

Human Resource Management Practices and Organizational Performance Problems, Prospects, and Corporate Realities in an Emerging Economy

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Received date: 06 January 2026; Accepted date: 18 January 2026; Published date: 29 January 2026

Citation: Kumar Das P (2026) Human Resource Management Practices and Organizational Performance Problems, Prospects, and Corporate Realities in an Emerging Economy. SunText Rev Econ Bus 7(1): 247.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51737/2766-4775.2026.147>

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Abstract

Human Resource Management (HRM) has emerged as a critical strategic function influencing organizational competitiveness in the context of globalization, rapid technological advancement, demographic transitions, and increasing workforce diversity. In India's fast-evolving corporate sector, effective HRM practices are essential for sustaining economic growth, enhancing labor productivity, and strengthening organizational resilience amid intense domestic and global competition. This study examines the key problems and emerging prospects of HRM in Indian corporations, with particular emphasis on strategic alignment, technological integration, and workforce outcomes. The study follows an analytical and interpretative research design based on secondary data drawn from academic literature, industry reports, and policy documents. The analysis focuses on core HRM dimensions including talent acquisition, training and development, performance management, employee engagement, and human resources (HR) technology integration across major industry sectors. The findings reveal persistent challenges such as skill mismatches, high employee attrition, inadequate workforce planning, limited adoption of data-driven HR systems, work-life imbalance, workplace politics, high attrition, uneven implementation of diversity, and inclusion practices. Additionally, the results presented in the exhibits reveal a positive association between strategic HRM practices and organizational performance, with variations across industries. The findings indicate that while Indian corporations have made progress in areas like performance management and employee engagement, significant gaps continue in strategic alignment, leadership development, and technology-enabled HR systems, which in turn adversely affect organizational productivity, employee satisfaction, and long-term sustainability. The study highlights the growing importance of HR analytics, employee well-being initiatives, and flexible work arrangements as critical enablers of effective HRM. Ultimately, the research concludes that long-term success of Indian corporations depends on the adoption of holistic, technology-enabled, and strategically aligned HRM systems capable of retaining talent, improving productivity, and the creation of inclusive and resilient organizations in an increasingly competitive global economy.

Keywords: Human resource management; Indian corporate sector; Workforce challenges; Employee retention; Organizational performance

Abbreviations: HRM – Human Resource Management; HR – Human Resources

Introduction

HR are widely acknowledged as the most valuable asset of organizations, covering employees from lower levels to top management. Yet, due to differences in personality, culture, and gender, HR frequently encounters challenges within the workplace. In today's competitive business environment shaped by

globalization, digitalization, and socio-economic change, HRM has become indispensable. In India, the corporate sector has undergone significant transformation, with HRM shifting from an administrative function to a strategic force driving culture, competitiveness, and employee performance. Despite these advances, HRM in Indian corporations faces persistent challenges including job insecurity, low motivation, inefficient recruitment,

skills mismatches, poor engagement, high attrition, and data security risks. Many firms struggle to adopt modern HR technologies, relying on rigid, outdated systems that limit effective talent management and workforce analytics. Additionally, organizational policies, leadership approaches, and external influences like government regulations and economic changes exacerbate these problems. Addressing such issues is crucial, as employee dissatisfaction directly affects productivity and profitability. This study critically examines HRM challenges in the Indian corporate sector and proposes innovative, evidence-based reforms. By aligning HRM practices with organizational goals and employee aspirations, Indian firms can foster adaptability, resilience, and long-term competitiveness.

Review of Literature

Prior studies in the Indian corporate context emphasize training, organizational culture, employee engagement, work-life balance (WLB), employer branding, HR analytics, and green HRM as key determinants of organizational effectiveness. Evidence suggests that coherent HR systems significantly enhance employee engagement, retention, and productivity, though contextual variations persist across sectors and regions. Jain and Khurana reported that effective training and development practices significantly improve job satisfaction, workplace dedication, advocacy, willingness to continue, and broad employee involvement in Indian corporates, although emotional attachment showed limited improvement [1]. Samanta emphasized the foundational role of organizational culture in boosting employee participation and performance, bespeaking main tenets and ethics as critical elements in Indian firms [2]. Shah and Sarkar postulated that robust corporate culture directly improves growing employee retention and loyalty [3]. WLB has emerged as another critical dimension of HRM effectiveness. Mittal demonstrated that individual, social, and organizational factors jointly impact employees' WLB across manufacturing and service sectors, influencing both job satisfaction and performance outcomes [4]. Sodal inferred that cohesive employer branding practices better talent attraction and retention among corporate employees in competitive labor markets [5]. Alam applied McKinsey's 7S framework to substantiate that integrated performance appraisal systems enrich organizational efficiency and clarity of role expectations [6]. Vinod underscored that positive employee attitudes are vital determinants of successful organizational achievements in Indian firms [7]. Madipelli and Chinappa opined that poor talent management stems from methodical gaps and necessitates holistic HR mediations [8]. Vidyawati and Jadoun identified that cross-cultural communication barriers and diverse

commitments foster turnover unless recruitment and inclusion practices become better [9].

Bahl and Sharma divulged that education–occupation mismatch notably reduces productivity and wage equity in India [10]. Biedma-Ferrer and Medina-Garrido evidenced that family friendly HR policies lower turnover and enhance organizational outcomes [11]. Recent literature emphasizes emerging HRM trends like HR analytics, digital HR systems, and sustainability-oriented practices. Saxena viewed that predictive analytics can enhance workforce planning and occupational health and safety management in Indian HR systems [12]. Manoj and Namratha highlighted the efficacy of structured retention strategies in IT industry firms [13]. Piniseti substantiated how digital transformation, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) frameworks, and dynamic employee expectancies remold up-to-date HR strategies, particularly in large and technology-driven firms [14]. Bhardwaj and Kalia and Samanta confirmed that coherent organizational healthy cultures substantially improve employee engagement [15,2]. Abbas found parallel corporate culture impacts on engagement across Indian and Nigerian workforces [16]. The Gallup Report estimated significant productivity losses due to disengagement and identified feedback and recognition as effective remedies [17]. Salim highlighted that green HRM practices promote sustainability-oriented employee attitudes of Indian corporate [18]. Annan-Prah and Andoh elucidated that tailored capacity building initiatives positively affect employee learning, empowerment, and engagement [19]. Tambunan observed that while HRM practices may not directly influence attachment, employee attachment significantly enhances talent retention [20]. Rajkumar demonstrated that successful WLB programs enrich employee well-being and also illustrate as a competitive edge in talent acquisition and retention [21]. This study advances the growing literature on HR practices and offers hands-on experiences for organizations investigating sustainable solutions to staff turnover. Collectively, the literature underscores the strategic importance of integrated HRM practices in improving employee engagement, retention, and organizational performance in the Indian corporate sector.

Research Methodology

This study employs a descriptive and exploratory research design to analyze the problems and prospects of HRM in India's corporate sector. The methodology enables a deeper understanding of existing HR practices, structural challenges, and potential reforms suited to dynamic corporate environments. The research relies primarily on secondary data drawn from diverse and credible sources including academic journals, corporate reports, government publications, industry whitepapers, and HRM repositories. Key references include reports from the Ministry of

Labor and Employment, NASSCOM, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), and SHRM India, which provide insights into sectoral trends, employment patterns, and policy measures. The unit of analysis focuses on mid-to large-sized firms across Information Technology, financial services, consulting, and manufacturing, chosen for their advanced HR systems and broader representativeness. Geographical emphasis is placed on urban hubs such as Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, Pune, and Hyderabad, where corporate HR practices are most developed and competition is intense. A qualitative content analysis approach is applied to synthesize the collected data, highlighting recurring challenges such as skill mismatches, inadequate training, attrition, and poor engagement. Comparative insights are also drawn between traditional HR frameworks and emerging technology-driven models. Analytical tools such as thematic categorization and trend mapping strengthen interpretation. The methodology provides a policy-relevant, diagnostic framework to aid corporate leaders, HR professionals, and scholars in developing responsive, context-specific HRM strategies for India's evolving corporate landscape.

Significance of the Study

This study features the emerging importance of HRM in India, which has transitioned from behind-the-scenes tasks to strategic position in organizational progress. It spotlights major challenges like employee dissatisfaction, skill shortages, and work-life balance issues, underscoring their impact on productivity, performance, and profitability. The research accentuates the significance of managing human capital persuasively to cultivate a driven team, while also analyzing how organizational, internal, and external drivers mold HR challenges. By imparting strategic guidance, the study endeavors to illuminate HRM in customizing to India's fast-paced corporate environment.

Scope of the Study

This study examines the evolving landscape of HRM in India's corporate sector, with focus on recruitment, training, performance management, employee engagement, workforce diversity, and digital integration. Special attention is given to systemic challenges like outdated policies, weak digital infrastructure, and poor alignment between HR strategies and business goals. Geographically, it emphasizes urban hubs like Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, Hyderabad, and Pune, covering industries including IT, finance, consulting, and manufacturing. The analysis primarily targets mid to large-sized firms with structured HR departments, drawing from secondary sources such as academic literature, reports, and policy documents. While excluding unorganized sectors and small enterprises, the study considers trends like remote work, gig employment, and AI-driven HR

systems, offering diagnostic and policy-oriented insights relevant to academics and practitioners.

Objectives of the Study

The research aims:

- To critically analyze the current HRM practices within the corporate sector in India, highlighting their alignment with strategic organizational goals.
- To pinpoint and effectively address the primary challenges confronted by HR managers and corporate leaders, particularly in areas like recruitment, employee engagement, retention, training, performance evaluation, and technology adaptation.
- To explore the future potential of HRM in Indian corporations, aiming to develop robust HR frameworks that foster sustainable growth and nurture workforce development.
- To provide impactful, evidence-based recommendations to transform HRM systems in Indian corporate organizations, prioritizing inclusivity, adaptability, and strategic innovation.

Results and Discussions

Relationship between HRM practices and organizational performance

HRM has evolved into a strategic function that significantly influences organizational competitiveness, innovation, and sustainability in dynamic business environments. Relationship between HRM practices and organizational performance emblemizes one of the most fundamental questions in management research. A committed workforce fuels organization's growth, and effective HRM systems as strategic levers foster high-performance culture aligned with strategic needs. By shaping employee skills, motivation, and mindset, HRM practices enhance innovation, efficiency, and competitiveness in dynamic markets, but the magnitude of their impact varies according to technological intensity, workforce composition, and strategic orientation [22]. Organizations that strategically incorporate HRM practices into their business models deliver peak performance unfailingly. Well-designed HRM frameworks create supportive work environment, foster morale and commitment, and integrate personal goals with organizational goals. Empirical studies confirm that close alignment between HRM strategies and corporate objectives builds long-term strategic superiority and nurtures organizational resilience in changing environments [23]. Research further demonstrates that HRM systems exert a significant and direct impact on organizational performance [24], with internally coherent HR architectures accelerating their effectiveness [25].

Grounded in social exchange theory, HRM practices cultivate trust-based relationships that strengthen mutual commitment between employers and employees. Such commitment enriches organizational adaptability, engagement, and productivity—especially crucial in today's digital economy. Practices like upskilling, objective evaluation process, and performance-based incentives deepen allegiance and reduce turnover. (Figure 1) shows positive correlations of HRM practices with improved organizational performance. The upward line shows that as corporates adopt more comprehensive and strategic HRM practices, performance levels rise, underscoring the critical role of HRM in driving long-term success. Deep pragmatic evidence avers that comprehensive HRM systems significantly improve innovation capability, operational excellence, and workforce resilience by integrating complementary practices of HR practices like recruitment, training, performance management, and rewards that reinforce employee commitment and skill development [26]. Empirical studies further confirm that strategically aligned HR systems contribute to organizational adaptability and sustained competitive positioning, particularly in knowledge-intensive and globally exposed organizations [27]. Strategically, HRM outstrips administrative roles to shape culture, agility, and strategic renewal. When synchronized with corporate roadmap, HRM cultivate employee morale, dedication, and ingenuity—driving efficiency and persistent value creation. In essence, HRM practices serve as catalytic mechanisms translating strategic vision into employee action, thereby achieving enduring success and market leadership globally.

Problems

HRM in India's corporate sector faces complex and interlinked challenges that directly influence organizational effectiveness and competitiveness. One of the most pressing concerns is the lack of long-term strategic HR planning. Many firms still treat HR as an administrative function rather than a strategic partner, leading to talent mismatches, underutilization of skills, and redundancies in the workforce. Closely linked to this is the weak alignment of HR policies with overall business objectives, which prevents HR from contributing meaningfully to decision-making and long-term value creation. Skill gaps and talent shortages remain significant, particularly in areas such as digital technologies, analytics, and innovation. Although India has a large workforce, many employees lack the competencies demanded by rapidly evolving industries. This is compounded by a shortage of skilled HR professionals equipped to manage workforce analytics, strategic talent acquisition, and organizational change. High employee turnover in fast-growing sectors like IT, retail, and e-commerce further reflects

inadequate retention policies, limited career growth opportunities, and weak recognition of contributions.

Rigid HR policies, resistance to adopting modern technologies, and limited investment in training restrict organizational agility. Outdated appraisal systems, often biased and subjective, undermine performance management and accountability. Regulatory complexity, with overlapping labor laws and frequent changes, adds to administrative burdens. In addition, issues such as gender disparity, lack of diversity and inclusion frameworks, and difficulties in managing India's cultural diversity weaken workplace equity and cohesion. Rising stress levels, poor work-life balance, and job insecurity from contractual employment reduce morale and loyalty. Weak succession planning and generic policies leave organizations vulnerable to leadership gaps during transitions. Furthermore, ethical concerns such as favoritism and non-transparent HR practices erode employee trust. Addressing these issues requires Indian corporates to reposition HR as a strategic pillar. This involves adopting advanced technologies, investing in continuous reskilling, modernizing policies, and fostering inclusive, transparent, and employee-centric cultures. By doing so, HR can evolve into a driver of innovation, competitiveness, and sustainable organizational growth.

Prospects

Prospects of HRM in India's corporate sector highlight its transformation into a strategic business partner and a driver of organizational growth. Increasingly, HR is being recognized not only for administrative efficiency but also for its role in workforce forecasting, talent management, and business transformation initiatives. Technology integration is a defining trend, with AI, machine learning, and advanced HR analytics streamlining recruitment, payroll, and performance management. These tools support data-driven decisions, predictive modeling, and personalized employee experiences. Digital platforms and continuous feedback systems are replacing rigid appraisal models, fostering transparency, accountability, and stronger alignment between employee performance and organizational goals. Employee-centric approaches are gaining momentum, with companies prioritizing mental health, wellness programs, ergonomic workspaces, and flexible policies. Rise of remote and hybrid work has expanded talent pools and enhanced work-life balance, while customized HR policies tailored to workforce diversity are improving engagement and loyalty.

DEI remain critical, with organizations actively promoting gender equality, disability support, LGBTQ+ inclusion, and cultural sensitivity. Simultaneously, cross-industry mobility and globalization are encouraging workforce adaptability, knowledge transfer, and the adoption of global best practices. Government



reforms, including the consolidation of labor laws, are simplifying compliance and safeguarding stakeholder interests. Alongside, collaborations between corporates and academic institutions are ensuring workforce readiness through skill development, reskilling, and industry-specific curricula. Leadership development is also advancing through mentorship, succession planning, and rotational programs designed to nurture future-ready leaders. HR is increasingly contributing to sustainability and CSR by linking employee engagement with CSR initiatives. Employer branding, digital presence, and employee advocacy are further strengthening talent attraction and retention. Finally, agile HR models are enabling rapid responses to changing market conditions, fostering innovation, and positioning HR as a key enabler of organizational resilience and competitiveness.

Current HRM practices in the corporate sector in India

HRM in India’s corporate sector has shifted focus from compliance and administration to strategy and business growth. Contemporary HRM approach focuses on aligning human capital management with corporate goals, ensuring that workforce planning, motivation, and capability development assist in meeting business milestones. Recruitment and talent acquisition are increasingly data-driven, supported by AI tools that distinguish future-ready skills aligned with strategic requirements. Training and development initiatives—through back-and-forth with EdTech platforms and universities—cultivate ongoing development and

strengthen leadership, analytical, and digital capabilities. Performance approach emphasizes real-time feedback and transparency, ensuring individual alignment with organizational targets. Employee engagement programs incorporating wellness, recognition, and diversity and inclusion (D&I) initiatives strengthen retention and satisfaction, thereby fostering corporate culture. Also, HR technology and analytics facilitate projection, personnel planning, and performance evaluation, while hybrid work models enhance resilience and talent acquisition. Corporations like Infosys, TCS, HUL, and Reliance demonstrate strategic HRM implementation. Infosys utilizes its 'Lex' platform for digital upskilling; TCS employs agile models linking performance to client delivery; HUL embeds D&I into leadership development; and Reliance leverages HR analytics to forecast talent needs. Together, these practices position HRM as a driver of innovation and sustainable performance.

Interpretation

Table 1 demonstrates how strategic HRM practices contribute directly to the achievement of organizational objectives (Table 1). Recruitment ensures optimal skill alignment, training drives innovation, and performance management strengthens accountability. Workforce commitment, the adoption of HR technology, and inclusivity initiatives mutually contribute to enhanced efficiency, heightened motivation, and enduring organizational success, solidifying HRM's status as a core strategically.

Table 1: Strategic Alignment of HRM Practices with Organizational Goals.

HRM Practice	Aligned Organizational Goal
Recruitment & Talent Acquisition	Right talent fit and future-ready skills
Training & Development	Workforce agility and innovation
Performance Management	Goal alignment and accountability
Employee Engagement	Motivation, satisfaction, and retention
HR Technology Integration	Efficiency, forecasting, and data-driven growth
Diversity & Inclusion	Equity, inclusivity, and sustainable growth

Table 2: Comparative Analysis of HRM Practices and Organizational Performance Outcomes across Industries.

HRM Practice	IT Industry (High Impact)	Manufacturing (Moderate Impact)	Services (Lower Impact)
Recruitment & Talent Acquisition	Automated recruitment fosters innovation	Technical hiring yields moderate efficiency	High attrition undermines performance
Training & Development	Digital upskilling enhances flexibility	Structured training improves quality	Limited training constrains growth

Performance Management	Continuous feedback strengthens alignment	Systematic appraisals ensure accountability	Weak linkage with strategy
Employee Engagement	Innovative engagement improves stability	Collective bargaining enhances loyalty	Customer pressure reduces morale
HR Technology Integration	AI-based analytics support future strategies	Gradual integration improves efficiency	Low adoption limits impact
Diversity & Inclusion	Inclusive culture promotes innovation	Compliance-driven progress	Informal and weakly institutionalized

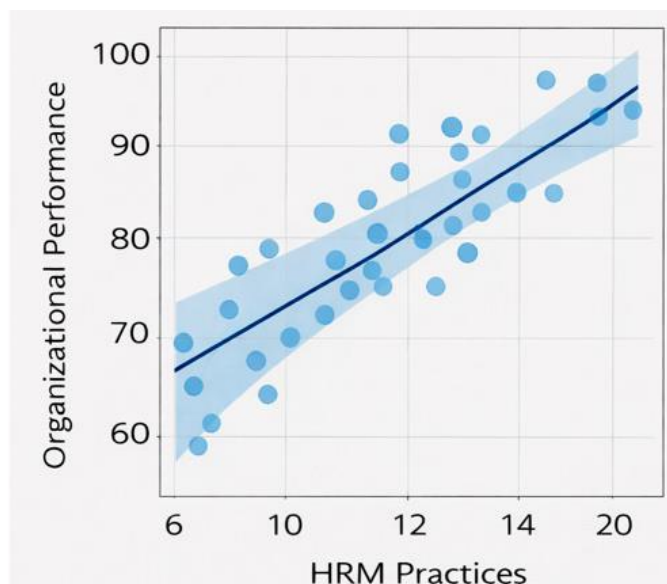


Figure 1: Relationship between HRM Practices and Organizational Performance. Figure presents a conceptual model illustrating the positive relationship between strategic human resource management (HRM) practices and various organizational performance metrics. The figure reveals a significant nexus, suggesting that firms utilizing rigorous and integrated personnel management frameworks typically realize optimized operational results regarding yield, resource management, and institutional longevity.

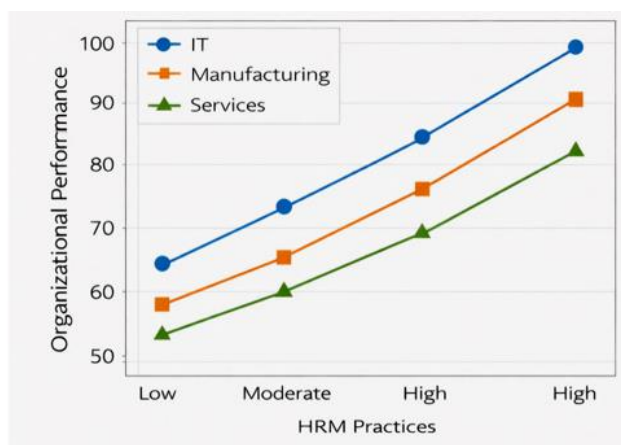


Figure 2: Industry-wise Impact of HRM Practices on Organizational Performance. Figure depicts the differential impact of human resource management (HRM) practices on organizational performance across the IT, manufacturing, and services sectors. The figure shows that organizational performance improves with stronger HRM practices in all three sectors; however, the magnitude of impact varies significantly. The IT sector exhibits the strongest performance improvement, followed by manufacturing, while the services sector shows relatively lower gains. This variation reflects the role of industry-specific dynamics, particularly digital intensity and workforce structure, in determining the effectiveness of HRM practices.

Interpretation

Table 2 compares HRM systems and performance results across key Indian sectors, including IT, manufacturing, and services. Evidence from sector-specific HRM literature [28-31] indicates that although HRM practices bolster performance universally, the intensity of this effect is inconsistent across industries (Table 2). Digital literacy and advanced HR tech put IT at the forefront of alignment; manufacturing maintains a mid-level position with its structured systems; the services sector stays at the lower end due to limited HR investment and high churn. (Figure 2) highlights that IT industry shows the steepest growth in performance for rapid digital adoption and talent strategies, followed by manufacturing and services, underscoring industry-specific dynamics in HRM effectiveness. This demonstrates the importance of tailoring HRM strategies to industry-specific conditions for maximum effectiveness. Notwithstanding the persistent obstacles to coherence across diverse enterprises, the megatrend shows that holistic alignment of HRM with strategic goals is staunchly entrenching HRM in India as a crucial catalyst for competitive sustainability.

Conclusion

HRM in India's corporate sector has transitioned from traditional management practices to a strategic function that significantly influences organizational performance and sustainability. In the context of globalization, rapid technological advancement, and increasing workforce diversity, HRM faces persistent challenges like skill mismatches, high attrition, symbolic inclusion practices, and limited strategic integration. However, the study also uncovers promising advancements in the uptake of HR analytics, workplace wellness programs, and remote-hybrid work models. The research confirms a significant connection between strategically oriented HRM approaches and improved organizational effectiveness; the specific impact, nonetheless, demonstrates variability across diverse industry settings. To secure a long-term strategic lead, Indian corporations must ensure seamless alignment among HR strategies, corporate roadmaps, innovation toolsets, and moral stewardship. HRM can be instrumental in shaping the future trajectory of Indian corporate enterprises by nurturing cultures centered on inclusivity, agility, continuous learning, and innovation. The study ultimately accentuates the necessity for proactive and cohesive HRM approach that builds talent potential and reinforces enduring corporate resilience.

Implication of the Study

This study holds broad implications for policymakers, corporate leaders, HR professionals, and academic researchers by addressing the problems and prospects of HRM in India's corporate sector. It provides a strategic approach to boost HR strength and focuses on

HR as core component of organizational strategy as opposed to routine task. The findings highlight the importance of workforce development through skill enhancement, employee engagement, and inclusivity, while stressing talent management, technology integration, and well-being support. For policymakers, it underlines labor reforms and regulatory simplification to reduce compliance burden while safeguarding employee rights. For academics, it invites curriculum redesign consistent with real-world corporate challenges. Overall, the study encourages data-informed, employee-centric, and future-oriented HR approach while advocating ethical, scalable, and sustainable HRM transformation.

Research Gap

This study highlights key gaps in HRM research within India's corporate sector that warrant deeper investigation. While offering a broad overview, it lacks industry-specific analysis across sectors like IT, manufacturing, or retail. Empirical evidence on the efficacy of AI-driven tools, HR analytics, and remote work platforms in India also remains limited, requiring quantitative evaluation. Further, regional and cultural diversity shaping HR practices is underexplored, as are employee perspectives through qualitative study. Finally, the growing importance of sustainability and ESG underscores the requirement to study HR's role in promoting green HRM and corporate responsibility. These areas present promising avenues for future research and innovation.

Suggestions

The study presents several suggestions to strengthen HRM in India's corporate sector. Alignment of HR with strategic business objectives is essential to ensure that policies remain consistent with organizational goals and long-term sustainability. Investment in training and reskilling, particularly in digital literacy, analytics, and sustainability, can address critical skill gaps. Strengthening employee retention through career pathways, incentives, and flexible work models can reduce attrition and foster commitment. Adoption of advanced HR technologies, including AI-driven recruitment, cloud-based systems, and analytics platforms, will enhance efficiency and evidence-based decision-making. Institutionalization of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is crucial, requiring comprehensive policies, sensitization programs, and periodic evaluations to build equitable workplaces. Similarly, performance appraisal systems should be modernized, shifting toward continuous feedback and transparent communication. Promotion of employee well-being through counseling, stress management, and health-focused benefits is vital for motivation. Development of succession planning frameworks can prepare high-potential employees for leadership. Enhanced compliance awareness and ethical practices must be encouraged through systematic training on labor laws and governance. Stronger

academia-industry collaboration is necessary to align curricula, internships, and research with organizational needs. Finally, adopting agile HR models and institutionalizing employee voice mechanisms will encourage innovation, responsiveness, engagement, and inclusive decision-making.

Limitations of the Study

This study is conceptual and relies exclusively on secondary data sources, making its results interpretive rather than empirical. Absence of primary data limits generalization across industries, regions, or organizational types. While addressing common HRM issues in India's corporate sector, heterogeneous organizational designs negate one-size-fits-all solutions. Fast-paced changes like remote work, gig employment, and AI-driven HRM may not be accurately illustrated. Reliance on prior work creates also introduces potential stigma. The broad scope reinforces patterns over sector-specific nuances, emphasizing the necessity for forward-looking observational studies for nuanced interpretation.

Acknowledgement

To my ALMIGHTY GOD, who gifted me the knowledge to write this piece of paper.

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