

SUSTAINABLE HRM IN HYBRID AND REMOTE WORK: TRANSLATING SDG STRATEGY INTO ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICE

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Article history: Received: 22 April 2026

Revised: 31 May 2026

Accepted: 10 June 2026

Published: 29 June 2026

Article type: Empirical article

Abstract

This study explores how sustainable Human Resource Management practices are implemented in hybrid and remote work environments in Bangladesh; also discusses the HR strategies related to flexibility, well-being, and performance evaluation are translated into practice, and to identify the cultural and structural factors influencing their effectiveness. A qualitative research approach was employed, using interviews with HR professionals and employees from diverse sectors. Thematic analysis was applied to explore patterns related to practices in hybrid and remote contexts. The results reveal a workplace in transition, with a shift from attendance-based to results-driven evaluation aligning with productivity and innovation goals. Remote and hybrid work in Bangladesh echo the systemic, cultural, and knowledge divides between HR policy and practice. The digitized overexposure, presenteeism, and invisible pressures threaten burnout and flexibility. Performance-based evaluation encourages individual autonomy but also generates 'always-on' self-surveillance. Mental health programs are on the rise but are largely skin deep, while stigma and insufficient support create distrust among employees. This study contributes to the limited literature on sustainable HRM in hybrid and remote work environments in developing countries by highlighting the gap between formal HR policies and employees lived experiences. It offers context-specific evidence from Bangladesh that can inform the design of more sustainable, inclusive, and employee-centered work practices aligned with the SDGs.

Keywords: SDG, Sustainable HRM, Hybrid work, Remote work, HR practice.

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■ 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Due to the global digital revolution, the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI), and mass automation in production and reporting systems, the workplace, as the world knows it, is undergoing a dramatic transformation that might change the concept of work, organizational culture, and performance evaluation (Özkiziltan and Hassel, 2021). From the office workspaces to digital dashboards, from local teams to globally distributed networks, the very nature of work is being reshaped (Bula et al., 2024). In a developing country like Bangladesh, this shift has been both rapid and impactful. Remote and hybrid work have rapidly moved from being a temporary solution to a permanent fixture in many sectors, accelerated by the global pandemic COVID-19 and enabled by digitalization (Arunprasad et al., 2022).

In the case of a developing nation like Bangladesh, the majority of the organizations here are yet to overcome the challenge of remotely managing or leading a workforce, keeping them engaged, ensuring mental health, making them do the right thing, motivating them out of the ordinary, building trust without physical presence, and dealing with cultural and generational differences virtually. For HR leaders, the question is not merely the adoption of remote tools and policies, but a transformation in their thinking that will enable them to create long-term sustainability, ethical leadership, and inclusive growth.

Considering the new reality of business operations and the arrival of the future of work (FoW), organizations need to consider the remote and hybrid work modes as the new beginning (Iqbal et al., 2021). These work models also need to move from just being productive to being human-centered with employee well-being, inclusion, and purpose front and center. For a nation with an expanding base of freelancers, IT specialists, and digitally literate young people, this shift offers tantalizing opportunities (Ausare, 2024).

Despite the growing body of research on remote work and sustainable HRM, much of the existing literature is concentrated in developed economies and focuses primarily on organizational outcomes such as productivity and performance. Limited attention has been given to how sustainable HRM principles are translated into everyday practices within hybrid and remote work environments in developing countries, particularly from the perspectives of both HR professionals and employees. Moreover, the connection between sustainable HRM practices and the broader Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remains underexplored in the Bangladeshi context. This paper seeks to address these questions through a study of the relationship between remote work, sustainable HRM, and the UN SDGs

in the Bangladeshi context. The SDGs, particularly those focused on decent work (SDG 8), gender equality (SDG 5), and reduced inequalities (SDG 10), provide a valuable proposal for creating workplaces that are not only productive but also socially responsible.

■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Sustainable HRM and the Sustainable Development Goals

Sustainable HRM has emerged as a significant approach that fit in the organizational business objectives with employee well-being and broader societal and environmental goals (Soekotjo et al., 2025). Unlike traditional HRM practices, which often prioritizes the productivity and economic performance, sustainable HRM seeks to balance economic, social, and environmental considerations with operational excellence, resource utilization to ensure long-term organizational sustainability (Al-Oun & Al-Khasawneh, 2025). Scholars argue that sustainable HRM contributes to the development of workplaces that support employee growth, equality, inclusion along with the responsible business practices (Sagandykova & Tayauova, 2026).

The increasing importance of sustainable HRM is meticulously connected to the United Nations (UN) SDGs (None & None, 2025); here, SDG 8 promotes decent work and economic growth (Rai et al., 2019), SDG 5 focuses on gender equality (Hales & Birdthistle, 2023), and SDG 10 emphasizes the reduction of inequalities (Monaco, 2024). HR policies related to flexible work arrangements, employee well-being, diversity, inclusion, and fair performance management can directly contribute to achieving these goals (Al-Jaber et al., 2025). Consequently, organizations are increasingly expected to align HR strategies with sustainability objectives.

However, the relationship between sustainable HRM and the SDGs remains largely conceptual in existing literature till now. Many researches discuss the potential contribution of HRM to sustainability goals but provide partial empirical evidence regarding how these principles are implemented in everyday organizational practices (Malik et al., 2020). Moreover, most of these researches have been conducted in developed countries, leaving a significant gap in understanding how sustainable HRM operates within developing-country contexts characterized by different cultural, economic, and technological realities.

2.2 Sustainable HRM and Transformation of Work System

Technology, work, and organizational dynamics are changing faster than ever; remote work and new ways of connecting have reshaped how we think about our jobs and workplaces (Bilderback & Kilpatrick, 2024). Even in this new reality, one thing is clear: that people must remain at the heart of work (Shahriar, 2025) and be the source of competitive advantage that makes organizations stronger and future-ready.

Here, sustainable human resource management (SHRM) is about building workplaces that care for both the organization and the people who make it run (Lu et al., 2023). It's not only about profits but also about creating fair opportunities, supporting diversity, protecting the environment, and looking after employee well-being (Sypniewska et al., 2023; Guerci and Pedrini, 2013). A sustainable approach to HR helps organizations stay strong and adaptable while ensuring that employees feel valued and supported in the long run (Kramar, 2013).

The move to remote and hybrid work has only made these more important. When there are no physical offices, employees at times can feel disconnected or ignored. That's why sustainable HRM is now being driven through creating digital workplaces where people feel included, where mental health is treated seriously, and where flexibility doesn't create unfairness (Kohont, 2025; Haquei, 2023). This shift holds big opportunities for a country like Bangladesh; a young, knowledge-based workforce and increasingly open access to global markets suggest that sustainable HRM can serve to ensure not only business success but also national progress (Mahmood et al., 2015). By incorporating inclusion, trust, and well-being into remote work, companies can transmute jobs from routine work into something greater that matters, work that gives an employee a sense of purpose and a path to a joint, brighter future (Saha et al., 2021).

2.3 Remote Work and Well-Being

Remote work has redrafted what it means to 'go to work'; for a lot of people today, that office is a kitchen table or a quiet corner of a bedroom or a shared workspace in a postindustrial city (Shahriar et al., 2022). This change has provided new forms of freedom, flexibility, autonomy, access to global opportunity but also new constraints (Wells et al., 2023). The spatial separation can muddy the distinction between personal and professional life, leave people feeling isolated or, worse, render them invisible in their organizations. Here is the point at which the relevance towards the SDGs is strongly felt (Tambovceva et al., 2025).

At the same time, here employee well-being has become a central concern in discussions surrounding hybrid and remote work (Ribeiro et al., 2024). Many studies suggest that flexible work arrangements can improve work-life balance by reducing commuting time, increasing autonomy, and allowing employees greater control over their schedules (Herrera-Ballesteros et al., 2025). Such flexibility is often associated with higher job satisfaction, improved motivation, and enhanced employee engagement. Some even argued that remote or flexible work arrangements are commonly promoted as tools for improving inclusion and equality within the organizations (Petitta & Ghezzi, 2025). Remote and hybrid work models can provide opportunities for the employees who face geographical, physical, or family-related barriers to traditional workplace participation (Mustajab, 2024).

Remote work is not simply a logistical shift; it's a social shift. It also relates to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), as it affects how people cope with stress, rest and connect (Hopkins and Bardoel, 2023). It connects with SDG 5 (Gender Equality) by giving women and caregivers greater access to jobs that once involved long commutes or rigid schedules. It addresses SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), by creating opportunities for talent in places like rural Bangladesh and in young people who are hungry to participate in the global economy but have no traditional access (Hopkins and Bardoel, 2023).

But if remote work is to be truly sustainable, organizations need to view it in broader terms than tools and technology alone. They have to build places where people feel supported and seen from afar (Asatiani and Norström, 2023). That involves reimagining leadership, establishing trust through screens and ensuring that flexibility does not lead to burnout or inequality. Done right, in fact, remote work might bring us closer together not physically but in purpose. It means work can fit around life, instead of life around work and it resonates so perfectly with the spirit of the SDGs: create a world that is more fair, inclusive and balanced for everyone, whatever their circumstances (Makowski, 2023). Interestingly, these studies regarding remote work outcomes remain inconsistent, with evidence highlighting both positive and negative consequences for employees and organizations. Additionally, much of the current knowledge is derived from developed-country settings, limiting understanding of how sustainable HRM practices function within developing economies such as Bangladesh. Cultural norms, technological infrastructure, managerial practices, and labor market conditions may significantly influence the implementation and effectiveness of hybrid and remote work arrangements. This particular study, however, examines remote work from the real-life context of Bangladeshi organizations and employees.

■ 3.0 PURPOSE

Bangladesh, a developing nation from South Asia, is witnessing a growing digital workforce, with increasing numbers of professionals, freelancers, and remote employees engaging in local and international work. However, this transformation brings both opportunities and challenges. While remote work opens doors to global markets and flexible lifestyles, it also raises issues that are deeply tied to the SDGs. This research aims to examine how organizations in Bangladesh are adapting their HRM approaches to address the future of work (FoW) and uncover whether current practices reflect the SDGs.

■ 4.0 METHODOLOGY

Because of the exploratory nature of the study, qualitative research design was adopted to document the real-time stories and personal reflections of the professionals struggling to cope with the unfolding experience of remote work in Bangladesh. The intention was not just hear about what is going on in remote places and what they are doing, but also how it feels, how fluid their adaptation is, and how employees and organizations respond to new standards of working in the context of Sustainable HRM and the UN SDGs. To profoundly understand the phenomenon from multiple perspectives, respondents were divided into two distinct clusters, as each cluster represented a different layer of insight within the organizational ecosystem:

Cluster 1: Consisted of 45 HR professionals from various industries, including RMG, IT, banking, finance, development, education, and telecommunications. These participants were selected based on their direct involvement in shaping, managing, or influencing remote work policies and HR strategies.

Cluster 2: Included 30 employees from departments other than HR, such as marketing, sales, customer service, operations, internal audit, and finance. This cluster provided perspectives from the receiving end of HR policies, giving the research a more balanced and grounded viewpoint.

Participants were purposefully sampled to ensure diversity in age, gender, organizational type, and experience with remote work. Many of them were working in hybrid or fully remote capacities, while others had experienced the transition during or after the pandemic.

Before the interviews were conducted, all participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their involvement in the research. Participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from each participant. To protect privacy, participants were assured that their identities would not be disclosed and that the information they shared would be kept confidential. No names or other identifying details were included in the analysis or presentation of the findings.

Data was collected through in-depth, conducted in a conversation-style format. This approach allowed participants to speak freely, reflect personally, and move beyond surface level responses. These interviews were not rigidly structured; rather, they followed a flexible guide that encouraged organic dialogue. Each interview lasted between 45 to 75 minutes, depending on the comfort level and availability of the participant. The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was applied to identify, analyze, and interpret patterns within the data. The analysis followed a structured process involving familiarization with the data, initial coding, theme generation, review of themes, and final definition of thematic categories. Themes were developed iteratively, moving between the data and emerging conceptual patterns.

■ 5.0 RESULTS

5.1 Remote Work: Freedom and Fatigue

The research results suggest that while the new work modalities like distance from workplace, created by remote work, introduced flexibility and autonomy, it has also generated unexpected psychological and operational costs on the part of HRs and other employees. Participants from both clusters discussed remote work as a mixed bag, one that fosters a particular freedom and autonomy even as it also generates professional malaise. This conflict highlights the challenging issue of implementing sustainable telecommuting practices in emerging digital work environments such as the one currently developing in Bangladesh. But there were positive results, including ranking in savings on commuting, increased scheduling flexibility and an increase in time with family. The benefits are in line with commitments to make the world a better place and to enhance job satisfaction, retention, and is in turn related to UN SDG 8 (Decent work and Economic growth).

According to the findings of this research, around 91% of respondents from Cluster-1 (HR professionals) and 96% of respondents from Cluster-2 said that they feel remote work gives them real flexibility, mainly the chance to spend more time with family. Within Cluster-1, 89% mentioned most employees are satisfied, which points to strong overall acceptance. At the same time, HR notes issues that can chip away at the benefits things like 1) uneven internet or power, 2) noise at home, 3) late-night messages that blur work-life boundaries, and worries about fairness if people in the office are seen more than those at home. At the same time around 70% respondents from cluster-2 said they feel, managers also struggle to set clear goals and give feedback without daily face time, which can slow work or cause confusion. Another major problem that the respondents mentioned that separation of work and personal in a small room. Around 82% HR professionals said they had a hard time unplugging and felt pressure to be online around the clock in multiple time zones. In Cluster-2, 63% employees reported their homes had ‘turned into offices,’ cultivating a constant ‘always-on’ sense that made it more difficult to rest and spend time with family.

Table 1 Hybrid work and HR Strategies and Actions Aligned with SDG

SI	HR strategy	Problem it fixes from findings	What to do (step-by-step)	Who owns it & how often	Related goal
1	Right-to-disconnect rules	Always-on’ pressure; late pings	Set quiet hours (e.g., 8 pm- 8 am); turn on scheduled send; teach ‘no reply needed after hours’; Allow rare urgent exceptions; rotate on-call fairly. Monitor and reduce after-hours messages, check employee wellbeing score	HR writes policy (once), managers remind teams monthly. Email/Chat scheduled send; sample message templates (Bangla/English)	SDG 3 (Health & Well-being)
2	Time-zone load control	Employee pushed to be online in all time zones	Pick one overlap window; rotate early or late meetings; always share recording and notes. Follow-up the performance matrix	Managers plan monthly; HR checks quarterly. Calendar with shared team hours'; auto-record and email notes	
3	Ergonomics and coworking pass	Homes turned into offices; noise or back strain	Give a small setup stipend; with checklist; offer coworking pass	HR sets budget yearly; managers approve as needed. Simple checklist; low-cost gear list; list of local coworking hubs	
4	Well-being check-ins	Stress stays hidden remotely	Add one wellbeing question in monthly 1:1; share helplines; allow buddy system	Managers monthly; HR shares resources quarterly	
5	Clear weekly goals (output-based)	People want flexibility but need clarity	Set weekly deliverables; review every Friday; show work on shared board	Managers weekly; teams update boards daily	SDG 8 (Decent Work & Growth)
6	Regular 1:1s with manager	Confusion without face time	30-min monthly 1:1: goals, blockers, wellbeing; write 3 action items	Managers monthly; HR tracks completion	
7	Skills: short micro-learning	Digital basics drive performance	10–15 min modules (docs, sheets, async writing); apply on a real task	HR/L&D monthly drops; managers assign tasks	
8	Fair promotions & reviews	Visibility bias against remote staff	Write criteria; run panel calibration; share promotion notes	HR sets cycle plans	
9	Smart hybrid schedule	Balance focus & team time	2–3 office days; plan team day; hot-desking to cut commute load	HR sets policy; managers plan monthly	

10	Starter kit for new remote hires	New joiners can get lost	Ship a welcome checklist; assign buddy; first-week goals written	HR before Day-1; manager Day-1 & Week-1
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Table 1 lists ten practical HR actions for a hybrid model and ties each to a Sustainable Development Goal. Set right-to-disconnect rules, limit time-zone load with one overlap window, fund basic ergonomics or coworking for noisy homes, and add simple well-being check-ins. Use clear weekly, output-based goals; hold regular manager 1:1s; deliver short micro-learning with real tasks; make promotions fair with written criteria and panel calibration; plan smart hybrid schedules (2–3 office days, team day, hot-desking); and give new remote hires a starter kit with buddy support. Each row states the problem, concrete steps, an owner / cadence, and the related goal.

5.2 Emergence of Result Driven HR

Results-driven HR is closely related to organizational success and sustainability; around 82% of respondents from cluster 1 agreed that shifting attention from where people sit to what they ship is a change in the backdated organizational mindset.

Here the interview analysis of the respondents from cluster-1 revealed that here HR strategically helps the organization to set a clear outcome by defining fundamental objectives and key results like revenue, quality, time-to-market, customer satisfaction, team KPIs, individual KPIs, and building the working model around those outcomes.

One of the HR professionals with nine years of experience in strategic HR mentioned:

"From my experience in strategic human resource management, I can say that, results-driven HR is simple, here we agree on a few clear goals each quarter, give each role the right mix of home and office time, and ask managers to do weekly check-ins on progress, not any attendance sheet."- HR016_Male, Dhaka

Another HR manager working in an IT firm said:

"We keep a small, visible dashboard: projects with deadline, how long it took, meeting hours, and voluntary attrition. Promotions and recognition are tied to proof of impact, and we review patterns to keep it fair for both remote and on-site people" - HR025_Female, Dhaka

Hybrid and remote become design lever, not ends in themselves. Here HR's role is to map roles to the right level of location flexibility, set clear operating norms for collaboration, and equip managers to coach for results rather than attendance. In practice, that looks like quarterly OKRs with evidence of impact, team 'working agreements' that make collaboration predictable, and a small number of telemetry signals meeting load, focus time, cycle time, and retention, so leaders can see whether the system is helping or hurting performance.

Interview analysis also found that fairness is a business risk, and HR should continually test patterns of promotion and recognition by work arrangement and demand written, outcome-linked proof in reviews. And the digital stack is important as well: decision logs and asynchronous documents and lightweight task tracking and governed AI tools all mean less being-in-the-same-room dependency and more time back to people for deep work.

A correlation emerged between achieving clear results e.g., turnover, quality, time-to-market; at the same time as reducing less productive meetings and steady gains in work efficiency, in line with SDG 8 (targets 8.2 and 8.5). Evidence was drawn from quarterly OKRs, timestamped cycle-time data, delivery logs, and retention records. As goals were clarified and meeting load was reduced, revenue per FTE tended to rise, lead times shortened, on-time delivery improved, and voluntary attrition eased, especially in teams with well-defined handoffs. These patterns were most visible where managers kept simple weekly check-ins and teams documented decisions in writing.

5.3 Employee Well-being: Recognized, But Not Fully Addressed

The research findings revealed that employee well-being has become an increasingly visible concern nowadays, in hybrid or remote work contexts, particularly under the strain of prolonged digital engagement it has become more important.

HR professionals from the cluster-1 consistently acknowledged rising levels of burnout, digital fatigue, and mental health challenges. Around 67% respondents reported that their organizations had launched well-being initiatives such as 1) virtual wellness check-ins, 2) flexible scheduling; around 13% respondents from the Cluster -1 said that they have drafted mental health leave policies considering the current scenario. These efforts were positioned by HR as aligning with UN SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), reflecting a commitment to integrate employee wellness into organizational strategy.

But a significant difference emerged among attitudes of non-HR employees (Cluster 2). Most welcomed such measures as a step in the right direction, but many were also critical of how limited, or ad hoc, or performative they were. Staff members countered that that true mental well-being support would entail deeper structural reforms, realistic workload expectations, empathetic management, clearly enforced after-hours boundaries and not ad hoc wellness campaigns.

As one participant remarked:

"Mental health day are nice but it doesn't make a difference if I come back to a stack of overdue work and unanswered"

Table 2 Contrasting Perceptions of Employee Well-being Initiatives

Aspect	HR Professionals' View (Cluster 1)	Employees' View (Cluster 2)
Recognition of Mental Health	Acknowledged as a rising concern in remote work	Strongly validated, often expressed through lived experiences
Initiatives Implemented	Wellness check-ins, online counseling, flexible hours, mental health days	Viewed as helpful but often symbolic or insufficient
Effectiveness of Support	Generally seen as positive steps toward sustainable culture	Perceived as inconsistent, performative, or lacking follow-through
What Real Support Looks Like	Programs, benefits, policies	Manageable workloads, empathetic leadership, respected boundaries
Alignment with SDG 3	Cited as part of compliance or sustainability strategy	Questioned-well-being seen as secondary to productivity in actual practice

In Table 2, a comparative analysis demonstrates how HR professionals, as opposed to employees, perceive organizational responses to mental health and well-being in remote locations. Both agree that the importance of well-being is increasing but differ in view of what constitutes effective support. HR practitioners mentioned a wide range of programs, from web-based counseling to flex time, and felt that these were actually meaningful steps to take related to their sustainability efforts. They frequently framed these tactics in the language of SDG 3, as if they were strategic in response to the work-from-home shift.

The employees were more skeptical, however. Some said they loved activities like mental health days or wellness sessions, but most said that these programs tended to feel superficial or inconsequential. Instead of giving well-being support the status of game changer, they perceived it as tokenistic: a superficial fix for a malfunctioning system driven by factors such as work pressure, digital overload, and emotional illiteracy among leaders. This cognitive dissonance betrays a gulf in between well-being as a policy and well-being as lived life.

■ 5.0 DISCUSSION

The findings of this research provided a detailed and multi-dimensional image of remote and hybrid work transformation in Bangladesh. Based on detailed dialogue in the form of 75 in-depth conversation interviews, it emerged that some likely structural, cultural, and cognitive gaps between policy and digital transformation exist. These deficiencies reveal tensions between intention and realization and policy designers and users of remote HRM.

The balance between flexibility and fatigue is a delicate one, especially in Bangladesh's culturally collectivist society, where employees are often hesitant to speak up about boundaries. The HR rhetoric of remote as an empowerment mechanism is undermined by the contradiction between its flexible policies and its inflexible expectations. What seemed on paper like autonomy often plays out as digital overexposure. This divide threatens to normalize the concept of burnout as part of the model for remote work. More negatively, however, there is still significant cultural inertia, such as presenteeism, over-managing, and availability as commitment that persists in framing the experience of employees notwithstanding progressive policies. Here the research results can also be understood in relation to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being). From the interview analysis it was found that although the remote work policies are framed as promoting flexibility, autonomy, and well-being in the organizations, there is a clear mismatch in expectations and reality from both sides. Flexibility is often accompanied by increased digital monitoring, blurred boundaries between work and personal life, and expectations of constant availability. This gap between policy and real practices in the organizations helps explain why employees may perceive such initiatives as partly tokenistic. While organizations align their HR strategies with SDG-related goals, everyday managerial practices, such as presenteeism, over-management, and equating availability with commitment here, limit their effectiveness. As a result, the intended benefits of remote work are not fully realized in practice.

Perhaps the most radical change in HR practice has been from attendance to performance or result-based evaluation. This is congruent with SDG 8, with the focus on productivity and autonomy. But as employees have pointed out, this change has given rise to a new kind of invisible work: always-on availability, quick digital responses, and self-surveillance. HR experts cheered at what they considered a trust-based evolution, but employees typically saw another layer of pressure masquerading as empowerment. To further interpret this shift in HR practice, it is useful to connect the findings with SDG 8 and relevant HRM theory. While the move towards performance-based evaluation is widely seen as progressive, the data suggests more complex implications in practice.

a. The transition from an attendance-based employee control to results-based evaluation aligns with SDG 8, as it promotes productivity, efficiency, and employee autonomy.

b. However, the findings indicate that this shift also generates new forms of invisible work, including continuous digital availability, rapid response expectations, and increased self-monitoring.

- c. From a theoretical perspective, this reflects the control-autonomy paradox in HRM, where formal surveillance decreases but informal self-regulation increases.
- d. Although HR professionals interpret this change as a trust-based and empowering approach, employees often experience it as an added layer of pressure rather than true flexibility.

Mental health and well-being related to SDG 3 are visible in corporate conversation today but regarded as less important to operational strategy. The HR professionals noted wellness programs and mental health awareness as signs of progress; employees saw these as superficial or performative. That qualitative difference between recognition and true commitment is especially concerning in Bangladesh, which still carries an intense stigma around mental health and has very inadequate formal supports. Without offering your people something different in return, such efforts might simply become checklists rather than change exercises. This shallowness discredits HR strategies that are aligned with the SDGs and deepens the skepticism of employees.

■ 6.0 CONCLUSION

The findings of this research suggested that the remote and hybrid work in Bangladesh is still in experimental early days, more talked about than done, with small pilots but relatively little day-to-day practice. Bangladesh's shift to results-driven HR in remote and hybrid settings shows gains in flexibility and productivity, yet exposes fragile human realities. Outcome-based evaluation aligns with SDG 8 and SDG 9, but digital presenteeism, blurred boundaries, and symbolic well-being efforts undermine SDG 3. Expanded access benefits women and peripheral workers, yet intersectional burdens persist, challenging SDG 5 and SDG 10. Sustainable HRM must pair flexibility with relational leadership, and credible mental-health support. Culturally aware norms, fair metrics, and manager capability are essential. Inclusion must move beyond headcounts to lived equity. Only then will hybrid remote work advance resilience and prosperity.

From the theoretical perspective, this particular research contributes to the literature of global human resources by reinforcing the control-autonomy paradox from the real-life experiences of employees and organizations. Simultaneously, it showed how increased flexibility may simultaneously generate new forms of informal control and self-regulation. This adds to the understanding of how modern HR practices reshape, but not necessarily reduce, workplace pressure in digitally enabled environments. In practical terms, this study offers important implications for HR leaders in Bangladesh. This also explains why organizations need to move beyond policy-level flexibility and ensure that implementation is supported by clear boundaries around employee availability, realistic performance expectations, and genuine well-being support systems. This research also discusses how strengthening managerial awareness, reducing over-monitoring practices, and fostering a culture that separates productivity from relentless connectivity are essential steps for sustainability.

Acknowledgement

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Data availability

Data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon request.

Ethics declaration

Formal ethics committee approval was not obtained for this study. All research activities were undertaken in accordance with established ethical standards. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality and privacy were maintained throughout the research process.

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