Prudent Hr Strategies for a Post-Covid-19 Workplace

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ABSTRACT*: Human Resource Management(HRM) is defined as an art of managing people and also a science as they apply the theory precisely and rigorously. It can also be defined as the process of managing people in an organisation in a structured and thorough manner. This management is from a macro perspective. The focus of the HRM is on building a healthy relationship between employee and employer. The current Covid-19 situation has changed the way the HRM functions in an organisation. The changed strategies of HRM due to the Covid-19 situation are discussed in this paper.*
KEY WORDS: *Covid-19, HRM strategies, HRM measures, people management*

I. INTRODUCTION
The world has changed drastically with in few months' time due to Covid-19 pandemic making the organisations to struggle for survival. There is no difference among the nature and size of business, everyone is struggling for survival. HRM is the pillar of any organisation that plays the role of mediating between the employees and the management. HRM should be strong to handle the crisis. Thus the functions of the HRM are redefined during this pandemic and people are made prepared for rapid shifts, financial strains and challenges of work from home. HR team works with the management and plans to reconfigure the workflows, upskill the staff to help them to stay relevant. Thus the HR team is supporting emotionally to the employees and keeping up the productivity for running the business successfully. HR team is taking steps to keep the employees out of the stress to face the emotional and financial stress being faced during this pandemic. There may be short term benefits and reduced productivity with the work from home option initially, long term implications are also to be realized.

Objectives
- To discuss the traditional HRM functions
- To discuss the change in the HRM functions during and after Covid-19

II. LITERATURE REVIEW
Gallagher (2000) defined HR planning as an important aspect of job analyses and was often used as bases for determining strengths and weaknesses among the employees and to develop the skills and competences they needed. As individual career plans started to gain more popularity, companies gradually started to pay more attention to the certain skills and competences among individual employees as a way of aligning and dealing with the companies' succession planning.Storey (1995) argues that HR planning today is a very important task of every contemporary organization's HR department. According to him, HR planning mainly involves the identification of skills and competence within the organization, the filling of identified competence gaps, and the facilitation of movements of employees within the organisation. Analoui, (2007) states that in an organization the system that is responsible for placing diversifies talents throughout is referred to as recruitment and selection processes. The process of recruitment and selection is an ethical approach by a firm to seek and attract the most competent and suitable applicant for a vacant position Price (2007) inferred that recruitment strategies can be divided in three significant approaches:suitability – the most qualified applicant for the position, malleability – moulded within the cultural norms, and flexibility – the most reliable and versatility employee. These factors are quite complicating and can be easily mistaken during the process of hiring employees. Suitability is a critical aspect hence it mainly concerned with the process of hiring the most suitable applicant for the position.Bishop,(2003). States that the perception about training implies that organisation should embark on a cost reduction strategies and focuses on in-house or on-job-training (OJT).
Traditional HRM functions
HRM in any organisation will have to perform the following functions. The magnitude of the work may change based on the strength of the employees but the nature of the work is same across the organisations.

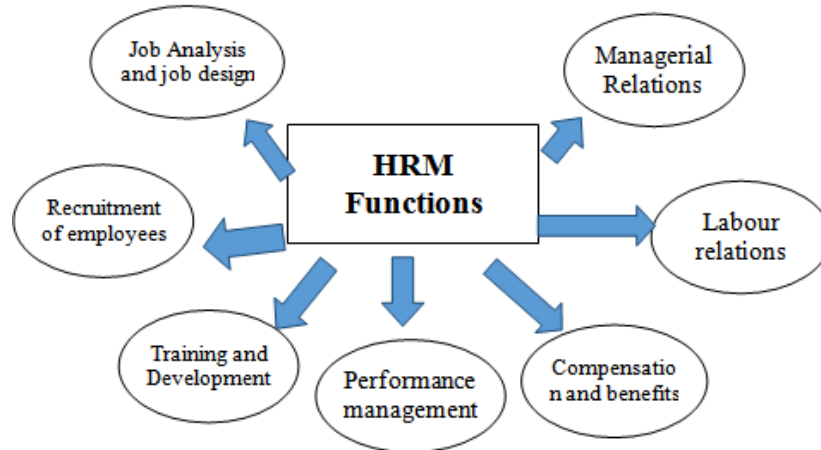**The Fig.1 shows the common human resource functions**

Fig.1 HRM Functions

- **Job analysis and job design**

Job analysis is the process of describing the operations, duties and responsibilities of the job. In order to recruit *the* employees on a scientific and rational basis, it becomes necessary to determine in advance a standard of personnel with which interested candidate can be compared. This standard must establish the minimum acceptable qualities necessary for the accomplishment of tasks by retail employees. Job analysis refers to the process of studying the operations, duties and organizational aspects of jobs in order to derive specifications, or as they are called by some job descriptions".

- **Recruitment and selection of employees:**

The success of any organization largely depends upon the team of efficient employees who are chosen out of a number of applicants for the job. Recruitment is a very first step in the employment process, which aim at obtaining and maintaining an efficient staff as a means of achieving targets. Recruiting employees basically involves three major sub-functions asRecruitment, Selection, and Placement on the job.

- **Training and development:**

After selecting the most suitable and eligible candidates in the organization, the next step of HR department is to arrange for their training. All types of jobs require some type of training for their efficient performance and therefore, all employees, new or old should be trained or re-trained from time to time. Further, the waynew developments are taking place throughout the globe, it becomes imperative for any organization to systematically plan for the training program aiming at increasing the knowledge, skills, abilities and aptitude of employees to perform the new competitive tasks.

- **Performance Management:**

After selected, training and motivation, the next task, a HR manager has to perform is to evaluate the personality and performance of each employee by quantitative factors (such as targets achieved). In actual, with the help of performance management, the management through HR department would like to find out how effective it has been hiring and placing employees. Performance management allows retailers gain access to the reliable, timely information that drives better decisions.

- **Compensation and Benefits:**

Compensation and benefits represent a substantial part of total cost in most of the organizations. Compensation is not only the concern of the organization but is equally important for the workers and employees to maintain their social image. The main objective of such compensation and benefits are to control the costs, to establish a fair and equitable remuneration to all, to utilize the compensation and benefits device as an incentive for greater employee productivity and to establish a satisfactory public image. Hence, it becomes imperative for the HR department to have clear-cut policy guidelines regarding employees' compensation and various benefits. For effective implementation of compensation plans, HR department should be aware about the benefits given to the employees in similar kind of organizations.

- **Labor Relations:**

In modern days, businesses are carried on a large scale where hundreds of employees work together. The HR manager is basically responsible for the control of labor (workers and employees) through human relation approaches. Employees differ in nature and therefore, it is natural that due to any communication gap, labor relations may spoil within the organization. Harmonial relationships not only results in industrial peace but also leads to better and higher sales targets.

• **Managerial Relations:**

The employment relationship, irrespective of nature of organization, usually has two parts: labour relations and managerial relations. The former which covers the price of labour is more obvious. The labour relation is also known as 'market relations'. The managerial relations on the other side are the relationships that define how the process takes place. Labour relations describe the price for a particular shift (a set of number of hours) but managerial relations determine how much work is performed in that time, at what specific task or tasks, who has the right to define the tasks and change a particular mix of tasks and what penalties will be deployed for any failure to meet these obligations

III. CHANGED HRM STRATEGIES DURING AND POST COVID-19

HR team have to manage this Covid-19 crisis by redefining their functions by allowing flexible work scheduling and defining creative methods to get the work done from the employees. Few of the ideas and measures that can be implemented by HR team are discussed below.

• Flexibility in the working hours is to be allowed instead of insisting on 8 hours of standard working hours.

• Teams can meet on internet or via teleconferencing to discuss on the task allocation and update on the progress of the work.

• Minimal staff to be allowed at office premises whose physical presence is essential for running the business but the usage of common places for serving food etc are to be avoided.

• Remote working possibilities are to be arranged for eligible employees. The desktop, laptop or data cards etc are to be provided to them to work without interruption.

• Work related traveling is to be avoided.

• Motivate the employees by meeting them on video calls.

The current crisis may continue for indefinitely but this situation makes the HRM of every organisation to shape up in a different way and will be ready to face any challenges. All the organisations might have gone through this tough times and faced the layoffs, pay cuts, no fund flow etc. HRM functions plays a major role in communicating the decision of management to the employees regarding the changed due to Covid-19 crisis. Change of major functions of HRM during and post Covd-19 are discussed below.

• **Recruitment of employees**

The core values in recruiting the employees may not change but the process will be modified as well as new skills will be included in the required qualifications. Young and fresh candidates will be preferred as they will be hungry to earn as well as ready to explore latest technologies. People well versed with digital and latest technologies will be given priority in the recruitment.

• **Employee retention**

The role of HRM is very crucial in engaging and motivating the employees. Well motivated employees will be the happy workforce who can understand the goals of the organisation and works toward the goal achievement. During and post Covid, the HRM should define a successful methods to communicate with the employees to motivate and drive them. The financial situation and requirements for reaching the goals are to be communicated to all the employees in a transparent and empathetic way by the HRM.

Employee welfare

Apart from the other facilities that are provided by the organisation to the employees, during this Covid-19 crises, employees are to be safeguarded with the mediclaim policies which covers the Covid-19. The mental stress and fitness challenges of the employees are handled by providing them online counselling and creativity boosting exercises etc.

AI-driven technology

Artificial intelligence (AI) will be a continuing trend for the foreseeable future as employers look to reduce costs in a potentially down economy. AI empowers companies to achieve more than ever before, for a fraction of the effort. Commonly, AI is being used by HR to help administrate their human capital. Some employers are using AI systems to autonomously screen candidates and move prospective hires through the application process, saving HR teams untold hours. Other employers are using AI to monitor employees so they can strategically address performance issues on an individual basis. When it comes to tracking complex data sets, AI will be the answer for HR. Keep an eye out as this innovative technology permeates deeper into the HR realm.

IV. CONCLUSION

It is close to impossible to predict how the world will change after the Covid-19 pandemic crisis is over and how people will evolve. But one thing is certain, the way we work will be deeply transformed and with transformation comes new skills to master and new roles to create. Additionally, the current situation probably

has led many people to reconsider different aspects of their lives, including their careers. What they aspired to yesterday is not what they want for tomorrow.

Companies hold an important role, if not a responsibility, to guide and accompany employees through this shift and give them the tools to develop professionally. Skills mapping is the solution to this challenge. To propose relevant and professional training to fit a new requirements and expectations, assessing skills needs is crucial. While these initiatives are recommended, they might not necessarily work for every company. However, in a post-COVID-19 environment, where employees have had to adjust how they work, all companies should shift toward a more human-focused approach. Implementing the HR initiatives discussed here even in a smaller-scale version may help to boost employee productivity and morale.

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