomes over the years. The perception about the organization changes with the years spent in the organization. Organizational culture and the organizational values can be understood by the participants' participation and communication process. Rabbur Reza, Chief Operating Officer of Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd, is one of the experienced and the longest serving participants of the interview session. 13 years of service, he contributed to the company with highest efforts and commitment. His role also serves the research purpose as he is currently working as the COO (Chief Operating Officer) of the Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd. The second and third respondent of the research have been serving the company for 10 years, the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> respondent have been serving the organization for 9 years and the sixth respondent of the research is the least experienced and new with 3 years association with the organization.

TABLE 1: Background information of respondents

Name of respondents	Designation	Years working at Beximco
Rabbur Reza	Chief Operating Officer	13
Md Sadekuzzaman	Chief Diversity Officer	10
Ashequr Rahman Zunnur	Deputy director of HRM	10
Dhiman Pal	Deputy director of HRM	9
MD Al Helal Rana	Chief Recruiting officer	9
M A Arshad Bhuiyan	HR coordinator	9

The second question of the interview session is about the designation of the participants of the research. As presented in Table 1 above, the first respondent Mr. Rabbur Reza, the commissioner of the research, Chief Operating Officer of the Beximco Pharma is one of the top-level management officers of the organization. The second respondent of the interview session is designated as Chief Diversity Officer, the third and fourth respondent of the interview are the deputy directors of the Human resource management division of the Beximco, the fifth respondent is in the role of Chief Recruiting officer and the sixth respondent works as HR coordinator for the organization. The designation and the current position are important to understand to categorize the involvement with the organization of the interviewees. Work or job responsibilities, roles and power of the position give another level of perspective of the working environment and the HRM practices of the organization.

The third question of the interview was about the challenges of the HR professionals face during the professional life. The respondents of the research answered properly and provided insightful perspectives and patterns to understand adequately the HR challenges. Employee engagement, keeping the retention rate high, and training and development strategies are the identified major challenges for the HR professionals. For instance, according to a respondent, ‘as an HR professional, I always face various challenges and these challenges include employee productivity assurance, employee retention process etc.’. However, according to other respondents, there were a few major reasons provided by the HR professionals during the interview sessions which helped to grow a new perspective. The routine HR management and the running of the business organization are not that difficult but it needs effort and building of relationships. The first respondent of the interview told that onboarding is very important to higher up the retention rate of the organization. In Beximco, the HR professionals ensure the highest possible onboarding process for the employees and to ensure a comfortable working environment for the individuals. Employee engagement is the major challenge as they need to be engaged with the implementation of the strategies and other necessary tools.

As the world is leaning toward technology it is hard to keep track of the development of technology. The old professionals need professional training and development programs. The proper design of the professional pathway program can help increase the retention rate of the organization and help develop the employees of the organization. To design the training and development module and pathway program HR professionals need to be up to date and continuously evolving, this process is very tiring and challenging for the HR professionals. As the organization has many companies affiliated, for instance, the pharmaceuticals of the Beximco needs proper lab updates and training for the operators. This process can be quite challenging and difficult for the HR professionals to have knowledge about all the necessary development programs of the other professionals of the organization.

The fourth question was about the use of technology in the professional settings and its impact on the efficiency of the collective approach or individual approach. The professionals of the Beximco group think that technology is an essential aspect of the business organization. For instance, the third respondent said, ‘the technology brings the business in the pharmaceuticals organization as the new machines and tools can increase the production rate of the company and it can provide competitive advantage in the market or industry. As a HR professional the collaboration with the team members, observation of the daily operation can be more efficient with the help of technology’. Moreover, according to other respondents, one of the major tasks of the HR professionals is the recruitment of the talents for the organization. The diversity of the talent pool can be found online and the proper strategy

and approach can attract very talented candidates who will help Beximco grow faster. The HR professionals of the Beximco are already using social media platforms and other professional platforms to collect the talented candidates for the organization. HRIS is a must for Beximco because of its size and operational area. HRIS is Human Resource Management Information Software, the software helps HR professionals to maintain documents, fill up forms centrally and manage payrolls of the employees of the organization. HRIS also helps to measure the performance of the employees of the organization. Beximco uses HIRS to identify lacks in the department and production process. According to identified lacks, the HR professionals design training and development sessions and arrange further recruitment policy and sessions. The use of HRIS helps HR professionals to maintain payroll in time which encourages employees to dedicate themselves and work effectively. The documents filled using HRIS of the Beximco saves money and time of the HR Professionals. The interview answer demonstrate that the use of technology has a significant impact on the HR operations of the organization which ultimately contributes to the production process of the business organization.

The investigation of the International Human Resource Management procedures at Beximco was the purpose of the fifth question of the interview. Beximco exports approximately to 55 countries around the world. The operation of the organization is very broad and needs proper HRM policy and international Human resource management process. The international Human resource management process of the organization is dependent on digital technology and has effective dimensions to support the structure. The selection and requirement process of the IHRM of the organization helps the organization to collect talented employees to smoothen the international operation of the organization. The IHRM of the Beximco concentrates on both the talent and cost, it outsources a few departments to reduce cost and increase efficiency. The organization takes care of the employees and the benefits are proper and adequate for the employees of the organization. The IHRM process of the Beximco also concentrates on developing a proper process of cross-cultural communication and adaptivity of the organizational culture to the branch offices of the organization. According to the interviewees, the company has a different wing to handle the IHRM of the organization and to create proper strategy depending on the operational country. The IHRM process of the Beximco, according to the HR professionals of the company, are the recruitment of the international talents, outsourcing necessary departments of the organization such as, consultancy, digital marketing, design and press, the process of training and development for the skilled employees, and compensations and remuneration of the organization.

In response to the sixth question of the interview, the interviewees of the organization responded on the technological use of the Beximco for IHRM operations. According to the fourth respondent, 'the need of technology is crucial for the management of the IHRM of the Beximco as the organization's operation is huge and complex'. There are many technologies used in IHRM. The company employees use central WhatsApp business suite and Google Business Suite solution for the file sharing and employee entry system. There are many benefits of using digital technology. As a fast-forwarding organization and one of the leading organizations of South Asia, Beximco has dedicated software developed by the experts to recruit, automate payroll, overlook the performance management of the employees. A few of the branches of the organization uses Monday.com as their IHRM software. The organization also uses central attendance software to overlook the performance percentage and attendance percentage of the employees of the organization. The portal of the Beximco software also has a section on complaint and contribution. Beximco is also planning on developing or collaborating with the Workplace by Facebook to increase the efficiency of the working of the organization. The only concern regarding the decision remains with the data security of the organization, says one of the respondents of the interview.

COVID-19 impacted the whole world and the business organizations within it. In response to the seventh question of the interview which is about the impact of COVID-19 on the IHRM operation of the Beximco, respondents expressed their experiences and challenges during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, the 1<sup>st</sup> respondent said 'the pandemic has created such a situation that we, HR professionals, were not sure of what to do. We lacked of essential workforce and there were no proper managerial guidelines to handle the situation'. His opinion reflects the very difficult situation that HRM went through. Moreover, as the IHRM operation dedicatedly depends on the technological aspect of the organization as it all integrates the operation centrally and helps the management to make crucial decisions regarding the system, during the pandemic the technological aspect played the most crucial role.

According to one respondent, Beximco has made crucial and effective decisions regarding the COVID-19 for the employees of the organization. The IHRM of the organization announced COVID-19 packages for the employees and opened a 24/7 hotline for the complaint and initiated free medical tests for the employees of the Beximco. An emergency isolation Centre, free checkup, ambulance, oxygen support, and many incentives were taken by the company that encourage the employees and helped overcome the situation during the pandemic. In addition to that the IHRM of the company introduced guidelines regarding public gathering, overseas travelling, and imposed employee restriction on outside operation to minimize the risk. The integration of the technology and the proper management of the production

site helped the organization to stay functional and overcome the rough and tough situation of the COVID-19 pandemic. The organization took direct care for the employees of the organization and it paid back as the increased production rate for the company. This process of incentives and encouragement apart from providing benefits, also increased the brand value of the company and it attracted more employees to the organization. The employee retention increased and the employee performance and the engagement has increased significantly. The COVID-19 impact at first was severe for the company but gradually by proper measures and impactful decision making the administration and the authority of the organization overcame the situation.

In response to the 8<sup>th</sup> question of the interview, respondents shared their insight about the procedures of IHRM operations during the pandemic. The employees of the organization first panicked as the virus started to spread all over the globe. It was very challenging for the organization to keep functioning during the pandemic situation as many of the central governments of the world imposed mandatory lockdown. During the pandemic, the IHRM operations of Beximco were functional only because of the digital integration of the full system of the organization. This notion was reflected in the opinion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> respondent. He said, 'if our company lacked of integrated digital system, the entire HRM system would have collapsed'. Hence, the activities of the IHRM were operated all over the world on the digital platform and most of the employees of the organization took home office work seriously, the COVID-19 package of the organization, compensation, benefit and health program encouraged the employees and kept them loyal to the company. During the Pandemic Beximco ensured a proper healthcare and mental health care of the employees of the organization. According to the interviewees, the proper measure of the IHRM and the management of the business organization and the proper integration of the technologies of the organization have supported the operation of the IHRM of the organization in tackling the crucial situation of the pandemic.

In response to the 9<sup>th</sup> question of the interview, the answers differed according to the positions of the respondents. The upper-level administrative respondent shared the use of the technology as the tool for crucial decision making. The Chief Operating Officer of the organization shared the importance of the technology and the process of using technology and the different purpose. The video conferencing and the shared storages were the most important technological tools they used for the daily HR operations. The performance report of the employees helped the HR manager to determine the motif of the organization and the process of the operation. The COO of the organization used various software to increase performance of the employees and to make training and development program for the employees during the COVID-19.

The transitions period and sudden acceleration of use of digital technology required a proper knowledge about the operation of the technology. The process of the teaching and development or training of the employees needs use of video tutorial creation and proper integration of the learning pathway which also requires technology. For the mid-level administrative the use of technology is different from the top-level management. They need to overlook the performance of the employees, need to communicate with the top-level management about guidelines of the pandemic and inspect day to day operation update record process. The attendance sheet maintenance, recruitment post on the social media, and conducting recruitment sessions needed use of technology to execute the tasks during the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, according to the 6<sup>th</sup> respondent, ‘we used to depend on technology, particularly digital technology to perform daily activities such as supervision, communication and coordination’.

In response to the 10<sup>th</sup> questionnaire of the interview, the respondents shared their views about the contribution of the technology to the organization during COVID-19 pandemic. The question was designed to find about the contribution of the technology in solving problems and helping the company overcome challenges of the organization during the COVID-19. Most of the respondent shared the same view and experiences regarding the use of the technology during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the respondents, the use of technology helped Beximco to remain functional. The most important problem was to attend offices physically during the COVID-19 pandemic. The use of digital technology and the digital platform solved the problem and established a strong communication through the use of the technology. The use of video conferencing helped the management to communicate with each other and helped the management to make crucial decisions anyhow. The use of the digital software and the HRIS helped to store information in the central storage and discover any problem regarding organization efficiency. The social media platforms and the recruitment platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and Glassdoor helped the organization to recruit actively during the pandemic situation and the central platform or the online workspace helped the proper onboarding of the employees during the pandemic situation. The process of recruitment, selection, performance analysis, performance management, and employee engagement can be acquired through the use of technology which is proved. The major problems faced during the COVID-19 pandemic can be overcome by the use of technology and the problems can be solved properly. And this notion was reflected in the opinion of 5<sup>th</sup> respondent as he said, ‘it is true that pandemic pushed us towards enormous challenges as previous natural calamities did. Nevertheless, we have minimized the challenges by means of digital technology’.

The response to the 11<sup>th</sup> question of the interview session was interesting as it concerns the reflex of the HR professionals to the sudden technological changes in the daily working during the COVID-19 pandemic. The first respondent of the interview shared personal experience since he said, 'it was very tough at first as the entire world were in panic and concentration to the work was challenging'. The pressure was huge in the first few months as the company was still adopting the changes. But proper measures and the initiatives from the management helped to tackle the situation. Before the pandemic most of the meetings used to take place physically in the office rooms, but after the pandemic most of the meetings were attended online. The shock was great for a few people, they needed mental support and consultancy. One of the challenging parts was learning about new software and platforms to work. There was a sudden need to use many software, online platforms and tools to work remotely from home. For instance, the use of team Viewer and the screenshare, online presentation, and use of AR and VR were new for many of the employees of the organization. Among all the communication processes online communication process was resulted positive for the professionals of the Beximco. The only drawback noted by the HR professionals was the difficulties of setting work life balance. It took quite some time to set boundaries between work and personal life during the pandemic time. The proper introduction of the technologies and the tools of the HR operations through tutorial program helped everyone overcome the difficulties and helped to increase individual and organizational performances.

The 12<sup>th</sup> question was about the success of the Beximco in terms of using technology to overcome IHRM challenges. The major HRM challenges during the COVID-19 period was the employee engagement, employee retention and the ensuring compensations and the crisis packages for the employees. Beximco properly introduced the crisis management COVID-19 packages for the employees of the organization. The IHRM of the Beximco announced oxygen, emergency ambulances, free checkup and proper guidelines for the employees to reduce the risk of the COVID-19 at the workplace. For instance, the third respondent said, 'there was no alternative to proper crisis management and our company did it very well. From emergency support to daily communication, Beximco has covered all aspects of managing troubling situation during the pandemic'. The arrangement of proper training on the digital technologies and software were used to maintain day to day communication and conduct day to day operation. The proper assurance of the incentives and benefits for the employees increased the engagement of the employees and increased the employee performance during the COVID-19. Another major challenge of the Beximco during the COVID-19 was the recruitment or hiring process. For the major transformation of the business organization and the sudden need for technological support, IHRM demands for tech experts within the organization. The process of hiring and recruitment were done using online platforms and an online interview system. For a better performance of the employees the IHRM of Beximco



designed a video tutorial course, which helped thousands of employees of Beximco around the world. Assessing all the activities and initiatives taken by Beximco it can be concluded that the use of technology to tackle the IHRM challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic was successful.

In response to question 13 the 2<sup>nd</sup> respondent said that a new trend in the technology is beginning. He said, 'the new trend is technological use is integrated system and virtual world'. Moreover, according to most of the respondents of the interview there is a pattern and similarities of understanding regarding the new trends in technology. The new trends of the technology are here in the world such as blockchain technology, virtual world, alternate living universe, VR, AR, and Meta. The process of business and the process of marketing is changing rapidly. The traditional business activities and the strategies are no longer in effect. The business organizations have become more efficient and effective. The productivity has increased by the use of automation and the artificial intelligence in many fields and department of the business organization. Repetitive tasks no longer need human presence, machines and the artificial intelligence can take care of the rest. The acceleration of the digital business and the process of the digital business was just the beginning of the new trend according to the respondent of the interview. They think the digital era has started and there will be many innovations and transitions in the coming century.

Most of the organizations around the world are still using the setup of the offices as it was in the time of pandemic. The transformation has showed that it is effective to work digitally and it has many benefits for the organization. the effectivity and the efficiency have increased 10 times to 50 times depending on the pattern of the business. Many business organizations are adopting new and hybrid system of office work (Vahdat, 2021). According to the respondents of the interview, they are interested in adopting the same technology they used during the pandemic time. For instance, the 1<sup>st</sup> respondent said, 'the use of video conferencing made things continent, the use of performance management tools and project management tools made observation of the progress easy and visible. The use of social media platforms and other online platforms for the recruitment purpose showed the quickest way to find talent online at the cheapest price'. Most of the participants agrees to use the same technology after the pandemic and are still using the same technologies although the effect of the pandemic has loosened a bit. The research shows that the regular commuting time and the loss of energy during commuting impacts on the work ability of the employees. If the commuting time is deducted, the employees of the organization can perform 25% better (Vahdat, 2021).

## **7 DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The chapter plays a vital role in the research process and accommodates further in-depth analysis and recommendations for the future betterment of the IHRM of Beximco. This chapter will provide analysis, evaluation, and recommendations to the commissioner of the research with proper justification and adjustments. This part will properly present the impact of the COVID-19 on the adaptation of the digital technology of the HRM of Beximco.

### **7.1 Discussions**

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the paradigm of the HRM of every business organization. In fact, business organizations accelerated the use of the digital technology to run the basic operation of the business organization. The HRM of the Beximco consists of comprehensive operations and tasks, such as: recruitment, selection, making strategies for the employees of the organization, organising training and development pathway for the employees of the organization. Creating appraisal strategy and benefit packages for the employees helps to maintain performance and monitor performance of the employees of the organization. The early stage of the Pandemic accelerated the digitalization of every aspect of the business. The human resource process became heavily dependent on the technology which needed the training and development of the employees of the organization to acquire the ability of operating new software and technology. The research shows that the Beximco as an organization is well-equipped and well-structured to accommodate new technologies and cope with the pandemic situation. The research also states the process of the IHRM of the organization that already involves quite a good amount of heavy technology for the recruitment process of the organization. The performance management and the strategy making process of the organization already integrates with the various advanced technology and depends on significant digital platforms. The research found that the employees of the organization are familiar with the technology to conduct IHRM activities.

The research also found that the organization values the people of the organization the most. The strategy and the policy of the organization benefits the employees and prepares packages for the support of the employees during the pandemic. The proper strategy and the compensation of the organization encouraged employees of the organization to give dedication, and show resilience. During the time of

pandemic, Beximco was committed to provide benefits, incentive packages and career growth opportunities for the employees of the organization. The HRM philosophy of the organization is to develop the employees to their best so that every employee can cope with the challenging situation and move forward with better career opportunities. Beximco promotes diversity and gender equality in the work environment. In the last year, even during the pandemic situation, the organization witnessed a raise of the female employees of 31% (Vahdat, 2021).

The organization has diversity of professionals within the organizational environment, there are technicians and specialized experts working day and night for the betterment of the organization. Despite the severe pandemic situation, the organization has organized specialized training with collaboration of various international organizations from home and abroad. The training and development program of the organization helped to adopt the technology in the working pattern of the company and increased the productivity. The organization arranged training for the future of the organization and to install the long-term online activity and the techno-ecosystem of the organization. The training and development of the employees of the organization ranges from the specialized sector to software-based training program. The training includes advance use of IHRM software, computerized system validation, brand management, online marketing, online recruitment process, strategy formulation and execution using online tools, and WHO GSDP implementation.

The research shows that the employees of the organization actively participate in the transformation process and adopts technologies for the recruitment of the talents of the organization, to overlook the performance of the organization, to create policy and process of IHRM. The benefit and the compensation packages were built dedicatedly for the COVID-19 support. The observation clearly states the impact of COVID-19 accelerated the use of digital technology of the HRM Beximco.

## **7.2 Recommendations**

The research finds that the use of digital technology to conduct the operation of the IHRM and HRM will be continued after COVID-19 pandemic. The main reason behind this is the suitability and the efficiency of the technology produces for the organization. Already the scene of the business world has shifted toward digitalization. Most of the business organization already adopted and transformed into digital business. It means it is necessary to continue the digital process of HRM operation and train and develop more employees into the digital HRM eco-system.

The digital HRM will be dependent on the data science and data analytics for the understanding of the employees and to understand the organizational performance. The use of data science and data analytics will help business organizations to train their own artificial intelligence and build the artificial intelligence according to the organizational culture of the specific organization. It would be a clever decision for the Beximco to invest in training employees for future technologies and enable innovations for the organization.

The future trend of technology no longer consists of video conferencing and group meetings online. The use of VR and AR technology is on the rise and becoming more interactive which can help employees understand clearly about the purpose of the project and the organization. It is necessary to invest on developing such technology in the working environment of the Beximco. The present trend of the new generation of the employees are more purpose oriented. The new generation of the employee's priorities impact more than pay. It is necessary for the organization to create better purpose and create impact. The HRM strategy must align with the organizational vision and mission, it will help to recruit more potential employees for the organization.

## 8 CONCLUSION

The present world after the hit of the pandemic has changed greatly. Most of the business organizations transformed in digital business and it is high time for the Beximco to transform into digital business and make a proper ecosystem of digital tools that supports digital HRM process. This research analyzed the impact of COVID-19 on the transformation process of IHRM of the Beximco. The COVID-19 forced the organization to adopt new technologies to conduct the IHRM operations of the business. The research presents how IHRM activities and procedures adopted digital technology and contributed greatly to the productivity of the overall organization. The research analyzed the use of digital technology and digital platform to conduct IHRM operations such as recruitment of the talents for the organization using LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram. LinkedIn is the major source of professionals. The organization also uses Fiverr and Upwork to outsource many projects and works for the remote worker at cheaper price. The effectivity of the remote working and the initiation of the hybrid office has contributed greatly to the betterment of the organization.

The thesis properly portrayed the potentiality of the digital technology and the impact of the COVID-19 on the IHRM activity of the organization. The aim of the thesis was to identify the extent to which technology may be updated in the case of a pandemic to improve overall efficiency while making the most of limited resources. From the interviews, it is found that the type of compensation and the benefit program of the Beximco has changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The thesis also found that the training and development materials and the program also changed because of the pandemic situation. Employees of the organization needed health safety and work from home facilities more than ever. The guarantee of health care and the post pandemic support encouraged more than the financial support. The instant ambulance support and the oxygen arrangement encouraged the employees of the organization and increased the productivity of the organization. Moreover, HR professionals faced various challenges at the initial level of the pandemic; however, adapting digital technologies in the all aspects of IHRM helped the department to mitigate the challenges. As this matter of fact, it is clear that Beximco has updated its technologies to the extent where technological update could mitigate the challenges. And this finding shows the proof of meeting the thesis aim stated at the beginning of the thesis.

Besides, the thesis used the qualitative research method to meet the stated aim and the keen observation was arranged through the qualitative research process of the study. The collection of qualitative data

provided an in-dept understanding of the problem and helped the researcher to analyze the problem from the various perspectives. The approach of the study was concentrated through the eyes of the executives of the organization. It can be pointed out as a weakness of the research as it only prioritizes the executive aspect and failed to view the situation from another angle. If the thesis, alternatively, used the quantitative method, it would not be possible for the thesis to find an in-depth insight about the extent to which Beximco has updated its technology to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on IHRM. From this perspective, it is ascertained that the qualitative study along with semi-structured interview process has properly supported the thesis to meet the aim.

Concededly, it is to be said that the COVID-19 pandemic is such an event that has changed the course of human resource management. From a different perspective, it could be said that, the pandemic has established a permanent bridge between technological advancement and human resource management. After the pandemic, there is no scope of ignoring technology in any aspect of business operations. The findings drawn from Beximco's case study basically reflects this particular notion. The thesis found that the impact of COVID-19 on Beximco was so vital that the only option open for the company was to increase the use of technology in IHRM. Although Beximco could not mitigate the challenge at the initial level of the pandemic, increasing technological use has mitigated that issue. And the most important finding of the thesis in line with the use of technology and the impact of the pandemic on HRM is that these new technologies will sustain in the field of HRM although IHRM has initially used those as various means of survival.

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## INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How many years are you working at Beximco?
2. What position do you hold currently at the Human Resource division of Beximco?
3. Describe your view as an HR professional about the challenges that you face on the job.
4. Do you think that using advanced technology can have an efficient impact on your tasks as an HR professional at Beximco? Describe your perception of this notion.
5. What are the International Human Resource Management procedures at Beximco?
6. What technology did Beximco use in the company's IHRM operations?
7. How would you describe the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the IHRM operations at Beximco?
8. How did Beximco manage to operate its IHRM operations during the pandemic?
9. What were the impacts of technology on your daily job as an HR professional during the COVID-19 pandemic?
10. Do you think that the use of technology can avert the problems and reduce the challenges that the company faced during the COVID-19 pandemic?
11. How was your experience as an HR professional in the sudden technological change brought by the pandemic?
12. Do you think Beximco was successful in using technology to reduce the IHRM challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic?
13. What new trends in technological use do you see now?
14. Will you use the same technology when the impact of the pandemic no longer exists?