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## Index

SN	Title of the Paper	Author Name	Page No.
1	Covid-19'S Impact on India's Manufacturing Sector	Miss. Farana Anjum Abdul Majeed Rais, Prof.Dr.KolheS.M.	1-7
2	Impact Of Covid-19 On Agriculture And Rural Poverty In India- A Review	Prabhu Naik S, Dr Sanjay N. Aswale	8-13
3	Impact of Covid-19 on Indian Industry : Challenges and Opportunities	Dr. Vilas Epper , Mr. Nitin P. Malegaonkar	14-18
4	Impact of Covid-19 on Indian Chemical Industry	Narayan W. Choudhari Vaibhav U. Dodke, Dr. Dinkar P. Kotwal	19-21
5	Covid-19 and Its Impact on Human Resources	Dr. Tiparse Ashok P.	22-24
6	Covids-19 's Impact on the Future of Human Resources in India's Service Sector	Miss. FaranaAnjumAbdul Majeed Rais Prof.Dr.KolheS.M.	25-31
7	A Review Article on COVID-19 Effect on Human Resource Management	Dr. Sunita B. Garud	32-34
8	Impact of Covid-19 on Manufacturing sector in India	Dr. Shaline U. Kadam	35-39
9	Impact of COVID-19 on Agricultural finance	Dr. Savita G. Joshi	40-44
10	Covid-19 Impact of tourism industry in India	Dr. Manju R. Mutha, Prof. Dr. Vijay R. Nagori	45-49
11	Impact of COVID-19 on Global Mobile Phone Industry- Competitive Viewpoint	Dr. Jyoti Ramesh Rao Kote	50-52
12	A study of an impact of COVID-19 on organized sector WRT Phoenix Mall, Kurla , Mumbai	Dr. Jayesh K. Rana	53-55
13	Analysis of impact due to COVID-19 on GST Contribution of Maharashtra State	Dr. Dhammpal Nivarattirao Ghumbre	56-58
14	Effect of COVID-19 on Some Sectors in India	Dr. Ankush B. Jadhav	59-62
15	Covid-19anditsimpactonIndianIndustry	Dr.B.B. Lakshete Dr. Archana K.Deshmukh	63-67
16	Impact of Covid-19 on Cell Phone Industry	Dnyaneshwar A. Yewale Prin. Dr. H. G. Vidhate	68-73
17	Impact of Covide-19 on Foreign Exchange Earnings in India	Disha Namdeo More	74-77
18	A Study of Stress Management by Undergraduate Students in covid-19	Mr. Barve Vishal Punjaram Dr. V. S. Rananaware	78-80
19	Covid-19 Impact Of Services Sectors & Other Sectors	Bhutada V.R	81-82
20	Human Resource Management during Covid-19	Prof. Akanksha S. Bhanji	83-86
21	The impact of covid-19 on food security of the poo rsouth Asian countries.	NavnathRohidasraoChavan	87-88
22	Covid-19 Impact on Indian Chemical Sector	Narayan W. Choudhari Vaibhav U. Dodke, Dr. Dinkar P. Kotwal	89-93
23	Impact of covid-19 on Indian agriculture and sustainable economic development	Mr. Kyadare G. N.	94-97
24	TheCOVID-19PandemicandItsadverseeffectonManufacturingIndustry.	Mr.Amol P.Karpe, Dr.Gite B. S	98-100
25	The Study of Impact of Covid-19 on the Indian Economy and the Opportunities Available	Dr. Rajesh Goje Mr. Dhule VishalA.	101-104

## Human Resource Management during Covid-19

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### Abstract:

As we all know, change is inevitable. It will keep taking place by virtue of certain triggers, whether internal or external or whether we are prepared for it or not! The biggest change or trigger for change that the entire world is experiencing right now is the Covid-19 crisis. It has certainly affected the way we live and work. There is literally a 180 degrees turn. No organization has been left untouched by the impact of Covid-19. Not only the organization, the entire sectors have been badly hit. The businesses are facing the rage of the pandemic and HR cannot stay unaffected as an organization is an ecosystem and everything is interconnected and interdependent. Now that the fact that HR's role will undergo a change has been established, it is imperative to understand what and how of this changes impacting on Human Resources. The impact of Covid-19 on health, economies, and markets is an unfolding story that is complex and fluid in its ever-changing dimensions. One of the biggest visible impacts of the virus has been on the organizations and the nature of workplaces. As the corona virus spread invisibly across the globe, nation after nation has declared lockdowns, and organizations have scrambled to comply with lockdown restrictions while striving to keep operations going. Work-from-home (WFH) became the immediate solution to business continuity. Agility, creativity, flexibility - these are the attributes demonstrated by HR in the lockdown scenario. As employees started logging in remotely, HR functions stepped up to transform brick-and-mortar offices into virtual workplaces almost overnight. Guidelines to ensure that employees could manage WFH seamlessly and securely had to be quickly defined and disseminated. In many cases, employees had to be supported with digital infrastructure - laptops, data cards - to ensure that business continuity could be maintained. Hence this study focusing on the changed scenario of HRD practices during this pandemic situation. It also have the objectives like to understand the impact of Covid19 on HR, and searching for the innovative practices which will be helpful to prepare HR for Future prospects.

**Key words:** Covid19 Crisis, HR Functions, Lockdown Scenario, HRD Practices, Future prospects, WFH (Work from Home)

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### Introduction:

HRM deals with creating conditions that enable people to get the best on of themselves and their lives. Development is an unending process. As people develop themselves in new directions, new problems and issues arise, requiring them to develop new competencies to meet the changing requirements, aspirations and problems. There is however some universal goals towards which all human resource development efforts should aim to achieve. At the individual level these goals may include developing capabilities for ensuring a happy and healthy living. The dimensions of such happiness may vary from individual to individual. These may include a good education or skill base that may be the key to income-generation and fulfillment of many other social needs; A good income base itself, self esteem, security, status and recognition in the society, good family and a sense of belongingness to a group, society or organization. At the organizational level the goal of HRD is normally to have competent and motivated people to ensure higher levels of productivity, profitability and growth of the organization. Organizations' normally direct their HRD efforts towards the development of competencies, work culture & commitment among employees individually and/or in groups. Organizations' use many mechanisms to achieve HRD goals, as without competent and committed employees, organizations can achieve very little even they have excellent technological and other resource bases. The organizations

which were prepared for the work from home were better equipped to deal with the nationwide situation without any significant impact on productivity. The HR department of every organization has been in the frontline, leading the efforts to facilitate employees. In situations like these, HR, in addition to handling the business requirements, is also responsible for managing concerns and apprehensions of their employees. HR has to step up and support their employees and prioritize their mental and emotional wellbeing.

**Objective of the study:**

1. To know the changed scenario of HRD practices during this pandemic situation.
2. To understand the impact of Covid19 on overall HR Functions.
3. To suggest the HRD practices this will be helpful to prepare HR for Future implications.

**Research Methodology:**

This research paper is based on the secondary data. The secondary data was collected from various published sources like information of various departments, magazines, journals, newspapers, articles, research papers, websites etc.

**The Future Organizations look like:**

- Working hours, locations, and even the work arrangements to become more fluid.
- Remote working to be an integral part of every organization.
- The popularity of contractual jobs and freelancers to grow.
- Workforce to constantly upgrade and work on capability enhancement to remain competitive.
- Focus on learning and development to increase to make employees future-ready.

**Human Resource Management for Future Prospects:**

Over the past couple of years, the HR function has experienced drastic changes, particularly in the way employees work, learn, and communicate. The pace of change has been exponential, with enterprises pushing for digitalization. However, no one would have imagined that a single global event, the COVID-19 outbreak, would accelerate one of the greatest workplace transformations of our times. Digitalization is crucial, as it will help companies enable their internal functions with collaboration and productivity tools for employees and improve operational efficiency with agile business continuity plans.

**Incorporate policy changes for the next normal:**

With the strain of the corona virus confining everyone to their homes, companies across the globe have mandated or are encouraging employees to work from home. And this model is expected to stay. Even after the pandemic ends and employees return to their workplaces, remote work will continue to hold significant relevance as enterprises realize its cost-benefit and commit to finding other methods to support business continuity. To ensure its success, companies will have to develop processes and inculcate policies that enable flexible working - establishing guidelines for working remotely, managing employee productivity in physical and digital workspaces, and formulating guidance for managers handling a distributed workforce. Further, the use of digital workers and bots will increase, which will, in turn, result in an urgent need to develop policies regarding cyber security, auditing, and redefining instances of human intervention.

**Ensure undisrupted workflow:**

With the new and restructured workforce, companies are also looking to digitize the workplace and automating various processes and workflows to increase efficiency. Thus, HR solutions for automated employee on boarding, automated helpdesk, and productivity tools, along with communication and

collaboration tools, are gaining traction in the market. For instance, the adoption of Microsoft Teams and Zoom has dramatically increased, and the uptake will continue.

**Utilize the power of virtual learning:**

Businesses that have typically relied on face-to-face/classroom learning will have to develop a proof of concept for learning using the latest online technologies. The remote working model and increased leverage of digital technologies will also increase the need to up skill and re skill the workforce. In light of COVID-19, enterprises have become extremely cautious with their spending and are seeking cost-effective solutions for their workforces, which add to the appeal of remote learning. To derive maximum benefit, organizations will have to look not only for relevant skills and talent but also for tools to enable smart learning, as well as enter into partnerships with traditional and non-traditional learning organizations.

**Focus on health and well-being:**

COVID-19 has brought the importance of employee well-being, which encompasses physical, mental, and emotional health, to the forefront. The HR wellness agenda for the future will have two facets: One, the employee side, which includes tools and policies that help employees plan their day-to-day activities, particularly when working remotely and have to deal with increased stress and added concerns of changing benefits ranging from health and hazard to leave policies; and, two, the operations side, which includes tools that track employee sentiment and help improve employee support, thereby ensuring better employee engagement.

**Develop new talent acquisition and workforce management practices:**

Every process in the acquisition value chain will be overhauled to make it more efficient - from the use of AI and Machine Learning (ML) algorithms to source and screen candidates to the use of video interviewing tools to enable remote presence, and chatbots to ensure a superior candidate experience and engagement. Following the COVID-19 crisis, the job market is also set to undergo massive changes; while the demand for some jobs will increase, the overall job market will slow. Enterprises will need to conduct powerful workforce planning to ensure their access to the right talent, and strategically structure existing talent to ensure maximum engagement and productivity.

**Use analytics to track workforce- and engagement-related data:**

As the workforce becomes increasingly (and literally) spread out, and as new ways of working emerge, HR leaders will have to keep track of their organizations' pulses. Efficient data collection and mining tools will be key to understanding the nature of changes. Organizations will increasingly adopt tools that track how employees work, perform, collaborate, and feel to derive insights to improve operations and engagement. These tools, along with advanced AI capabilities, will also deliver actionable insights for more informed decision-making in a shorter time.

**Keep employees motivated:**

With increasing instances of pay cuts and the uncertainty of the current situation, enterprises are looking for effective strategies to keep their employees engaged and motivated. Deploying a robust R&R solution that quickly recognizes and rewards valuable employees for their effort and commitment to work can help organizations mitigate some of the impacts of the ongoing pandemic and the slowdown, and as a result, boost employee morale.

**Emphasize on financial wellness:**

With the increasing number of layoffs, instances of pay cuts, and market fluctuations, financial security is a significant concern for many employees. To curb these types of fears within the workforce,

companies can provide employees with financial wellness options. Features such as budget management tools, financial coaching, and financial stress management tools, as well as the offer of paid leave, on-demand paychecks, and pre-paid cards, can help during these unprecedented and trying times.

#### **Automate tasks, humanize processes:**

While HR must redesign processes to make them more efficient, it is far more important to keep the employee at the center of these processes rather than the function. This crisis is an opportunity to redesign around the central stakeholder – the employee. These strategies will help enterprises survive in the new normal while keeping their employees engaged and satisfied, whether they develop them in-house or partner with service providers to deliver them.

#### **Conclusion:**

According to WHO Chief, Covid-19 crisis will not end anytime soon. All we can do is change the way we live and the way organizations function. Not only HR, all the functions in an organization are undergoing a change and it is imperative to adapt to new ways of working. In this situation we can only keep improvising our approach and implementing the right steps to ensure the survival of the organization in the long run, because we aren't getting rid of this virus anytime soon!

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