

Managing Human Resources In Hospitality Industry For Recovery In India

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Abstract

This research specifically focuses on the impact of covid 19 on human resources and managing of human resources by implementing new strategies in hospitality Industry. The study is based on descriptive method as this include the history as well as current scenario of human resources in hospitality industry due to covid pandemic. This research paper is based on the cross-country perspective to make it more context focused to present some suggestions to manage the human resources in hospitality industry. In addition, government either central or state, they are helping the human resources in this difficult time. The research scholars can refer this research paper for future implications on similar topic.

KEYWORDS: Hospitality Industry, Covid-19, Training, Crisis, Recovery, Human Resource.

Literature Review

1. Introduction & History of human resource management

The human resource department is the back bone of any industry as this department holds control over almost the entire employees regarding their presence. 'The task of human resources manager is to control almost the whole feelings and presence of the entire staff. The HR department is responsible to hire the dedicated staff for each position. The retention of employees is a challenging task for the Human resource department as staff do not seek single particular hotel as their ending career goals (Sharafi et al., 2018). As the Covid-19 has resulted a huge deprivation of livelihood across the world, the hotel industry has been severely impacted too due to lockdown. Almost all the hotels being forces took a harsh measure like layoffs, furloughing and pay cuts of

employees of keep their business floaty. A concrete decision has been taken to monitor optimistically for reinstating affected associates. We would be able to provide a robust opportunity to retain the talented staff internally when the time is right,'. Due to covid pandemic, hospitality sectors worldwide, are either sinking down permanently or languishing to survive somehow or other. The Human Resource department is relieving the employees to minimize cost for their survival. But There are many other hotels who are staying with their staff in this crisis by providing all kinds of facilities, or minimal facilities. 'The decisions were difficult for the property owner of Prestige Group to give zero layoffs to the employees. The voluntary adjustments being arranged for remunerations temporarily for managerial staff, so that maximum numbers of our team remain unaffected,'. "The origin of HRM is has a vast history and therefore a debatable topic. As per records, the origin has been found in the United

States in the 1950s but gain a huge recognition in the beginning of the 1980s (U.K), (**R. S, 2019**). Formerly, it was considered menial to work for a livelihood in ancient times. But then the factory system came into existence and later the new era begins with industrialization followed by urbanisation. Due to urbanization, this had led to a greater emphasis on “labour management”. ‘Personnel Management’ and human resource management were used to common in administrations but in recent times it is known as “HR development”. “It is the process of selecting the competent people, so that they can achieve the organizational objectives, by utilizing their energy and abilities.”. “As per **Griffin, 2005**, it is the set of organizational exercises directed at attracting, developing, and maintaining an effective workforce”. “it is a strategic path to the operative and competent management of people in a company or organization such that they help their business gain a competitive advantage. It is planned to maximize staff performance in job”. “The HR area started to take shape in 18th century in Europe. It was based on a simple idea by Robert Owen (1771-1858) and Charles Babbage (1791-1871) during the industrial revolution” (**Wikipedia**). In today’s scenario, the HRD is directly associated with hiring or selecting the capable person for a right job. “The key function of HRM is to plan, organize, control and direct the employees to maximize the efficiency of departmental and organisational workforce to achieve the designated goals”. To achieve the predetermined goals, it is mandatory to communicate well with the employees for maintaining and developing systems regarding framework under the organisation. Once the system is operated, the employees remain with the organisation since beginning of his job till his termination.

2. Meaning & Significance of Human Resource in Hospitality Industry

“As mentioned in **Cambridge Business English Dictionary**, “The hospitality industry” means hotels, restaurants and service of food and accommodation”. “The hospitality industry is a broad area of specializations like lodging, food and drink service, event planning, theme parks, and transportation within the service industry”. Hospitality industry is a glamorous industry which is expanding rapidly worldwide. As the hotels are constructing to facilitate more facilities like accommodation & dining etc, therefore it is creating a tremendous

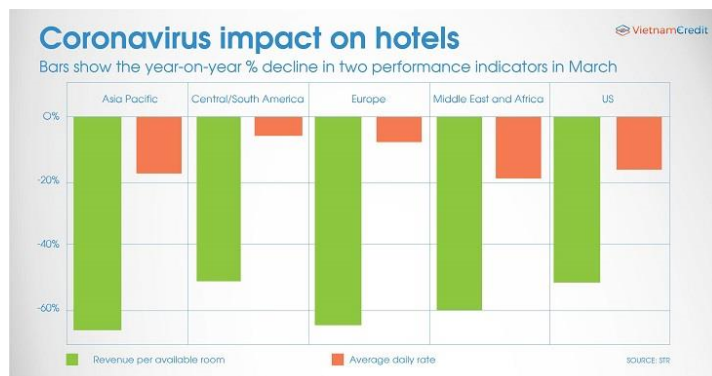
employment opportunity. “The HR professionals are the masses-friendly one, who are able to manage the operation of the company”. The human resource development is the most crucial and significant department which contributes all efforts for the success of the hospitality industry regardless in the country. The human resource management always focus on the growth of its employees by imparting different trainings to enhance interpersonal skills and knowledge. Therefore, human resource department has become an important to the hospitality industry. The Human Resource management has the vision that “staffs are the backbone of any Industry and their corporality is more than integral for them. Retention of the employees is a major concern, and lots of industries & sectors look serious in this condition to maintain a healthy outcome with their employees” (**S.P. et al., 2016**). “Retention of the jobholders increases with their momentum or motivation. Motivation has been categorised into two different factors: intrinsic factors and extrinsic factors”. “Intrinsic factors are based on non-financial that could maximize the level of satisfaction among the jobholders, while the extrinsic factors are based on fiscal factors that accelerate the level of satisfaction in the employees” (**Hofeditz et al., 2015**). But due to covid pandemic, the system has drastically affected in hotel industry.

3. Impact of covid-19 on Human Resource worldwide:

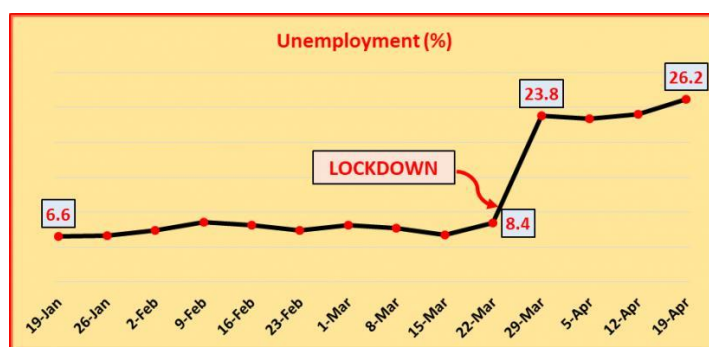
This covid pandemic has raised a demanding condition for Human Resources. “All the organisations including hospitality industry need to react and accept the modification to manage the workforce. HRM has an eloquent role to help staffs to defeat the difficulties brought by the unpredicted changes in the premises as well as in the society”. According to **UNWTO report**, travel restrictions implemented worldwide. Out of 217 destinations, there were 4 distant “types” of restrictions worldwide”, i.e., mentioned below:

- 97 destinations had been closed the border completely or partially (equivalent to 45%)
- Flights suspended completely or partially in 65 countries and territories (30%)
- The borders had been closed of certain groups of 39 locations (18%)
- The different measures had been applied by 16 countries and territories

requiring foreign arrivals to be quarantined (7%).



(Figure 3.1: Impact of coronavirus on hotels)



(Source: <https://www.newsclick.in/National-Lockdown-India-Joblessness-COVID-19-Crisis>)

(Figure 3.2: unemployment during lockdown in India)

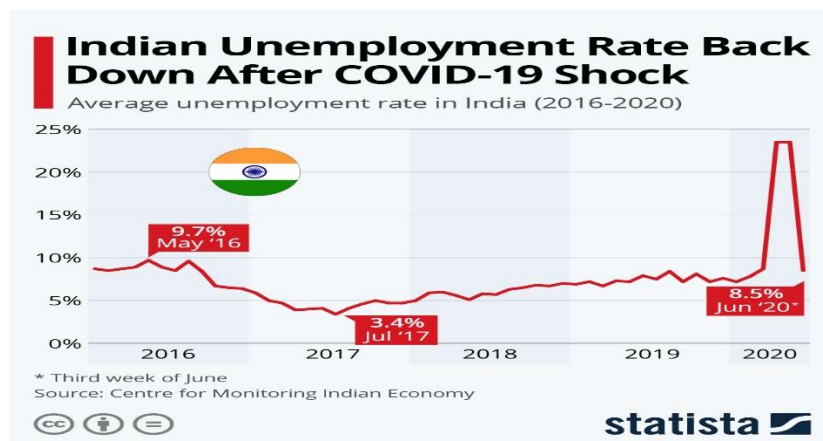


Figure 3.3: unemployment rate in India, 2020

Month	Unemployment Rate (%)		
	India	Urban	Rural
May 2021	11.90	14.73	10.63

Source: Statistical Profiles - Unemployment in India due to covid-19, June, 2021

(Figure 3.4: unemployment in India due to covid-19)

The figure 3.1 above, denotes the impact on hotels in Vietnam. Hotel sales started declining in the March, 2020. All major hotels including

Marriott and Hilton, had declared layoffs and pay cut of their employees. "This stressing alteration had been taken quickly as per

necessity. All tourism exercises are being removed by the pandemic.”. As it can be observed in the figure 3.2 above, the unemployment rate had floated between 7-8% in the pre-exist months, that denote a bad condition. But the impact of the lockdown is clearly visible as the unemployment rate rises up to 23.8% within days of the lockdown announcement. Since then, it has boom further to an unheard of 26.2%. approx..10 crore persons (100 million). The figure 3.3 above denotes, as per centre for monitoring Indian Economy, unemployment reached at 23.5 percent overall in April and in May. As per report by Economic Times, the rate was back down to just 8.5 percent in June, 2020. As per latest report in figure 3.4: It has been noticed that Due to covid19, In India, there is 10.63 % unemployment in Rural areas and 14.73% in Urban areas. It has been noticed that due to covid-19, the unemployment has increased and this has imposed more tension on the people. The international labour organisation (ILO) evaluated those 195 million full time workers may lose their jobs worldwide this year”. Almost all the hotels started using fewer human resources due to this pandemic to maintain social distancing at their venues. As per media report, the Hyatt hotel, Mumbai confronted with a financial loss during the first lockdown, The industry noticed a loss of Rs 109 cr in 9 months in 2020-21 year (**Chaturvedi, 2021**). It was one of the favourite hotels among the Hyatt regency corporate tourists. As per notice from General manager, it was clearly mentioned that the property doesn't have sufficient money to pay-off salaries to their employees and therefore the services have been temporarily resumed till further notice. **According to FHRAI**, the unemployment ratio was counted 50% in first wave and 70% unemployment recorded in 2nd wave directly or indirectly”. There are 50 % of the restaurants closed permanently, 20 per cent are reeling under losses and over 20 percent haven't opened fully since lockdown was lifted. “The hospitality sector deals directly with the customers and therefore it has been brutally impacted in Covid-19.”.

4. Precautionary steps taken by the HR Personnel in Covid 19 Pandemic

On 11 March, 2020, the **WHO** declared coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as pandemic. It was far away from the imagination of any HR professionals that Covid-19 can change the scenario of world. Human resource managers need to handle with the pressure of their staffs associated with the removal boundaries

between work and family”. “Covid pandemic has crushed the economy world-wide and that has become a hot topic to research on the tourism crisis after the outbreak of COVID-19”. This unparalleled crisis has rendered the hotel industry into a strange recession. In China, 150 Hilton hotels had been shut down during the COVID-19 outburst (**Bond, 2020**). “It is hard to measure, how many deaths have been occurred due to covid-19 without historical data”. The HR professionals followed the guidelines published by the Central Government & State Government under DM Act and ED Act.

4.1.1. Many circulars and Advisory notifications released under employment guidelines by Government for all sectors. That includes:

- a) **Work from home during lockdown:** Depending on the characteristics of industry, employers can suggest their employees to work from home. Further, in relation to establishments which are completely non-operation due to coronavirus pandemic, the jobholders of these units will be deemed to available on duty, as per the notice released by Central government to employers' associations.
- b) **Regarding salaries and stipends:** The staffs, who have been assigned to work from home as well as employees/workers who can't perform their task from home owing to the sector of employment and nature of the sector/industry, are endorsed to release full salary for the duration of the lockdown.
- c) **Termination of employees:** “It had advised by the central government, that all the employers of any sector/industry will extend the employees coordination by not firing, particularly non-permanent staffs during this period”,
- d) **Leave:** The premises which are entirely inoperative due to covid-19, the staffs of such premises are deemed to be on job, and therefore, no reduction should be made from the authorized leave accrued”,
- e) **Employment funds:** The FM announced a series of fiscal and ministerial reliefs to individuals & companies to accord a non-refundable withdrawal from the PF of an individual”,

4.1.2. **Guidelines released by CDC for Hotel employers/Human Resource Management:**

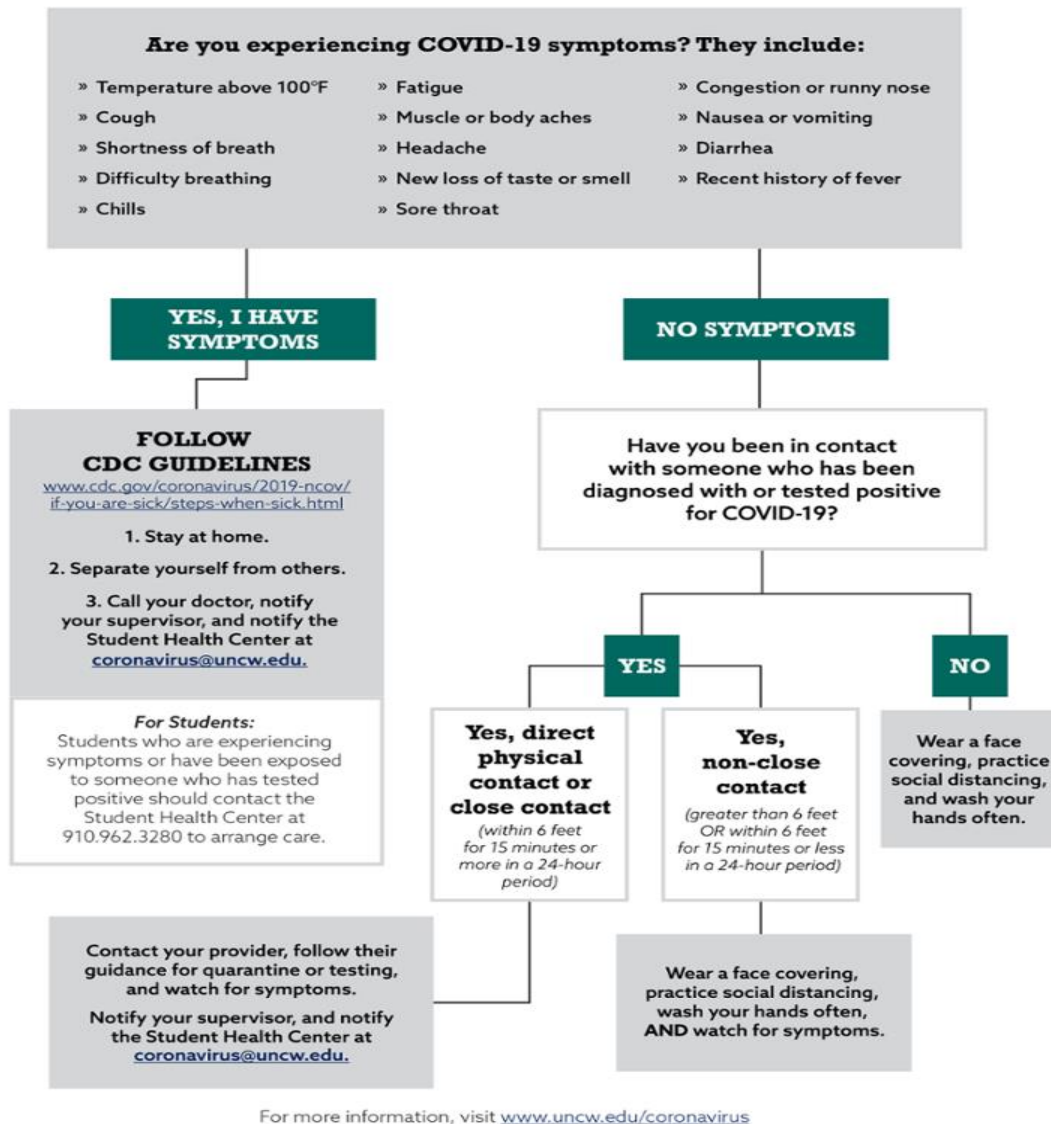
As the hotel is a place which is crowded at its peak seasons and almost have 60-70% occupancy all the time. Keeping this in view, the CDC issued an information how to tackle and maintain the decorum of hotels. "COVID-19 travels when an infected individual breathes out and the virus released with droplets. Once inhaled by other people or fix on their eyes, noses, and mouth or by contaminated surfaces. People who are nearer than 6' from the infected individual, are majorly get infection". The HR personnel followed the guidelines as per CDC in their hotels: To protect hotel's employees and guests too, HR professionals advised to design a covid-19 premise health & safety plan, which includes: Follow the regulations issued by any state or local body (Indian Ministry of Health & Family Welfare) for hotels. Assign a coordinator inside the premise, who will take care of assessment & control of coronavirus disease. Like, public areas, locker rooms and patios, lounging areas, dining/kitchen areas, salons, and parking, lobbies, laundry department and routes of entry and exit. It must include all the employees in the workplace such as facilities workers, security staff, outside contractors, utility employees, maintenance staff, supervisory employees and housekeeping staff, who may enter the hotel. If any staff is suspected or confirmed covid positive, he or she should have immediately sent to isolation room. These infected staffs should isolate themselves and consult with their family doctor immediately. Prohibited those areas used by any sick person for a specific time to get it sanitized properly. The employees are asked to share their health reports immediately, who

found their test report positive. They should not be allowed to return at work until they do not recover from illness completely. If any guests found covid positive then he immediately transfers to nearby hospital, and his room should be sanitized properly and prohibited for further use. Contact their health care provider or 011-23978046 (India) help line centre. "There are more chances of linens to get contaminated with this virus if used by any infected person, therefore these linens must be washed with disinfectant during washing in laundry".

5. **New strategies implemented by the HRE for recovery under this crisis**

As per the CDC and state government guidelines, the new strategies have been launched and implemented by HR among the employees: They have been guided to wear mask and sanitize their hands during their shifts. The employees will maintain social distancing during handling guests. There will be social distancing between staffs and between employees and guests. For this, they will use plastic barriers or strip curtains, similar materials for partitions. The reception desk will be covered with transparent sheets or other barricades as physical spacing is not an option. For wedding functions, the hotel must follow the new guidelines: On April 17, 2021, weddings and receptions that are run by a recognized business or organization are limited to no more than 100 people including the officiant. Physical distancing must be maintained". "The employees have been instructed on basic signs and symptoms of Covid-19, such as high fever, shortness of breath, and dry cough. Symptoms usually noticed within 1-14 days after interaction with people having no symptoms".

GUIDANCE ON COVID-19



(Figure 5.1. Guidance on covid-19)

According to figure 5.1, it is a guidance manual for the people, either you are suffering from corona disease or not. What are the various steps to be taken if found coronavirus positive? As per Government guidelines, Human Resources have been asked to their employees to register on Aarogya Setu app (Made in India) to all the citizen of India, so that the data related to corona positive cases can be traced and preventive measurements may be facilitated. (Find figure 5.2)



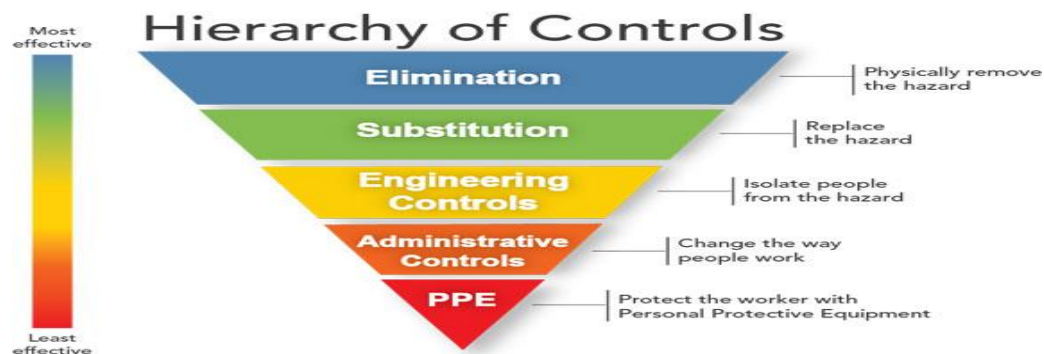
(Source: Aarogya app. (Photo: IANS))

Figure 5.2: Aarogya App

5.1. Hierarchy of controls to be followed in hotels:

Human resource managers are advised to consider and follow an appropriate combination of controls based on the hierarchy of controls to reduce the spread of the coronavirus. Under this approach, the committee (employees

and management) may be most efficient to identify all possible situation. The purpose behind is to apply the possible controlling methods, the top of graphics is more productive and preventive than the bottom. By following this system leads to implement the safer networks, as the risk of contamination or damage may be reduced. Traditionally, this system has been utilized as a means of judging how to implement possible and effective controlling solutions (NIOSH, 2015).

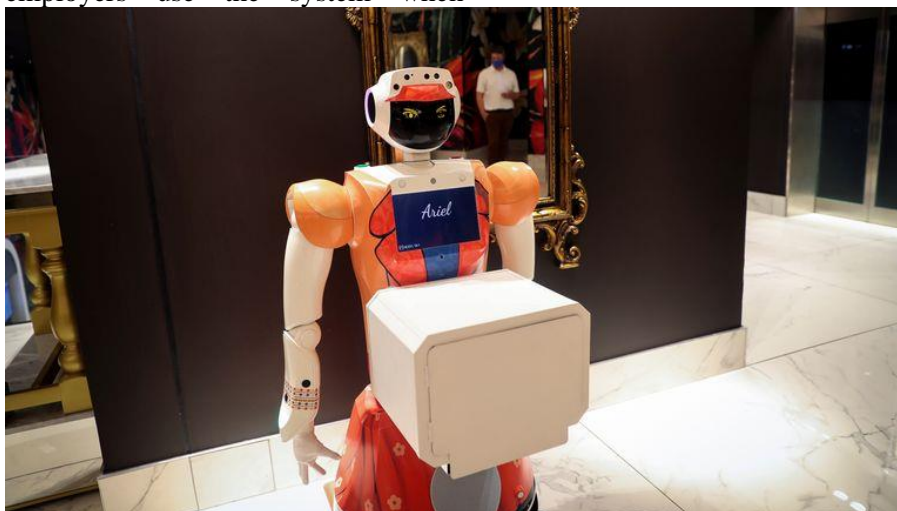


“Many government agencies and institutions that develop, monitor, and enforce workplace safety guidelines and standards, they also consider the hierarchy of controls a best practice—if not the best practice—for keeping people safe. From the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) to the National Safety Council (NSC), numerous organizations recommend that employers use the system when

addressing workplace health and safety challenge”.

5.2. Hiring of robots in hotels:

The Hyundai Robotics created a team to manufacture robots, who help people take pride in data development & data literacy, along with space planning, autonomous driving & voice recognition”.



Source: Robot “Ariel: At Johannesburg Hotel, UK (News.Sky.Com)

The “Rose” name of robot is used in Hotel Trio, California for maintain

social distancing ambassador since July 2018. This robot is capable to hold

and bring all types of materials such as wine, towels, trays, groceries and pet treats etc. after each delivery, this robot is properly sanitized, this robot provides internal satisfaction as she provides every item to their suits. Scott Satterfield, general manager of Hotel Trio. In Johannesburg, Hotel sky has also hired robots named Lexi, Ariel and Micah to keep in mind the social distancing and to serve their customers (news.sky.com). There are many hotels have robots in U.K. such as Marriott, Hilton in the Los Angeles such as Embassy Suites, Residence Inn, Homewood Suites, H Hotel Los Angeles, Curio Collection, Residence Inn and AC Hotel.

Benefits of robots:

- a. They can provide service to guest room.
- b. Able to deliver trip information to guests
- c. Can easily handle luggage up to 300kg from reception to rooms
- d. If there is a customer who has coronavirus symptoms, robots are best option to get interaction with them.
- e. Social distancing may easily be maintained.
- f. Robots are sanitized after the interaction of guests as a precautionary step.

Disadvantages of robots:

- a. The robot is not made in such a way to spread bed sheets or to take booking.
- b. They don't have emotions and behaviour as humans
- c. Unemployment has been increased as they have replaced employees.
- d. High cost and maintenance required

5.3. Role of Front Office, Housekeeping & Food and Beverage Service Employees

5.3.1. Front Office Department:

The Front office department is the main area where the guest first interacts with the hotel's employees. Therefore, the counter must be covered with a clean wrap or a plastic film to avoid direct interaction. The

employees should only accept payments through online payment like e-wallets etc. Guest's luggage should be sterilized before proceeding to the rooms. A guest should present his travel history and health state before getting registration with self-statement. Always keep an eye on valet parking as this is the most sensitive area.

5.3.2. Housekeeping Department:

Housekeeping department is considered the most important department in-terms of keeping each and every corner of the hotel neat & clean. The Housekeeping staff already manage cleaning and maintenance of the corridors, public areas, Lobby, Lift, Floors, and guest rooms on daily basis. Under this covid pandemic, the role of housekeeping employees has become more complicated as: They are liable to sanitize the surfaces in the hotels. The staff assigned for duty should be experienced, multi-talented to judge the situation and act accordingly. All staff must use gloves and masks for themselves and guest's safety concern. Extra care and safety measures to be followed for those staff members who are at major risk such as old aged, medically unfit and pregnant. They should either send on leave or avoid direct contact with the mass. The elevators and lifts should not be crowded.

5.3.3. Food & Beverage Service Department:

Another major concerned department is "Food & Beverage Service department", as this department deals with the customers and moreover their food. Therefore, the points to be remember during service or organising any event are: Takeaway to be preferred instead serving in outlets, or the food should be served in rooms only. There should not be any crowd in outlets, social distancing must be maintained properly. The digitalization technique is followed in restaurants by taking orders on tablets (Prabha et al., 2020). The food menus have been fixed with limited choice of foods. Only two guests are allowed to sit on the tables in many hotels or restaurants. Even the cabins have been allotted to the customers for avoiding crowd. After every service, the tables should be sanitized properly.

The cloth napkins should be exchanged with branded paper napkins. Many restaurants started providing self-service to minimise human contact. The other departments also need to follow the instructions made by the human resource managers.

Methodology

This study is based upon a secondary data analysis of high-quality content from reputed journals and websites and online literatures. The objectives & scope of this research was to explore various functions of HR Managers in this COVID-19 Pandemic, moreover the difficulties encountered by the Human resources in hotel industry. There were total 70 numbers of articles and research papers downloaded and 48 were found suitable for the Human resource management in Hospitality and Tourism Industry under COVID-19 Pandemic intended study. I went through with all articles and research papers and analysed several times before drawing the review and discover the conclusion.

Conclusion:

As the rising of corona virus infections has changed the life style and working conditions in hospitality industry worldwide, the government bodies have assumed multi-layered and multi-pronged approaches, wherein government at centre invoked 'National Disaster Management Act' and further activated state disaster response funds for individual Indian states to tackle the rising pandemic. Aside from initial lockdowns and gradual unlocking of economic activities, public has been encouraged to ensure social distancing, practice appropriate hygiene, mask wearing and avoiding gatherings unless critically needed. "For resuming tourism activities to revive the sector, governments at various levels have initiated check-ins with relevant COVID-19 negative reports, encouragement on minimum days stay at hospitality establishments. Due to coronavirus, the Central Government & state governments have provided relief to the individuals or employers to achieve some extent of financial stability.

"The Indian Courts have raised the relevant factors to determine whether the employers-workers relationship is healthy or not: 1) Salary on time, 2) Control & Supervision of staff's work, 3) Selection and appointment of workers, and 4) practices of disciplinary authority above the staffs". The orders issued by government

beneath the DM and ED Act, if the offence is done by the employers, they will be responsible for a penalty and imprisonment up to 2 years or fine or both to control over the employers. As the coronavirus had not eradicated yet and 2nd strain has been noticed in India, therefore the condition is still same but the Human Resource Managers have found the ways to tackle with.

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