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## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

BJMR is in the thirteenth year of publication of our journal. This Volume 13 No. 1 of April 2021 includes five papers covering various subjects.

The first paper is titled “Management of Stress and Coping Behavior– A Psychological Analysis Study of Stressed Police Force”. This paper lays down that the police force has a significant role in society and stress decreases the efficiency of this personnel. The stressed policemen pose a hazard to themselves, criminals, their colleagues, or to public protection, and therefore, psychologists in particular, and mental health researchers in general, are urgently concerned. Police employees use psychological techniques to minimize, modify or eliminate stress. The paper outlines the role of stress management for the police force. The goal of the research article is to study the adverse effects of stress on police officers of Amravati city.

The second paper is titled “A Study on Education and Rehabilitation of Differently Abled in India”. The present study primarily focuses on a review of the broader challenges in the current education system with respect to the issues of quality of education for students with disabilities. As a secondary objective, the study examines the viability of their rehabilitation and the government policies to facilitate it. It also briefly discusses the provisions of the National Education Policy 2020 in this regard.

The third paper titled “Human Resource Management During Covid-19 Pandemic: An Insight On The Challenges For Human Resource Practitioners”. Organizations around the globe are currently experiencing a significant decline in revenue, bankruptcy and job losses regardless of their size as a result of the covid-19 pandemic. By implication, the travel bans, quarantine measures and border closures have also contributed immensely to the challenges of businesses. In order to sustain business operations, human resource managers need to embrace novel methods of operation to cope with the new challenges arising from the pandemic. Therefore, calculated and rapid responses in form of policies, combined with strong multidimensional leadership skills are required to control the effects of Covid-19 on human resources practices on employees and the organisation as a whole.

The fourth paper titled “CoronaVirus (COVID-19) Lockdown Policy Measures and Socio-economic Development of the Nigerian State: Critiquing the Present and Envisaging the Future. The paper, therefore, envisages that the pains are likely to persist and cause more damages to the national development if socioeconomic recovery programmes that will guarantee socioeconomic inclusion are not put in place. Consequently, the paper suggests some plausible socioeconomic inclusive remedies that will facilitate socioeconomic recovery of the Nigerian state such as job creation, investment in social programmes to support the poorest and the vulnerable members in Nigeria, provision of social amenities for the masses, decreased interest rate and provision of emergency loan packages to support businesses in financial difficulty. The study concludes

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by arguing that a stitch in time saves nine, therefore, every attempt to procrastinate putting in place endogenous socio-economic plans that would nip in the bud the effects of the lockdown policy measures stands the chance of plummeting the country socioeconomic environments into dangerous disasters and mess worse than the pandemic itself in the long run.

The fifth paper titled “Interplay of Gender and Executive Stress: A Review”.With the ever-increasing competition and desire to stay ahead, the levels of executive stress are on the rise. Working executives have to be constantly on their toes to meet not only their professional needs but also their personal ones. Stress-related symptoms or health issues can vary among individuals. Although members of different genders work in the same sector or profession but they are exposed to different types of work demands and stresses. Several studies suggest that stress-inducing factors for females and their coping mechanisms are different than that of males and, therefore, it can be stated that there are, to some extent, gender differences in the ways of dealing with stress. This research paper is focused on the exploration of these issues.

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# Management of Stress and Coping Behavior– A Psychological Analysis Study of Stressed Police Force

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**ABSTRACT :** *The police force has a significant role in society and stress decreases the efficiency of this personnel. The stressed policemen pose a hazard to themselves, criminals, their colleagues, or to public protection, and therefore, psychologists in particular, and mental health researchers in general, are urgently concerned. Police employees use psychological techniques to minimize, modify or eliminate stress. The paper outlines the role of stress management for the police force. The goal of the research article is to study the adverse effects of stress on police officers of Amravati city. It was hard to locate information regarding the stress of the police officers on the officer and it cannot identify all types of stress. It has been noted that several factors bring stress in their life such as their high authority, shift work leading to a lack of time with family, colleagues, and people in general. It was observed that female police officers and police head constables are facing a very high degree of stress. Statistical techniques like cross-tabulation and chi-square test were used to test the hypotheses hence framed. Suitable conclusions were drawn and required suggestions were given in this research piece.*

**Keywords:** Stress Management, Coping Skills, Police Force Department.

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## Introduction

Modern life is stressful. Stress on people varies from everyday personal life to their organizational tasks. Involvement, participation, transaction, regulation, and planning are becoming key concerns in this changing environment, each with its grievances. People experience stress because they can't control what happens in life any more. In modern-day life, there is no avoidance of tension. Stress is also a critical issue in the modern world, because it may affect the health and efficiency of workers. Stress has been described differently by various physiologists and psychologists. Stress refers in simple words to strain or anxiety that people face in life. Therefore, stress is a natural and inevitable characteristic of human life. However, stress goes beyond a specific level with physiological and psychological issues that can influence the performance of the person within the organization. Stress at work in several jobs is almost unavoidable. The nature of the job and the role and expectations of stakeholders in society mean that police work is more stressful. Occupational stress is a term that is highly difficult to describe. It is obvious the stress at the job which stressed an individual.

Some sources of stress related to the position of the employee in the organization, some to professional development, some to the relations in the workplace, and some to the organization's environment as well as structure.

## Consequences of Stress

**The spice of life is stress.** Total stress relief is only triggered by death. When we start to feel a lack of stability and efficacy, stress becomes distressed.

**Physical consequences:** The physical or medical consequences of stress affects the physical well-being of an individual. Amongst other illnesses, stroke and heart disorder is attributed to stress. Other prevalent medical conditions due to extreme stress include headaches, backaches, ulcers and stomach related, and skin disorders such as hives.

**Behavioral consequences:** These consequences of stress can harm the individual under stress or others. Smoking is one such behavior. Research has shown clearly that people who smoke are more likely to smoke

while they are depressed. Drug and alcohol behavioral consequences can also be illustrated by accident proneness, appetite disease, and aggression.

**Psychological consequences:** The mental health and wellbeing of the individual are the psychological consequences of stress. If people are stressed too much at their job, they are upset or fall asleep too much or inadequate.

**Other consequences:** No social life, no time for family. Stress management is by no means permanent for police officers and can be handled effectively or minimized using some effective strategies.

Stress management has a broad range of strategies and psychotherapies designed to control the stress level of an individual, chronic stress particularly, typically to improve routine functioning. There are a variety of realistic stress management strategies that can enable a person to lower his stress levels, give him an optimistic sensation of managing his life and encourage general well-being, some for medical professionals and others.

**Problem Definition:**

In the defense force and police force, occupational stress is more significant. The stress level is more caused by population growth, slum regions, unemployed young people, industries, migrant, job pressure, travel time, etc. the researcher has tried to identify the causes of this stress, to cope with techniques and comparing stress between police force based on gender as well as the designation.

**Objectives of the study**

- To analyze the stress causes between the police force of Amravati.
- To suggest Stress Coping Skills to the police officers.
- To identify the consequences of stress on officers of the police department of Amravati.

**Hypotheses**

**H1** – Female police officers are more stressed than their male counterparts.

**H2** – The lowermost designations face a lot of stress as compared to the higher posts.

**H3** – Changing schedule is the highest reason of stress amongst the Police force of Amravati city.

**Research Methodology**

Answer to the problem or research problem can be achieved through the paper formulation of research methodology. The research design for this paper is descriptive in nature. The researcher has worked upon this study to determine the causes of this stress, to cope with techniques, and to compare stress between the police force of Amravati based on gender as well as the designation.

The simple Random Sampling technique has been used. A structured questionnaire was designed for determining the stress causes between the police force department and was filled by 150 respondents out of which 100 judiciously filled questionnaires were further analyzed using simple statistical tools like Cross Tabulation and Chi-Square Test. The research is also supported with secondary data collected from various previous researches.

**Hypothesis testing**

**H1** – Female police officers are more stressed than their male counterparts.

<b>Gender wise impact of stress</b>			
<b>Particulars</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
<b>Agree</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Highly Agree</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Disagree</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Highly Disagree</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Chi square</b>	<b>0.131572688</b>		

Since chi-square value is not under 0.05, hypothesis (H1) is declined.

**H2** – The lowermost designations face a lot of stress as compared to the higher posts.

Designation wise impact of stress						
Particulars	ASI	Head Constable	Police Naik	Police Constable	Others	Grand Total
Agree	2	1	2	2	2	9
Highly Agree	11	3	3	1	6	24
Disagree	3	1	2	1	3	10
Highly Disagree	15	2	11	5	14	47
Neither Agree Nor Disagree	2	1	5	1	1	10
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>chi-square</b>	<b>0.281250388</b>					

H3 – Changing schedule is the highest reason of stress amongst the Police force of Amravati city.

Major Reasons of Stress at Your Workplace:		
Particulars	Respondents	Percentage
Changing Time Schedule	33	33%
Non - Cooperation of Colleagues	2	2%
Dissatisfaction with the PayScale	5	5%
Overburden With Assignment	33	33%
Any Other	27	27%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Standard Deviations</b>	<b>15.29705854</b>	

From the above table, it can be seen that most of the respondents opined that changing schedules and being overburden with the assignment are the major reason for stress. The opinion of the respondent shows a 15.29 standard deviation in their responses.

### Causes of Stress among Police Personnel

Following were found to be the major problems contributing to the stress of the police force department:

- A negative image in the public.
- An environment of lack of trust at all levels.
- Negative self-image.
- The frequency of traumatic incidents and everyday troubles has increased.
- Increased many ideas as well as depression issues.
- Discontent because of non-grant of leave.
- Bad health effects due to hostile lifestyle.
- Family/housing security is inadequate.
- Varying shift hours.

- Lack of healthcare services.
- Insufficient provision for the education of children.
- Inconsistent assessment, accountability, transfer, and promotion policies.
- Insensitive workers handling

**Coping with Stress:** The interaction between a person and the environment causes stress. In seeking to handle stress, individuals and organization have three wide-ranging choices to avoid or control stress, to escape or to respond to stress. Police officers and police departments must collectively take responsibility for the battle against stress. In difficult circumstances, a policeman can be helped by expanding social support, trustful empathic colleagues, and those who are good listeners and develop confidence. The study observes stress in the sample of police force department in Amravati city and suggests the coping skills being carried out in their workplace to help them cope with all these stresses.

The following efforts were observed to be taken in the police force departments of Amravati to cope up with these stresses.

- Time management
- Good personal planning
- Networking regular vacations
- Enhanced self-esteem and awareness
- Positive thinking
- Self-development
- Goal setting
- Meditation
- Holistic yoga exercises
- Mind stilling practices
- Medication
- Other relaxation as a tool for dealing with stress

The following strategies can help at the organizational level.

- Counseling
- Program for spouses
- Counseling
- Job rotation
- Job enrichment
- Appreciation

Stress may be handled on a personal as well as at an organizational level.

### **Personal Stress Management**

To mitigate stress, strive not to use alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine as a coping strategy. The influence on the body of such substances does not help however eventually leads to symptoms.

An effective way to alleviate stress is to fully participate in a healthier lifestyle. A healthier diet and workout will enhance your mind and body's resilience to stressful circumstances. Don't be afraid of saying no, workers sometimes take much higher workloads than their brief states in such high-pressure jobs which only increase stress. The fear to let others down or disappoint someone may cause people to take too much stress at once.

To maintain a healthy balance, it is important that we know the limits and do not fear reducing the possible stress caused by additional duties. Choose your battle. In the home as well as workplaces, seek to prevent any

inappropriate disputes. Instead of attempting to win unwinnable disputes, search for a compromise that is friendly to both sides and go forward. Precious energy is consumed for trivial issues, which can create unnecessary stress.

### **Organizational Stress Management**

Better financial resource distribution in the police department may also help to alleviate some workers' job stress. More funding in deprived sectors may reduce work burdens as well as making the workplace a more comfortable and friendly atmosphere, thereby stress levels will be minimized. Heads of departments should prepare a written strategy that outlines their organizational stress management activities. This initiative would show stressed employees that progress will be made in their working conditions even though all changes aren't adopted at once. The development of police training academic resources and facilities would help to ease recruitment in the real world of police forces. A sense of familiarity and continuity would make the transition as quick and simple as possible, thereby reducing the stress levels of police officers of the new generation from the very first day. Use a "person-job-fit-analysis" for every new hiring which corresponds to the particular job criteria with capabilities of each officer in the organization. Not every officer has the similar personality and mentality. Find a post that matches their personality may assist to avoid any stress at the workplace that one can experience.

### **Conclusion**

Following the analysis of the study, we found many important factors to determine the incidence of stress among police. Stress in female officers is more common and in male officers, it is less common. Several reports have found characteristics of those most influenced by stress in the police department. Among those characteristics were a lack of family or social support, the fact of being a female minority or a female officer, less education, being less religious or less conscientious. Several recommendations have been made to strengthen the practice of police departments to help to reduce the stress burden. The key recommendations were to introduce enhanced stress-alleviate programs, eliminate the stigma of calling to assist, advise and establish a

special protocol for officer-involved in domestic abuse, provide counseling, include more education on police-related issues, debrief stress on matters of concern and increase the impact of officers on their working circumstances.

### Further scope

It can be a worthwhile job to serve as a police officer; however, it is also a stressful job. Police are one of the few occupations in which people cope with multiple stressors that exceed society's common expectations. Both internal as well as external factors extremely affected police officer stress. Requirements to conform to standard operating procedures were also found to affect employee stress through departmental policies and procedures. Following the study analysis, several main factors have been found that assess the incidence of police stress. Further researches can work upon these factors in detail suggesting the solution to them.

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## A Study on Education and Rehabilitation of Differently Abled in India

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**ABSTRACT :** *The educational scenario in India has witnessed major change over the years due to the efforts of several governmental and non-governmental agencies. The Government of India has taken various measures, which are reflected in its policies. Despite these policies, children with disabilities are amongst the most disadvantaged in terms of access to schooling, completion of elementary education along with access to vocational education. Present study primarily focuses on review of the broader challenges in current education system with respect to the issues of quality of education for students with disabilities. As a secondary objective the study examines the viability of their rehabilitation and the government policies to facilitate it. It also briefly discusses the provisions of National Education Policy 2020 in this regard.*

**Keywords:** Differently abled, Disability, Education, Rehabilitation, Policies, Government, NEP 20

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### INTRODUCTION

The 2030 agenda for sustainable development holds a deep promise for persons with disabilities across the globe. Sustainable Development Goal 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education for all has highlighted education as a fundamental right. It focuses on eliminating inequalities in education and aims at ensuring equal access to education and training for everyone including persons with disabilities.

According to World Health Organization (WHO), “Disability is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations.”

Further, “Disability is thus not just a health problem. It is a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person’s body and features of the society in which he or she lives. Overcoming the difficulties faced by people with disabilities requires interventions to remove environmental and social barriers”.

According to the Census 2011, in India, about 2.68 cr. persons are ‘disabled’ which is 2.21 per cent of the total population ( 121 cr. ). In India people still consider the

disability as a punishment for sins of previous birth and karmas. The education scenario for disabled children demonstrates a very disappointing picture. According to the National sample survey (58th round) and Census 2011, among the total disabled persons, nearly half i.e. 45 per cent are illiterates, only 13 per cent of the disabled population has matric/ secondary education but are not graduates and very few of them i.e., only 5 per cent are graduates and above. Thus, the data clearly reveals that a vast majority of children with disabilities in India are not getting adequate education. The UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) and other International Human Rights treaties such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1946), UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and Convention on the Rights of Child (1989) prohibit any sort of exclusion from educational opportunities on the basis of sex, ethnic origin, language, religion, nationality, socio-economic conditions, abilities etc. However, a large number of children continue to experience exclusion within the education systems everywhere.

### Review of Literature

During the last few decades there has been a rapid growth in the research conducted on various issues related to differently abled in India and abroad. Majority of the studies focus on their problems, social status, education

and their rehabilitation in different parts of the world. A brief review of research conducted in this field is as follows:

On the basis of his study in two regular private elementary schools in Sidon-Lebanon ElZein[2009] suggested that there is a positive attitude towards inclusive education by the parents of children with special needs. Their attitudes towards inclusion legislation, academic improvement and social adaptation as well as cooperation reveal that the parents see providing their children with inclusive education is equivalent to providing high quality education for all. The findings supported the importance of the parent's attitude for the success of inclusion programs. Moreover, the study highlighted meaningful lessons for the people involved in inclusive education regarding various aspects of inclusion and types of inclusion.

A study by Srivastava et. al. [2012], reported that locomotor disabilities were most prevalent (10.44 per 1000) amongst all other types of disabilities. The study population included 2107 members residing in 285 families. Total prevalence was 19.46 per 1000. The study also found that prevalence of physical disabilities among the  $\geq 60$  age group was highest (90.28 per 1000). Prevalence was higher in male (20.41 per 1000) as compared to female (18.46 per 1000). Prevalence among illiterate was higher (47.20 per 1000). Physical disability was found to be higher in illiterates and community having low and medium standard of living.

**Bhuvanewari and Swarnakumari[2013]** conducted a survey in 28 Arts and Science colleges of Trichy district to ascertain the enrollment of differently abled in arts and science related courses during 2007-2011. They found that the number of persons with disabilities enrolled showed a gradual increase from 2007-2011. Further, they observed that the vast majority of respondents in aided and private colleges were physically handicapped. Higher number of male students was enrolled in these colleges than the female students with disabilities. The students with disabilities in Government colleges are mostly from rural areas. However, in aided and private colleges the students with disabilities are from urban areas. The study brought to light that there were definite signs of progress in provision of higher education to students with disability taking place within a demanding context. However, much further development is needed.

**Ambati and Ambati [2013]** explored the factors affecting the educational experiences of students with disabilities at Freie University (FU), Berlin, Germany. They found that disability coordinator plays an important role in assisting and integrating students with disabilities in this university. It was also found that while all the participants had positive educational experiences, they also had to face a number of challenging situations at the university. The study recommended for a decentralized supporting system, full-time availability of a disability coordinator, and additional funding resources to resolve different issues.

**Janardhana et.al.[2015]** analyzed two years of field visit reports of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for including people with mental illness from 2007 to 2009. The study described the various ugly forms of discriminatory practices seen in the community towards differently abled children such as denial of disability, physical restraints, social boycott, denial of property rights, decreased marital life prospects due to disabled member in family, implications on sexuality of people with disability, women with disability, discrepancies in state welfare programs, and problems in measuring disabilities. It was suggested that community-based rehabilitation is very appropriate in the Indian cultural setting, where social and community bonds are strong and deep-rooted. A movement towards community based rehabilitation has picked up pace and contributed towards greater independence and self-sustainability of the disabled.

**Hakeem [2015]** analysed the challenges that accompany persons who have been physically challenged and their working life in Finland. The main discussions raised in this study have been related to the lives of persons with physical disabilities in regard to the society's attitude towards them, employment after study, and as well looking at the Finnish legislations and act on employment for the disabled. The results indicated that there is a reasonable percentage of unemployment as compared to the total population of people with disabilities. The study also confirmed that still there is social exclusion of persons with physical disabilities in the society. Recommendations have proved that enforcement of the non-discrimination act still needs more attention, as well as the employment act.

**Singal [2016]** analysed key developments in educational policies and strategies, since 2000, in relation to the

education of children with disabilities in India and Pakistan. The article draws an analysis of official policies, various programme documents, and empirical research evidence. It suggested both the countries to focus on future work in relation to the education of children with disabilities.

**Bakshi et.al.[2017]**, interviewed 1294 households between November, 2, 2011 and June 20th 2012 about activity limitations and functioning difficulties associated with a health problem among all family members using a validated screening instruments, as well as questions about access, retention and barriers to education. They found that vulnerable children, particularly children with disabilities are less likely to start school and more likely to drop out of school earlier and before completing their high school education than non-disabled children, showing that the learning process is not inclusive in practice. The gap is wider for girls, economically deprived children, or children from households where the head is uneducated.

**Banoet.al.[2017]** made a comparative study of differently abled adolescents on visual impairment and physical deformity on the basis of their home, social, school and emotional adjustments in Jammu district. The data was collected from various schools of Jammu about differently abled adolescents in the age group of 14-18. The data was analyzed with the help of percentage statistics and 't' test. It was found that physically deformed were more adjusted than visually impaired on the basis of their home, social, school and emotional adjustments.

**Majumdar[2019]** found that maximum number of physically challenged persons (PCPs) in India are not provided equal opportunities for education and few disabled persons who are enrolled in school are not given equal opportunity for middle, secondary and higher education levels. Situation is vulnerable for Children with Disabilities (CWDs) particularly in low-income countries. CWDs should need equal access to quality education because this is a fundamental key to form human capital and their participation in social and economic life.

The review of literature suggests that across the globe the disabled persons suffer not only due to their physical or mental incapability, but also due to impartial behavior of society towards them. Governments have started realizing importance of bringing them into mainstream

and have also taken initiatives in this direction, but the outreach is minimal. Still many disabled persons are there who are deprived of their fundamental rights of education, dignity and inclusion.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The present study aims to explore the position of disabled persons in India and also the initiatives taken by government and non-government agencies in this regard. The objectives of the study can be stated as-

1. To explore the broader challenges in current education system with respect to the issues of quality of education for students with disabilities.
2. The study also examines the viability of their rehabilitation and the government policies to facilitate it.

### **Research Methodology**

The present study is based on descriptive analysis. For the purpose of study secondary data sources such as websites of Government of India, World Health Organization, and International Labor Organization, various reports, books and journals have been used.

### **Disability Rights Movement in India**

In India the disability rights movement began in 1970s. It was the time when people with disabilities were considered as a burden on society. They were looked down as according to Indian psyche disability was the result of someone's previous life's sins and thus persons with disability were considered responsible for their condition. This erroneous belief has led to various forms of injustice against persons with disabilities in India.

Although, the early 1970s different groups of people began demanding the rights of people with disabilities, in 1980s the movement became more intense when several NGOs joined the movement. However, most of these NGOs worked only for selected disability, eg., NGOs for persons having physical disabilities, hearing disabilities, visual difficulties and for persons with mental disabilities, etc..

Further, affiliation by social activists like Baba Amte, who had dedicated his whole life in serving poor people suffering from leprosy, resulted in many people realizing

the importance and coming forward to become a part of the movement. The movement inspired many others in sensitizing people towards welfare, rehabilitation and empowerment of such people.

Later on, the United Nations General Assembly notified year 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons. This resulted into creation of a plan of action at the national, domestic and international levels, with a focus on equalization of opportunities, rehabilitation and empowerment of disabled population. In decade 1980-1990 major shift in the policy frame was observed where the disabled persons, who were earlier treated as recipients of charity then became participants in the overall development process. In many countries the united efforts of international communities the welfare model was transformed into a developmental model. Moreover, medical fraternity all over the world started focusing on rendering medical help and cure to different types of disabilities. Medical practitioners tried reducing the suffering and helping disabled people with the use of medical treatments, medical equipment, and technical help so that they can lead "normal" lives. However, benefit of these developments was limited to few people from literate, sensitized, economically well-off, and modern section of the society.

Another landmark towards the goals of rehabilitation was marked when the United Nations announced 1982-1993 as the Decade of Disabled Persons. In India, the Rehabilitation Council of India was set up by the Government of India in 1986 to for the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. Later on, the Mental Health Act (1987) come into existence that focuses on regulating standards in mental health institutions. These initiatives increased sensitivity of people towards the issues and needs of persons with disabilities.

Further, the government passed the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 (or PWD Act). It was a big social motivator for all the people and organizations working for the rights and welfare of special needs. This Act reserved three percent of government posts for those in the PWD category. Adequate provisions were then made for education and respectable placements of people suffering from disabilities.

In 2006, the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. India also signed and ratified this convention in 2007. Later on, the Rights

of Persons with Disabilities Bill, 2016 was passed in India. This Bill has tried to ensure better inclusive education and rehabilitation opportunities to the persons with disabilities. Appropriate government authorities have also been made responsible for betterment of differently abled.

### Dimensions of Disability in India

As per the Census 2011, in India out of the 121 Cr population, 2.68 Cr persons are 'disabled' which is 2.21 per cent of the total population. "Section 2(i) of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 defines disability as:-

- (I) Blindness;
- (ii) Low vision;
- (iii) Leprosy-cured;
- (iv) Hearing impairment;
- (v) Loco motor disability;
- (vi) Mental retardation;
- (vii) Mental illness."

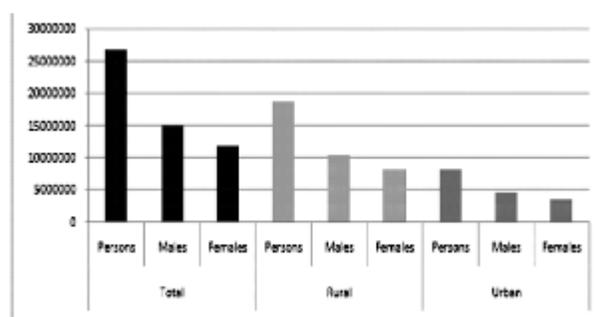
**Table 1: Disabled Population in India**

Population, India 2011			Disabled persons, India 2011		
Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
121.08 Cr	62.32 Cr	58.76 Cr	2.68 Cr	1.5 Cr	1.18 Cr

Source: Census 2011

Among the disabled population 56 per cent (1.5 Cr) and 44 per cent (1.18 Cr) are males and females respectively. In the total population, the proportion of males is 51 per cent and proportion of females is 49 per cent. The data further reveals that, majority (69 per cent i.e 1.86 Cr disabled persons) of the disabled population resided in rural areas and 0.81 Cr disabled persons live in urban areas.

**Figure 1: Disabled Population in India - Census 2011**

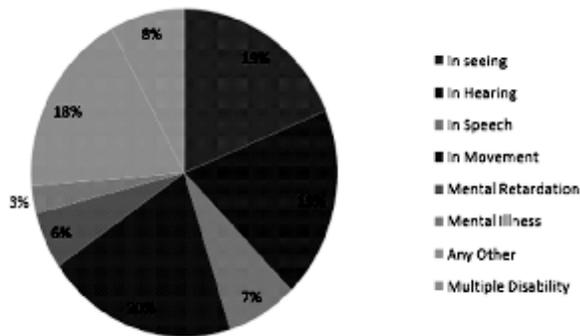


Source: Census, 2011

Figure 1, clearly shows that there is urgent need for addressing this problem in rural India. Immediate and strong steps must be taken for prevention of disabilities to happen in the country along with intensive measures for education and rehabilitation of differently abled population in nation.

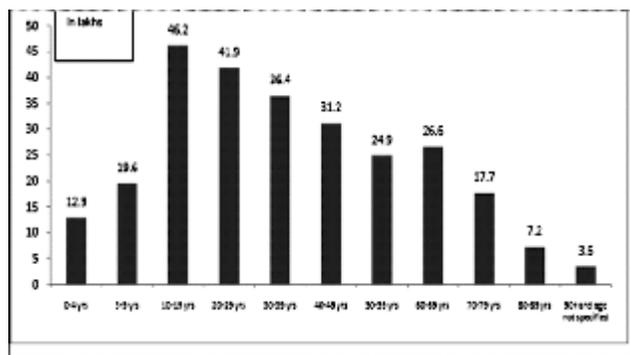
Further, Figure 2 shows that, 20 per cent of the disabled persons are having disability in movement, 19 per cent are with disability in vision, and another 19 per cent are with disability in hearing. Around 8 per cent have multiple disabilities. It was also observed that males are more in number among the affected for each type of disability.

**Figure 2: Disabled population by type of Disability in India -Census, 2011**



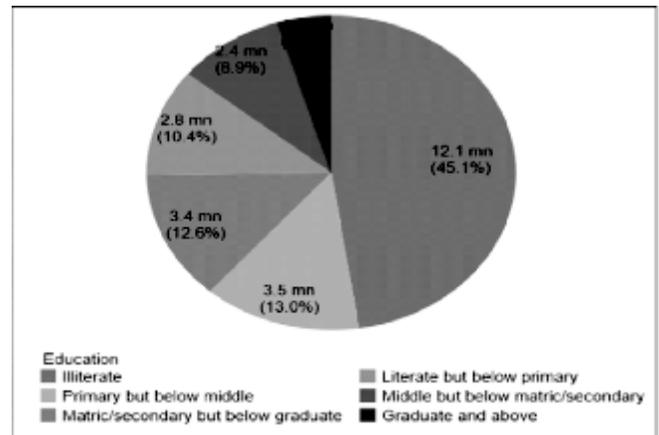
As shown in Figure 3, the number of disabled persons is highest (17 per cent) in the age group 10-19 years . About 16 per cent of them are in the age group 20-29 years. Senior citizens (more than 60 years) disabled constituted 21 per cent of the total disabled at all India level.

**Figure 3 : Disabled population by age group in India-Census, 2011**



Source: Census, 2011

**Figure 4: Educational status of disabled Persons( per cent), in India – Census 2011**



Source: Census 2011

As shown in Figure 4, among the total disabled persons, 45 per cent are illiterates. 13 per cent of the disabled population has matric/ secondary education but are not graduates and only 5 per cent are graduates and above. Nearly 8.5 per cent among the disabled literates are graduates. Among the male disabled population, 38 per cent are illiterate. 16 per cent of them have matric/ secondary education but are not graduates and 6 per cent of them are graduates and above. About 9 per cent among the male disabled literates are graduates. Among the female disabled persons, 55 per cent are illiterates. Only 9 per cent of the disabled female population has matric/ secondary education but are not graduates and just 3 per cent are graduates and above.

The data reveals serious implications and an urgent need to take measures to provide education to differently abled in India. A vast majority is either illiterate or is just able to read or write. We all know that education is the only weapon through which one can overcome the problems arising due to any disability; it is the responsibility of state to provide education to them. Several initiatives are taken, however following barriers are observed:

- 1. Attitude of Parents:Parent’s:** attitude towards children with disabilities and their education could be the main facilitator or a serious barrier to achieve inclusion and participation of differently abled in mainstream society. The type, severity, and visibility of disability affect parental acceptance of disability.
- 2. Lack of Awareness aboutFacilities:** The Government of India has many schemes, policies,

programmes for children with different disabilities but such facilities do not reach many families especially those who stay in villages or remote areas. Many of the parents are unaware about the admissions, educational aids, vocational training, exam concessions, etc.

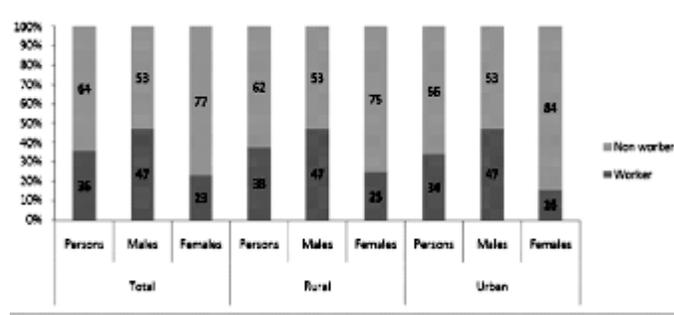
3. **Lack of awareness about disability certificate:** Children with disabilities did not have a disability certificate because of lack of awareness about its importance. Not having a disability certificate also is a reason for many parents not enrolling their children in schools because they cannot access the benefits of government's education schemes.
4. **Gender Discrimination:** Girls with disabilities experience various forms of discrimination on the basis of disability and gender in India. However, parental attitude is changing regarding the value of educating and training girls with disabilities.
5. **Social Stigma:** Children with disabilities in India face stigma since birth due to several socio-religious beliefs. Age-old beliefs that if a child has a disability, it is due to child's or parents' "karma" (fate) or it is because of sins in the previous birth or that the mother has observed sun eclipse during her pregnancy are still commonly held. The stigma also comes from the influence of various mythologies and religious beliefs.
6. **Lack of Awareness:** Knowledge is not widespread through society of various types of disabilities. The impact of disability on a child's development as well as the need to have special pedagogy to achieve the educational qualification is ignored. Therefore, parents fail to understand the importance of education for such children and they do not know in what way they can encourage children with disabilities.
7. **School related issues:** The special schools are concentrated in larger cities and there are hardly such facilities available in rural especially remote areas. There is a lack of transportation and lack of accessibility of travelling in slum areas in big cities, villages and remote areas.
8. **Training of teachers:** The teacher's attitude is of utmost importance in the education of children with disabilities because their judgments can have a social, emotional and intellectual influence on the

well-being of a child. They also need to update their knowledge as well as pedagogy in this field from time to time.

9. **Poverty:** A large number of children with disabilities belong to families that are below the poverty line. Disability may be compounded by poverty because it leads to barriers to education and skill development. Because of economic hardship, families may find difficult to provide educational facilities including expensive assistive device and it becomes challenging for poor families to send children with disabilities to the school.

For the empowerment of disabled population, the attainment of education and participation in economic activity are extremely important. The Census 2011 highlighted that, nearly one third of the total disabled persons are working.

**Figure 5**  
Distribution of disabled persons (in per cent) by work status in India - Census, 2011



Source: Census 2011

As shown in Figure 5, at all India level, 36 per cent of the total disabled persons are workers. Among the male disabled persons, 47 per cent are working and among female disabled, only 23 per cent are working. In rural India, 25 per cent of the female disabled are working, while in urban India, the corresponding figure is 16 per cent. There are several barriers for people with disabilities to get employment. The main reason is their lack of education and adequate training. Further, lack of financial resources which limit access to self-employment. The nature of the workplace or occupation also serves as hindrance for the disabled. Employer-perceptions about disabled people and also the perceptions of coworkers are amongst the behavioral challenges faced by them. "Anecdotal evidence suggests that social protection systems can create incentives for

persons with disability to leave their jobs and move on to the disability benefits.”

## **WELFARE OF DIFFERENTLY ABLED IN INDIA**

In order to ensure rehabilitation, empowerment and overall development of differently abled in India, a National Policy Statement was adopted in the year 2006. The National Policy recognizes that Persons with Disabilities are valuable human resource for the country and seeks to create an environment that provides equal opportunities, protection of their rights and full participation in society. Rehabilitation measures can be classified into three categories:

- i. Physical rehabilitation, which includes early detection and intervention, counselling & medical interventions and provision of aids and appliances to assist them.
- ii. Educational rehabilitation including primary as well as vocational education.
- iii. Economic rehabilitation for helping them to earn a decent livelihood for a dignified life in society.

Article 41 of Constitution of India provides that “the State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement.”

In light of various directives given in the Constitution of the country, pioneering initiatives have been taken by the Government of India. Several scholarships and grants are offered to persons with disability to facilitate their education eg. National Fellowship awards for Students with Disabilities (RGMF), various Scholarships for students with Disability including National Overseas Scholarships for them. Incentives are also given to private sector organizations for providing employment to persons with disabilities.

## **STATUTORY BODIES**

**Several statutory bodies have been set up for the welfare of differently abled in India:**

### **(1) Rehabilitation Council of India**

The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) was constituted under the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 with an aim to regulate and monitor the training of professionals and personnel to assist rehabilitation of

disabled persons. It also promotes research in rehabilitation and special education, and maintains the Central Rehabilitation Register (CRR) for keeping track of assistance delivered to persons with disabilities.

### **(2) Chief Commission for persons with Disability:**

The Chief Commission of Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) is empowered with certain powers of a civil court to look into complaints relating to denial of rights of persons with disabilities and non-implementation of laws, rules etc. made for the welfare and protection for rights of persons with disabilities. Such powers are granted by the persons with disability (with Equal Opportunity, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.

### **(3) National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disability**

This National Trust was set up in 2000 under the National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disability Act, 1999. Since then it is working through a network of voluntary organizations, association of persons with disabilities and association of their parents. Such associations provide an integrated approach to help the persons suffering with critical disabilities.

### **4) National Institutes and Regional Centers**

To meet the requirements of specific disabilities, Govt. of India has established 7 National Institutes (Nis) in specific disabilities under the Department. These National and regional centers are engaged in Human Resource Development and also, providing Rehabilitation Services to the persons with disabilities. These centers are also continuously engaged in and Research & Development to help the effected people.

### **5) National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC)**

Set up in 1997 NHFDC is engaged in promoting economic development activities and self-employment opportunities for the benefit of persons with disabilities. It provides financial assistance by extending loans to the persons with disabilities for their self-employment ventures and for pursuing professional / technical education to upgrade their skill sets.

**6) Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO):** This organization has been manufacturing cost effective assistive devices for disabled on large scale. Simultaneously, it is engaged in distributing these devices to the needy at reasonable costs.

**7) District Disability Rehabilitation Centers (DDRCs)**

DDRC are being setup in all the unserved districts of the country for providing various services to the persons with disability. Such centers facilitate creation of infrastructure and capacity building at district level for awareness generation, rehabilitation, training and guidance of disabled population.

However, in a recent study by Mehta et.al.(2019) , it was found that “Disability” is still looked up at the majority of the workplaces as a medical or charity problem. Indian organizations and employers are still not able to see disability as part of human diversity. As per statistics produced by International Labour Organization in 2011 reveals that 73.6 per cent of the disabled population in India are still not engaged the labor force. Of these people, those with a mental disability, disabled women and those in rural areas are the worst neglected.

Studies show that although the country has a large number of NGOs working in the field of disability and most of them focus on rehabilitation. Yet, the training and skills they provide generally fail to provide them employment in organized sector. Moreover, the number of such NGOs is very less and they also face shortage of funds and adequate infrastructure and equipments. However, some NGOs have realized this and have started working on it by organizing job fairs, constituting awards and promoting achievements of the disabled.

**National Education Policy 2020**

The National Education Policy (NEP) is perceived as a document to ensure opportunities for children with disabilities as it supports inclusive system of education where students with and without disabilities learn together. However, it exists within a framework of prevalent policy gaps in the education of children with disabilities. It has given due recognition to the provisions of Rights of persons with disabilities Act (RPWD Act) by recommending inclusive system of education where

students with and without disabilities learn together. NEP asserts accessible infrastructure, individual and adequate support system as well as non-discrimination in schools.

It also aims to recruit special educators along with incorporation of disability awareness within teacher education. Teachers will be trained to identify learning disabilities in children, which in turn will help such students to learn better.

It has given due recognition to home based education. Proper audit of such education based on the norms in the RPWD Act will ensure quality of such education to the children. PARAKH (National assessment Centre), will be formulated to create equitable system of assessment for children with disabilities.

However, endorsing home based education in place of making schools more accessible and inclusive for children raises questions on its efficacy. The new policy has also failed to move away from charity based model to right based model. The policy should explore how school premises can accommodate students with diverse needs. It should also specify appropriate training requirements for special education teachers and remove barriers encountered in establishing resources to enable special education. Moreover, adjustment in curriculum to ensure inclusion successfully is also required which can be achieved with active involvement of parents of children and adults with disabilities, and activists/organizations that support their rehabilitation. These considerations will embrace inclusion and help children with disabilities get increased access to employment, health and other services thereby developing better awareness of their rights and improving their quality of life.

**Conclusion**

The magnitude of disability in India is large and brings about the need for developing comprehensive rehabilitation programs for the welfare of disabled millions. Involvement of different stakeholders such as school, community leaders, government officers, parents having children with disabilities is needed. Further, creation of barrier free environment including provision of ramps, transport facilities for accessibility to school is also necessary which can be successfully implemented in coordination with various Ministries and Departments responsible for education for children with disabilities. Monitoring and evaluation of statistics and

services for students with disabilities also needs further development. Gender differences and inequalities need to be addressed and many more female students with disabilities should be motivated to join the mainstream of education and work force later. The government support and the financial outlay need to be qualitatively and quantitatively enhanced. Although much has been done for the betterment of persons with disabilities, but still there is a long way to go.

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# HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC: AN INSIGHT ON THE CHALLENGES FOR HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTITIONERS

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**ABSTRACT :** Organizations around the globe are currently experiencing significant decline in revenue, bankruptcy and job losses regardless of their size as a result of covid-19 pandemic. By implication, the travel bans, quarantine measures and boarder closures have also contributed immensely to the challenges of businesses. In order to sustain business operations, human resource managers need to embrace novel methods of operation to cope with the new challenges arising from the pandemic. Therefore, calculated and rapid responses in form of policies, combined with strong multidimensional leadership skills are required to control the effects of Covid-19 on human resources practices on employees and the organisation as a whole. The study provides an overview of the challenges of human resource professionals, especially managers face and their roles in filling the lacuna created by the covid-19 pandemic, as well as provided recommendations in order to create a suitable teleworking and sustainable working environment among the workforce and the organization during and after the corona virus pandemic in addition to combating the current challenges created by the pandemic.

**Keywords:** Human Resource Management; Employee well-being, Teleworking, Covid-19

## Introduction

One of the utmost priorities of HR managers during covid-19 era was to emphasize health and safety concerns in the organization (for employees and employers) and the rapid adoption of teleworking to cushion the effect of the pandemic for effective and efficient productivity. In particular, HR managers have positioned the workforce to respond to this imminent pandemic by engaging them to be more resilient and productive. In this respect, corona virus, the world new pandemic has created numerous challenges for human resources managers. HR challenges are diverse; these challenges were worsened with the advent of the covid-19 pandemic. HR practitioners now have to worry about the efficient and effective functionality of the organization towards the achievement of organizational goals despite the

restrictions of movement, inability to hold physical meetings, appraise employees despite remote working, effective ways to sensitize employee on the corona virus and its effects, maintenance of personal hygiene, psychological state of employee to function effectively etc.

It is pertinent to note that certain business considered essential such as the food and pharmaceutical industries were not able to short down completely because of the significance of their businesses (Ahmad, 2020). This has necessitated the introduction of work from home policy which is now widely accepted as a norm by businesses who could not afford to shut down completely. However, with the lockdown gradually easing off and organisations gradually reopening, both the public and private organisations are now confronted with exceptional

challenges especially in the area of increased workload accumulated during the covid-19 pandemic.

It is therefore the role of human resource managers to introduce new measures to safeguard the health of employees who are risk takers for the organisation (Ahmad, 2020). There is also need to be more innovative in response to the current challenges. Such measure may include educating employees the importance of observing social distancing, medical screening to identify employees who may have been exposed to the virus and measures for successful overall business operations despite the challenges.

This paper explores a number challenges faced by HR managers during the covid-19 pandemic and proffered various measures to address the challenges experienced by organisations during the COVID-19 era.

### **Objectives of the study**

The study focused on identifying the challenges experienced by human resource managers in sustaining the HR experience in organizations during the covid-19 pandemic and provides remarkable insights on how to either mitigate these challenges as well as its effect on the general workforce. Apart from reviewing and applying previous research to unravel the crisis, the study aims at providing a general framework to guide imminent research on the COVID-19 challenges in the workplace.

### **Significance of the study**

The efforts put in to this study is designed to help researchers and organisations take decisive steps to manage and alleviate the corona virus effects on the activities of organisation as well as designing roadmap for the future. In addition, the contemporary issues discussed in this study would present a review of relevant literatures on HR challenges in the wake of COVID-19 for both researchers and practitioners. The study is organized in four sections: Introduction, conceptual clarification, literature review and probable solutions to identified problems.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Conceptual Clarifications**

#### **Human Resource Management**

The concept of personnel management was first rebranded to human resource management in the 80s through the research of a renowned economist, Michael Porter, who attributes the success of every organization to

the employees (Porter, 1980). This rebranding was necessitated by the growing economic downturn and accelerated industrialization as well as technological changes on organizations (O’Riordan, 2017). Thus, the change from personnel management to human resource management implies that employees are now viewed as a major resource that contributes significantly to the success of the organisation. Kok et al. (2001) argued that HR Department in the past was saddled with the responsibility of providing support for the entire organisation, but recently business now understand that employees are the most important asset of the business, a knowledge not widely accepted decades ago. While personnel management is restricted to activities surrounding recruitment, placement and legal compliance, HRM is more encompassing; and includes strategic planning.

Obviously, the transition from personnel management to human resource management has improved organisational competitiveness and productivity (Flynn, 1997). As observed by Olasoji, (2019), the major responsibility of human resource unit is to optimize employees’ effectiveness for organisational productivity. Thus, both public and private organisations are now considered as a group of individuals with coordinated efforts to achieve a specific goal. This is why many researchers have gained interest in the subject of human resource management towards the end of the 20th century (Michaels et al., 2001). Igalen & Roussel (1998) opines that human resource management covers every activity aimed at developing the collective effectiveness of employees working in an organisation. This is because effectiveness is the basis for measuring the level at which organisational goals are achieved. The role of HR managers in this respect would be to model HR development towards achieving organisational objectives. In support of this view, Byars & Rue, 2006 posits that Human resource management is a system of activities and strategist that focus on successful managing of employees at all levels of an organisation in order to achieve organisational goals.

In support of the above assertion, a number of researchers have postulated that human resource management is synonymous with organisational effectiveness and increased productivity (Arthur, 1994; Jackson & Schuler, 1995; Huselid, 2011; Igwe et al, 2014). In line with these assertions, organisations have deemed it necessary to

invest in human capital in order to achieve optimal productivity in the organisation and in the global economy.

### Corona Virus Pandemic

Coronavirus pandemic is described by the World Health Organization (2020), as a contagious disease caused by a newly discovered virus known as covid-19. Primarily, the virus is transmitted through droplets of saliva and nasal discharge from an infected person. Covid-19 is described as a pandemic because it has a high rate transmission if not controlled. Corona virus was initially believed to have originated in a food market around Hubei province in Wuhan, China in December, 2019. Currently, it is unclear where the virus actually began. Organisational activities have been disrupted by Covid-19 pandemic. This has become a great challenge to the operations of human resource department. In a bid to control this virus, organisations have suddenly adopted remote working, email and video conferencing to replace on-site operations with all its implications (Lewis, 2020). With the gradual reopening of economic activities, HR professionals are faced with the challenge of hiring additional medical personnel to augment the existing one in order to curtail the spread of covid-19 and the adhere strictly to the isolation centre policy.

In addition, human resource experts have to battle with ensuring the well-being and sustaining the health of employees' during the pandemic. Most importantly, HR professionals are faced with the pressure of processing voluminous paperwork as more workers are being laid off with the corresponding pressure on the existing workforce. Also, as millions of workers are being laid off, HR managers would also have to provide consolation those affected. For those employees subjected to remote working, HR managers would have to motivate them in order to sustain emotional connection with their colleagues at work

Table 1: Statistics of corona virus impact in the world as at December 20, 2020

Total Corona cases	76,901,568
Deaths	1,696,419
Recovered	53,944,518

Source: (world metre, 2020)

Table 2: Statistics of corona virus impact in Nigeria as at December 20, 2020

Total Corona cases	77,933
Deaths	1,218
Recovered	67,784

Source: (world metre, 2020)

### Human Resources Management challenges during Covid-19 pandemic

#### Employees' motivation and well-being

In the past, many employees believe that remote working or working from home was an impossible task, but the pandemic and its subsequent effect necessitated the sudden shift to the "new normal" approach. Regrettably, the remote working approach was taken into consideration as a result of covid-19. More especially, the week preceding and during the covid-19 confinement posed a number of stress and anxiety for all business stakeholders including employers and employees as remote working and exceptional working conditions had to be introduced to ensure continuity of industries (Sigma, 2020). While some employees experienced the fear of losing their jobs, others were faced with the fear of increasing workload and reduced wages. At the same time, majority of the workforce suffered perplexity as a result of poor communication from supervisors, demotivation and constant stress. Some were inadequately supported as a result of limited or no contact with other colleagues, with the agitation to be efficient and productive, supervisors and senior managers frequently demanded for deadlines to complete a specific work with online supervision (Ahmad, 2020). According to the 2020 American state of mind report on covid-19, employees are significantly affected mentally by the effect of the virus. The report showed that there was 21% increase in mental health since 16th of February, 2020 and the corresponding increase in the prescription of anti-anxiety medication in order to relief the effect of the virus. In this situation, Human resource managers can adopt some measures in order to ease off these challenges such as self-scheduling, a situation where employees set their own to help them balance work and family responsibilities using certain criteria and limits.

In addition, senior managers can promote flexible working hours such as shift work for employees in order to improve morale, increase job satisfaction and motivate workers. More can also be achieved by encouraging stressed employees to proceed on advanced annual leave (Sigma, 2020).

### **Managing Teleworking and maintaining a balance between work and family**

Prior to Teleworking is a term that describes a situation where an employee works from home using modern technology and telecommunications to remain in touch with their employer. Prior to covid-19 pandemic, organisations were not conversant with managing the workforce without on-site supervision, but with the onset of the pandemic, organisation had to go digital even though a number of jobs still requires physical attention. Besides, a number of staff was not equipped with modern technologies to cope with the sudden change. Organisations had to distribute technical equipment such as laptops and internet facilities to support them (Baska, 2020).

Series of difficulties which resulted to anxiety and stress, especially for staff with children and those working from home. The ability to ensure adequate performance of employees who are remote-working as well as ensuring proper integration with on-site workers with work processes becomes a hard nut to crack for the HR managers. This is because managers would have to manage remote employees and teams which they have never managed in the past (Gartner, 2020). The dramatic modification of work environment will inevitably have drastic effect on employees' ability to fit in work environment (Kristof, 1996). (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011), in analysing the theory of person-environment fit opined that employees tend to flourish and experience high level of satisfaction and general well-being when they are selected by organisations whose work environments reflects similar culture, values, and work features as their own important beliefs. On the contrary, when the job setting present a different environment that does not fulfil these needs, employees' desires are significantly altered and they may not properly fit-in the work environment as in the case of the current pandemic – covid-19 (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). Gartner survey on remote working during covid-19 pandemic posits that managers have well adapted to the new technological development especially in helping employees adapt socially and economically (Gartner, 2020). In this survey,

new models of managing remote employees were introduced (the NEAR Model) as follows:

**Normalize Self-Direction:** Majority of the remote worker demand for self-directed work. Therefore managers should reduce supervision of remote workers but rather concentrate on their output.

**Enable New Relationships:** Since employees are not physically connected to colleagues, HR manage identify distressed staff and connect them to other colleagues. Bailey, K., & Breslin, D. (2020)

**Emphasize the Positive:** remote working personnel are almost twice as liable to get correction criticism – which centres on conduct that was not fruitful – To maintain a two-way communication, management need to put more effort in addressing the remote working employees openly and in a straight forward way. Management need to affirm noticeable advancement with explicit illustrations.

**Refurbish Team Expectations:** At times, managers expect that teleworking staff depend solely on personal ideas. However, Gartner investigation reveals that completely remote workers relate with at least 3-5 other teams while working. For leaders, it is necessary to set targets for each member and the whole group to guarantee effective individual commitment and team work. Leaders should lay emphasis on individual and group targets in their discussions.

Yu (2016) conducted a study on the Relationships between Different Types of Individual–Environment Fit and Job Satisfaction. The study maintained that during the process of enrolment and selection, individuals are usually fascinated about an organization based on their essential need, culture, values, and work features and indeed existing also supports the notion that work relationships fulfil these fundamental desires. However, there is a sudden shift in the existing belief as organisation currently adapts employees to the current demand of covid-19 pandemic which basically limits physical contact in a way that the misfit arising from the current adjustment poses an impending catastrophe for employees' well-being and efficiency for organizations (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). In this regard more research is needed to discover how the sudden shift to teleworking during the pandemic would influence employee's job search in the future. Further research could also be geared toward discovering the impact of remote working in employees' productivity.

### **Limited Number of Staff Working On-Site**

Corona virus related absence at work environment has practically increased the level of teleworking as the workload has gradually doubled. Most employees now work from home while some are practically not available as a result of ill-health and the resulting increase in workload for those working on-site. In addition, covid-19 related circumstances had drastically reduced the attendance of employees especially in sensitive positions. These issues pose some uncertainties for the human resource managers, whose responsibility is to ensure optimal utilization of manpower resources. In resolving this, management may increase the presence of employees at work place by introducing policies that encourage workers on-site to work for longer hours in order to accomplish greater tasks and cover up for staff who are not on ground (EP, 2003). In another way, overtime limit can be increased to allow more hours to reduce backlogs (sigma, 2020). Likewise, in order to protect the on-site working hours, overtime compensation may be introduced but restricted to teleworking hours.

### **Covid-19 Health Hazards within the Workplace**

The workplace environment has been identified as a major risk factor that could accelerate the spread of Covid-19 disease. Organisations consist of both skilled and unskilled labours, which are mostly made up of employees from remote communities. These workforces most often contribute greatly to the spread of the disease (George & George, 2020). For instance, corona virus is mostly spread in heavy traffic arrears such as rest rooms, changing rooms canteens, corridors, exit points, elevators, and other shared areas (HSC, 2020). Hence, it is imperative for organisations to create a healthy work environment that is free workers from mental as well as physical health and wellbeing for business continuity and productivity. The strategy for containing the virus should also involve the acquisition of essential human, financial and material resources such as conducting risk assessment and how to prioritise the requirements, development of project plan with specific actions as well as consulting health and labour experts where necessary (George, 2020). In response to this, HR managers should take reasonable steps to protect and control employees and customers from contracting coronavirus. Based on the risk assessment conducted by the Health and Safety Executive, United Kingdom (2020); Travers (2020) and

NCDC, (2020) corona virus can be alleviated using the following guidelines:

- Maintain the health and safety guidance on cleaning, hygiene and hand sanitisation provided by health experts;
- Preventive measures should be communicated through emails, videos, fliers and public announcements
- Ensure guidelines on canteen hygiene and welfare are maintained. This can be achieved by monitoring and supervising areas with cameras ensure people are complying with measures put in place.
- For hazards associated with employee's well-being and mental health as a result of isolation or coronavirus anxiety, organisations should conduct regular check or conversation with affected staff through e-mails, phone calls and meetings. In addition, managers should on a regular basis discuss the problem of fatigue and encourage them to observe breaks, leaves as well as ensuring employees do not put in long hours as work.
- Put a control or outright prohibition of unnecessary travels and advise employees to self-isolate on arrival from every journey.

### **Rapid Policy Modifications**

As situations are changing due to the corona virus pandemic, company policies and being affected and requires update in line with Covid-19 guidelines. HR Leaders would be held accountable for the implementation of these new policies and therefore have to work harder to meet up with demands. In this respect, HR departments should consider the importance of good communication. They can take advantage of new technologies such as webinars, video conferencing, emails and other communication medium to reach out the employees.

Research reveals that during the pandemic, organizations made quick shift in operational procedures by making drastic decisions such as staff layoff, shutting down of companies, cutting down supplies and so on to ensure safety and standards (Caliguiri et. al, 2020).

### **Managing Employees' Communication:**

Another challenge faced by HR managers during Covid-19 pandemic is managing communication among employees. Ordinarily, poor communication networks make it extremely difficult to manage the workforce. But during covid-19 pandemic, it became even more difficult for the HR leaders to identify effective communication methods that will suit each worker especially for remote

working. Communication tools like zoom, video conferencing, e-mails and the like are being utilized to

cushion communication challenges, even though some employees were not conversant with them.

**Empirical Review of Literature**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Findings</b>
J. B. Carnevalea,& I. Hatak (2020)	United States	Identified employee adjustment and well -being in the era of COVID -19: Implications for human resource management	Conceptual Review	In order to address the challenges of covid-19, establishments may likely embrace how business owners succeed in reducing physical and social interaction such as: appreciating autonomy, tolerance of uncertainty, addressing new circumstances openly and proactively
Chinmoy Kumar (2020)	India	Discussed the emerging human resource challenges in a pandemic world	Conceptual Review	In order to sustain businesses during the pandemic, Organisations should expand virtual working, Maintain essential HR/payroll operations and legal compliance, Maintain employee health at work
Gary N. Mclean (2020)	Thailand	Identified the roles of national Human Resource Development in an era of COVID-19	Review of Literature	Findings reveals that providing strong leadership by making innovative decisions, creating a new normal will improve employees well -being during and after the pandemic
M. F. Wunderlich & A. Løkke, (2020)	Northern Europe	To examine how organizations respond to the COVID-19 crisis especially from a human perspective. This will enable organizations understand better how human resource manager can contribute to other crisis.	Survey method	The study shows that there is increasing support from management to human resource Unit during the COVID-19 pandemic.
V. De Leon (2020)	United States	Explored the HR challenges facing the	Qualitative method using	The study revealed that several HRM issues

V. De Leon (2020)	United States	Explored the HR challenges facing the local public sector employers during the COVID-19 pandemic	Qualitative method using content analysis	The study revealed that several HRM issues emerged during the COVID19 pandemic in Sacramento County.
A. Elsafty & M. Ragheb (2020)	Egypt	To examine the contributions of Human Resources Management in the direction of employees, even up to reducing the scorching effect of Covid-19.	Descriptive Statistics and Correlation	The study found that the variables are positively connected to overcome the adverse effect of corona virus pandemic. Guidance and support from the workplace as well as access to ICT, with financial benefits are some elements that should be considered by organizations to maximize their expected income and values.
Agarwal, P. (2020)	India	To explore the HR methods implemented by hotels during the covid-19 and how it affected employees well-being.	Qualitative exploration	The research analysed possible HR approaches which organizations could adopt to manage employees effectively and efficiently during uncertain challenges. The study discovered that HR managers who exhibit great concern for employees always impact on their wellbeing.

### Overcoming the challenges of Covid-19

This study concludes that organizations experience change at all times. Covid-19 has drastically changed the operations of Human resource management. When these changes are not properly managed, they create disorderliness and reduction in productivity. Therefore, it is imperative for HR managers to be well equipped in order to be able to handle the challenges as they emerge. It is on this premise and based on the above, that the following recommendations were made to handle challenges posed by corona virus:

1. Change is constant; hence, the HR managers should be prepared for change at all times. The business world has been particularly characterised by its ever-changing nature, therefore keeping abreast of changes and its

challenges should be paramount for an HR professional. This is because any shortfall on their part will jeopardise the efforts of the organisation in achieving its goals.

2. Human resource professionals should readily be able to sensitize (through an orientation programme) employees of the changes, its effects and implications on the activities of the organization, as well as its employees and other stakeholders. The importance of a learning organization cannot be over-emphasized. When stakeholders are aware of what is expected of them and the consequences of negligence on their part, it will help them develop strategies particularly as it pertains to core HR functions in the company to survive a situation where an outbreak that could wreak havoc on company operations. Such strategies should be created in

partnership with other departments, including risk management, finance and IT. (McIlvaine, 2020)

3. Human Resource professionals should focus on introducing policies and procedures that would allow easy access to the new challenges. Not only should there be policy introduction, there should also be careful collaborations with employees at all levels with focus on interpersonal relationship rather than control, standard and hierarchy (Bingham, 2020). This can be achieved by building trust on the well experienced employees and at the same time constantly supporting them.

4. Human Resource professional should encourage leadership styles that are effective and efficient, yet flexible enough to accommodate sudden changes in the workforce, operation, business structure and environment. In this context, HRM flexibility refers to the degree to which they are adapt to a varying circumstances and the speed with which the practices are readjusted and redeployed to suit the new situation (Agarwal, 2020).

5. The importance of imbibing the information management skills to filter information with the aim of identifying reliable information from fake news and disinformation should be emphasised. Identifying verifiable and accurate information will aid in the formulation of strategies and policies that will sustain the organization through challenges.

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## CoronaVirus (COVID-19) Lockdown Policy Measures and Socio-economic Development of the Nigerian State: Critiquing the Present and Envisaging the Future.

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**ABSTRACT :** Utilizing bibliographic documentation and descriptive-analytic method, this paper reviews and critiques the on-going lockdown policy measures in Nigeria with the view to unraveling the present and future socioeconomic impacts of the policy on the development of the Nigerian state. The paper indicates that the total or partial lockdown introduced to curb the spread of the COVID19 pandemic is a step in the right direction. However, it reveals that socioeconomic pains such as poverty, sudden and radical review and changes in expected revenues and expenditures of most states in Nigeria, unemployment, fall in demand and disruption in the supply of goods and services, increase in out-of-pocket expenditure on health services and the closure of the educational system which are fallouts of the policy are highly devastating to the development of the Nigerian state at the present. The paper, therefore, envisages that the pains are likely to persist and cause more damages to the national development, if socioeconomic recovery programmes that will guarantee socioeconomic inclusion are not put in place. Consequently, the paper suggests some plausible socioeconomic inclusive remedies that will facilitate socio-economic recovery of the Nigerian state such as job creation, investment in social programmes to support the poorest and the vulnerable members in Nigeria, provision of social amenities for the masses, decreased interest rate and provision of emergency loan packages to support businesses in financial difficulty. The study concludes by arguing that a stitch in time saves nine, therefore, every attempt to procrastinate putting in place endogenous socio-economic plans that would nip in the bud the effects of the lockdown policy measures stands the chance of plummeting the country socioeconomic environments into dangerous disasters and mess worse than the pandemic itself in the long run.

**Keyword -** COVID-19 Lockdown Policy Measures and Socio-economic Development

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### Introduction

COVID-19 is a public health challenge that has been ravaging the entire continents of the world (Oruonye, Idris& Ahmed, 2020).The pandemic has had severe negative impacts on businesses, economies as well as social interaction and many countries have sunk deeper into unemployment. For instance, more than 33 million people have filed for unemployment in the USA during the pandemic(Kauzya, 2020). Thus, the effects of the pandemic are not limited to health crisis alone, but extended to the societies and the economies at large. The aftermath of the pandemic might aggravate poverty and inequality, and if not properly assessed would thwart the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

in many countries of the world, Nigeria inclusive. Considering the ugly impacts the COVID-19 would have on her economy, Nigeria in the first few months of the outbreakproactively adopted aggressive mitigating policies and organised her resources towards the reality of the COVID-19 based on the experience of other countries that suffered the early attacks of the global monster-like virus. The policy measure that readily came forth just like what was obtained in othercountries affected by the virus in other climes was the lockdown of the economy.The lockdown and containment measures taken by many countries have increased poverty levels among the world's informal economy workers in lowincome countries (Kauzya, 2020). The measures

according to ILO have also affected the informal workers in higher income economies: “in high-income countries, relative poverty levels among informal workers is estimated to increase as well as in upper-middle-income countries”. (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2020). With the lockdown, event centres such as beaches, malls, markets, hotels, etc, that attract funds to the government and informal sectors were closed to prevent the gathering of crowds. This measure was considered appropriate, because, it has the potential of curbing the transmission of the virus from one person to the other. The measure was no doubt a good step in the right direction, but, unfortunately, has little or no focus on the present and future socioeconomic costs.

The social-economic costs such as poverty, unemployment, disruption in the supply chain of goods and services, increased out-of-pocket expenditures and so on that suddenly accompanied the lockdown occasioned by the pandemic were so devastating, that it might take a longer time than envisaged to fade away from the Nigerian society. The pains that came with the lockdown will have long term ripple effects on all the sectors of the Nigerian economy. This is more painful, especially now that the country is gradually striving to break out of the economic recession of 2016, occasioned by low foreign exchange earnings to meet imports, an offshoot of the sudden crash in the global oil price. Interestingly, the macro effects of the lockdown on the economy have been documented (Obiakor, 2020). These include a fall in both aggregate supply and demand, a decline in exports and a rise in overall government spending. Furthermore, a lot has been said about the socioeconomic consequences of the lockdown measures, but a little has been said about the future effects of the lockdown and how to get the country out of the wood.

Therefore, the objectives of this study are to:

- i. Unveil critical debates on the prevailing lockdown policy measures undertaken by the government of Nigeria;
- ii. Imagine the future consequences of the policy measures; and
- iii. Proffer some plausible suggestions that will cushion the effects of the lockdown to jump-start the socio-economic recovery of the country in the short and the long run.

In view of the above objectives, the following research questions are pertinent:

- i. What are the critical debates on the lockdown policy measures undertaken by the government of Nigeria?
- ii. What are the short and long term effects of the lockdown policy measures on the socio-economic development of the Nigerian state?
- iii. What are the plausible solutions to the effects of the lockdown policy measures that could jump-start the socio-economic recovery of Nigeria in the short and long run?

To achieve the above objectives and provide answers to the research questions, the paper is organised in the following sections. Section one x-rays the relevant concepts such as COVID-19 and development. The second section is the critique of the policy using the present realities on the ground. Section three imagines the future consequences of the policy measures, and sections four and five dwell on the ways forward and the conclusion respectively.

### **Conceptual Issues**

#### **Historical Development of COVID-19**

At the end of 2019, COVID-19 pandemic appeared on the world scene in the shape of the novel coronavirus. The corona virus pandemic has significant implications for public governance. This emerging condition has quickly overwhelmed the world and most countries, developed and developing are vulnerable including Nigeria, Africa’s largest economy by Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the biggest country in Africa. (Moti & Vambe, 2020)

Covid-19 by nature is a respiratory disease, which emerged in Wuhan, in Hubei province, China in December, 2019 as a result of the novel virus identified as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Brüssow, 2020; Fauci, Lane & Redfield, 2020; Gentile & Abenavoli, 2020; Shang, Yang, Rao & Rao, 2020). With the rising numbers and evidence of person to person transmission and a handful of cases outside China the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared a “public health emergency of International Concern” to enhance proper coordination and accountability among nations (Zheng, 2020, Communist News Network [CNN], 2020). It is an illness

that is easily transmissible from one person to the other. Consequently, as of February 27, 2020, the virus was reported in about 47 countries, resulting in 82,294 cases with 2,804 deaths (World Health Organisation [WHO]2020). In March 2020, it spreads rapidly to over 177 countries (UNDP,2020). As at 17 of August 2020, a total of 21,842,782 cases and 777,279 deaths were recorded (worldmeter, 2020). This virus started like wildfire and spread in large number to different parts of the world with similar clinical characteristics. The symptoms of this respiratory illness include, among others, cough, headache, fever, diarrhea, pneumonia, vomiting, nausea, confusion, sore throat, etc (Chen, Zhou, Dong, Qu, Gong, Han. et al., 2020, Huang, Wang, Li, Ren, Zhao, Hu. et al. 2020, Guan, Ni, Hu, Liang WH, Ou, He et al 2020).

In preparation to combat the virus, if it eventually spread to Nigeria, the Federal government of Nigeria established the preparedness Group on 31 January 2020 (Ekiabor, 2020). Coincidentally, on the 31 January 2020, Nigeria was listed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) among the 13 African countries, namely, Algeria, Angola, Cote d' I Vore, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, as a high-risk country that may likely be infected by the virus (Ezigbo, 2020). Mboya (2020) opines that initially African countries were sitting pretty, smug in the false belief that Covid-19 was generally affecting people of Caucasian origin.

The index case of the coronavirus pandemic in Nigeria was announced on February 27, 2020, since then till date 162,762 cases have been confirmed, 151,532 patients discharged with 2056 deaths (March 22, 2021). Nigeria has a fragile health care system and experts predicted that the country could be overwhelmed by the pandemic (Wikipedia, 2021).

It was first identified in Lagos State, when an Italian citizen tested positive for the virus on the 27th February 2020 (Nigeria Centre for Disease Control [NCDC], 2020). Subsequently, a Nigerian citizen who had contact with the Italian was confirmed positive on the 9th of March, 2020 in Ewekoro, Ogun State of Nigeria (PM News, 2020). This presupposes that the COVID-19 outbreak in Nigeria is not unconnected to the worldwide pandemic caused by the same virus, Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2). As a further

step to discontinue the spread of the virus, the Nigerian government swung into action by enforcing surveillance at the International Airport in the following five states, namely, Enugu, Lagos, Rivers, Kano and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) (Agency Report, 2020). These are major cities in Nigeria that attract a high influx of travellers in and out of the country, hence, high potential of enhancing the spread of the virus. Despite all these attempts, the reality eventually dawned on Nigeria, which stimulated the introduction of several measures such as cancellation of flights and gatherings that are official, social and religious in places like Church, Mosque, banks, offices, beach, malls, schools and airport to curb the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. The impacts of these measures on the development of the Nigerian state were/are negatively enormous in the short and long run because the places and activities locked down are paramount to the development of the Nigerian state. The locked-down of these activity centres became necessary given that the spread of the virus could be curtailed when people are disallowed from coming in contact with one another (Harvard Health Publishing, 2020). In furtherance to curbing the spread of the virus, the Federal Government of Nigeria restricted entry into Nigeria for travellers from countries that were already recording 1000 cases and above with effect from 21 March 2020, for an initial period of 4 weeks. These countries, according to Busari and Adebayo (2020) were 13 in number, and they are China, Italy, Iran, South Korea, Spain, Japan, France, Germany, the United States, Norway, United Kingdom (UK), Netherlands and Switzerland. In quick succession, the Federal Government of Nigeria banned, with effect from 30 March 2020 the movement in and out of two states, namely, Lagos and Ogun and the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria where cases of the virus were recorded, for an initial period of 14 days. The Governors of the 36 states under the aegis of Nigeria Governors' Forum also met via teleconferencing and agreed to implement inter-state lockdown across the federation for an initial period of 14 days to curb the spread of the virus from state to state (Olaniyi, 2020). As promising as the above measures are toward curbing the spread of the virus, they have their attendant negative consequences to the development of the Nigerian state. The consequences are unravelled in the subsequent section titled the critique of the present.

## Development

There is no one-size-fits-all or a generalised definition of the concept of development. Infact, the definition of the concept is impressionistic. Different scholars look at the concept from different perspectives depending on their backgrounds. According to Matowanyka, (1991) and Abuiyada (2018), the term “development” has various meanings to different people and can be explained in different contexts. For instance, the development needs of a starving population must be different from those where there is sufficient nutrition. Rostow (1971) defines the concept of development drawing his insights from the work of a renowned biologist, Charles Darwin’s process of evolutionary succession in stages. Transferring knowledge from the work of Darwin, Rostow defines development as a process where human society metamorphoses from a traditional stage until they reach a western industrialised civilization consumption model, which is considered unique and universal (Soares and Quintella, 2008). The preceding definition belongs to the realm of scholars that always see the concept of development fundamentally as “being like the developed countries of the world”. However, development might be seen differently from a real sense of the word. From this perspective, Ribero (2005) defines development as a state, a process, well-being, progress, economic and human growth or ecological balance. Similarly, Michael Todaro, a Development Economist cited in (Rashid, n:d) defines development as not solely an economic event, but rather a multi-dimensional process encompassing reorganisation and reorientation of entire economic and social system. The social and economic indicators that development focuses on are education, health, welfare and Gross Domestic Products, etc. Developmental objectives inherent in the preceding definitions include making available food, education, shelter, health, protection, improvement in the level of living and income through social, political and economic systems and institutions that promote human dignity and respect.

The concept of development as can be deduced from the above definition is very vital to all the facets of human society, especially the social and economic dimensions of the human beings. The success of the social and economic structure of human society is determined ultimately in terms of how they affect human lives. The improvement of the living conditions of human beings is

entirely the function of the social and economic activities, which are integral part of the concept of development. Hence, this paper dwells on the extent the lockdown measures impact on the socioeconomic activities in Nigeria during the COVID-19 pandemic with the aim of critiquing the policy measures using the present circumstances and suggesting better ways of cushioning the impacts in the near future.

## Critiquing Lockdown Policy Measure

The COVID-19 lockdown policy measures were instituted to prevent the spread of the virus in Nigeria. The policy measures as discussed above were unmatched steps taken by the government to prevent the spread of the virus which could have affected a lot of Nigerians and incidentally, high morbidity and mortality rate, but at the other extreme, the measures have their adverse consequences on the development of the Nigerian state. Given their real and perceived negative consequences, this section attempts a critique of the policy measures with intent to suggest some social-economic recovery framework for the system.

In the first instance, the advent of COVID-19 and the attendant lockdown policy measures have prompted the downward revision of the GDP projections for most states in Nigeria, and this has consequential effects on both internal and external demand and supply (Akanni and Chukwudi, 2020). Social distancing as one of the policy measures from the demand side forces people to stay at home. This further reduces the amount of money spent by individuals and groups of individuals. On the whole, the consumption rate declines. On the supply side, factories are folding up in major industrial cities in Nigeria due to lack of sales from the limited goods produced, thereby leading to a reduction in the production of goods and services, and invariably, leading to sharp declines in the circulation of goods and services (Hassan Wuyo, 2020). The consequential implication of the above scenarios on national development is that the decline in the supply of goods and services triggered panic buying, and by extension instigated geometric rising of prices of items in the market and incidentally high inflation rate in the economy.

Also, considering the rapidly changing situation and high uncertainty, growth forecasts are constantly being updated in most African countries including Nigeria, unfortunately downward (see Table 1). It must be noted

that a recession in Nigeria and several African countries the first in 25 years, is now likely, with rippling effects on already high poverty numbers (Beegle and Christiaensen, 2019, OCED, 2020).

Similarly, unemployment, which has been the major problem of the Nigerian state has been further worsened due to the lockdown policy of the government. This ugly situation is already taking place in the formal and the

**Table 1. Forecasts of COVID-19 impacts on Africa's GDP growth**

<b>Table 1. Forecasts of COVID-19 impacts on Africa's GDP growth</b>	
<b>Institution and Date</b>	<b>Growth Prospect of Africa's GDP</b>
African Development Bank, 3 April 2020 (Adesina, 2020)	Projected GDP growth contraction of between 0.7 and 2.8 percentage points in 2020.
IMF Regional Economic Outlook: Sub-Saharan Africa, 15 April 2020 (IMF, 2020)	Growth in sub-Saharan Africa in 2020 is projected at 1.6%, the lowest level on record, a downward revision of 5.2 percentage points compared to six months ago.
UNECA April 2020 (ECA, 2020)	Africa's GDP growth prospects are likely to drop from 3.2% in 2019 to between 1.8% and -2.6% in 2020 depending on policy response.
McKinsey, 6 April 2020 (McKinsey, 2020)	Africa's GDP growth will decrease by three to eight percentage points, from 3.9% in 2019 to between 0.4% and -3.9% in the worst case scenario.
World Bank, 9 April 2020 (World Bank, 2020)	GDP growth in Sub-Saharan Africa could fall sharply from 2.4% in 2019 to between -2.1% to -5.1% in 2020.
Oxford Economics, 26 March 2020 (Oxford Economics, 2020)	The coronavirus-related knock to economic growth in Africa's three largest economies alone could affect the continent's GDP growth from 3.8% to 2.8%.
Brookings Institute, 18 March 2020 (Coulibaly and Madden, 2020)	Africa's GDP growth is expected to fall from 3.5% in 2019 to between 2.5% and 1.5% in 2020.
African Union Commission, 6 April 2020 (AUC, 2020)	Forecasts show a negative growth from 3.4% to between -0.8% to -1.1%.

Source: Authors' compilation.

informal (street traders, taxi drivers, tradesmen, and artisans to food vendors and hairdressers) sectors in Nigeria (Obiakor,2020). Informal workers in Nigeria are especially more vulnerable because they have no employment-related protection and no social safety nets. This is very significant because the informal economy represents 41 percent of GDP and employs 53 percent of Nigeria's active labor force. The domestic outbreak of COVID-19 is pushing up spending on public health, social protection, and economic support measures designed to address market disruptions (World Bank Group, 2020).

In the informal sector, for instance, Lagos State Government banned not less than 14,000 and 50,000 bikes and tricycles respectively (Ogunpolu, 2020). This action was timely and in the right direction to make social distancing policy effective. However, the same action triggered sudden unemployment, with the potential of instigating poverty and other social vices capable of making the state unstable and ungovernable to drive socioeconomic development. Access to food, shelter and health services elude this category of people and their family as their fortune to access them is the function of their daily interactions with their customers. This is at the backdrop of the fact that the last unemployment report released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) before the pandemic already portrays a danger to the Nigerian economy. The Bureau ranks Nigeria "21st among the 181 countries with an unemployment rate of about 23.1%" (Ceseeafrika.org, 2020). The emergence of the pandemic with the lockdown policy is already threatening people who have been gainfully employed over the years. Many workers in Nigeria may face one form of unemployment or the other. It may be total unemployment or under-employment. In addition to the instance cited from Lagos state of Nigeria, the Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), for instance, notified its staff via a circular with ref number FAAN/HO/ADMIN/2020/05, that from May 2020, it will slash staff salary due to the dwindling revenue generation amidst COVID-19 pandemic (<https://www.operanewsapp.com/ng>, 2020). It was necessary that this measure was taken to ensure the survival of the organisation, however, the danger inherent in this action is the fact that many staff may decide to leave the organisation on their own, because with the fractional

salary, many will not be able to cope with their responsibilities.

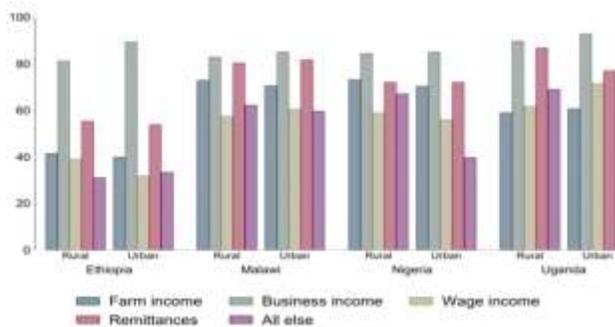
In the same vein, Access Bank Nigeria PLC planned to lay off 75% of its staff amidst the coronavirus pandemic or embark on a pay cut by 40 percent instead of outright workforce downsizing (Premium Time, 2020). This measure was proposed by the bank due to the economic crisis posed by the lockdown. In the nutshell, the cost-cutting approach of the bank will enable it to achieve greater efficiency and ensure continuity in running a profitable business after the pandemic. However, the measure will hit hard on the livelihood of the affected families. The timely intervention of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) mitigated and minimized the negative impacts the layoff would have had on the affected staff and the economy on the whole. Access Bank eventually had an agreement with the CBN to suspend the staff lay off until further notice.

Conversely, the Punch Newspaper at the end of May 2020, laid off 40 staff because advert which is one of the major sources of income to the company were not forthcoming as it used to be. Hence, overhead costs became extremely difficult to maintain (Ayode, 2020). The incidence has uncountable consequences on the affected people such as inability to pay bills and lack of resources to manage family, their purchasing power dropped due to inadequate money in circulation. With regards to the resultant unemployment occasioned by the lockdown, Oruonye, Idris & Ahmed (2020) maintained without mincing words that the informally employed were more negatively affected. This assertion is not far from the reality on ground because most people that belong to this sector depend largely on daily income as could be seen from the preceding paragraphs above. The lockdown affected them radically as the income flow was shortened or completely wiped off. The accumulated incomes before the lockdown were exhausted. As the lockdown was relaxed they have to start all over again. Some of the impacts of the lockdown on this category of people were failure to extend helping hands to their extended family members that have been under their welfare package, and consequently poor feeding, etc.

Corroborating the foregoing analysis, a working paper published by World Bank (2020) on the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 in Four African Countries (Nigeria, Malawi, Uganda and Ethiopia) shows the the

percentage of households that have lost income from five sources, namely, farm income, business income, wage income, remittances and other sources as presented in the graph below as at November, 2020. The paper found Nigeria, Uganda and Malawi as severely affected. From the graph below, business income of households was the most severely affected in the four country, and the least affected in the countries study was wage income. This was probably because employees worked from home.

**Fig. 1 Socioeconomic Impacts of Covid-19 in Four African Countries.**



**Source: WorldBank, 2020, Socioeconomic Impacts of Covid-19 in Four African Countries.**

Closely related to the unemployment dimension caused by the lockdown measures were damages unleashed on the agricultural sector of the economy. Unfortunately, the pandemic escalated into the farming season, and the total lockdown restricted movement of the farmers, thereby threatening food security. Consequent upon this, farmers found it very difficult to dispose of their products to other farmers and also access needed supplies from other farmers. The southern part of Nigeria, for instance, depends on wheat and grain from the North, whereas, the North on the hand depends on root crops from the south. The lockdown distorted the supply and the demand chain of agricultural products. In the long run, the food supply will be in limited quantity, which will definitely affect feeding and eventually spelling doom for healthy living for the citizens of the country. This has already started manifesting in the rising prices of food which was evident in the increase in the food inflation rate of 15% as of April 2020 compared with 14.7% in December 2020 (Pricewaterhouse Cooper [PWC], 2020). Besides, export earnings from agricultural products depleted automatically due to the lockdown (PWC, 2020).

Apart from the disruption of the agricultural products supply chain, the restriction on the interstate movement might have also affected some people who go for a health check-up in another state due to lack of facilities in hospitals within their states of residence. The lack of access and facilities worsens their already deteriorated health conditions and eventually many deaths were recorded in some parts of the country. Izundu (2020) affirmed this from an interview he had with Dr. Nagoma Sadiq, who works at the Aminu Kano Hospital in a BBC News that the count of death in Kano state was alarming and not unconnected with the lockdown and a reduction in the number of health facilities in the state. The consequence is that many people died due to lack of treatment. This invariably means that human capital supply will be low in the near future. This will tell much on the production chain as many hands will be lost due to death.

Closed related to the above, is that the interstate ban affected the welfare ability of many states negatively as they eventually found it extremely difficult to cater for their citizens and accommodate residents from other states. The inability to cope with the daily welfare of their citizens prompted them to embark on their peculiar internal lockdown policy measures like the repatriation of some residents to their home states. A typical example was the repatriation of the Almanjiris from one state to the other. Almanjiris is a system of Islamic education practiced in northern Nigeria. The system encourages parents to leave parental responsibilities to the attached Islamic schools (Wikipedia). In an expanded form, Yusha'u; Tsafe; Babangida; Lawal, (2013) defines it as any young person who begs on the streets and does not attend secular school. In whichever way it is seen, the action taken against them is condemnable. The Nasarawa state government, for instance, sent 788 Almanjiris to their parents in different states in Nigeria on the ground that the parents would take better and proper care of them (Vanguard, 2020, Punch, 2020). Odama (2020) affirmed the foregoing when he reported that Taraba and Bauchi state governments rejected the Almanjiris repatriated from Nasarawa state. The repatriation during the interstate ban was condemned because it translates to defilement of the nationwide lockdown. Lockdown forbids the interstate movement. However, some states in Nigeria violated this by repatriating the Almanjiris from

one part of the country to the other infringing on the right of this set of people. The International Human Rights law states that the government must protect the right of the people to the highest attainable standard of health, right to social security, an adequate standard of living, including food and nutrition (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Unfortunately, the government of Nigeria failed to live up to the expectation to maximize the human right of the Almajiris, but rather expose them to more danger by deporting them from one state to the other within their own country, which in itself is against the law of the land. Inherent in the repatriation is the inevitable danger to the safety of the receiving states as the infection rates will also escalate. This is because the movement was carried out without a coordinated test carried out on the Almajiris, hence many tested positive in their receiving states (Premium Time, 2020). The migrants will also constitute a burden on the existing overstretched facilities and other public services in the receiving states.

Another stringent measure adopted that affected and will continue to affect the socio-economic development of the Nigerians was the closure of the educational institution like the unity schools on the 26 March 2020 (Aluko, 2020). The school calendars have been distorted. This creates an unexpected extra year(s) for the student. The extra year(s) translates to extra expenditure on feeding, school materials and so on for the parents and the government. These constitute expenditures that were not planned for and would have been utilized in other areas to improve the standard of living of the family and the society at large. Apart from the foregoing, the closure of the school has some consequences on the children that are dependent on the school feeding programme of the federal government, especially those from not well-to-do families. Their food intake would be low within the period. This may lead to malnutrition, which may expose them to low immunity and incidentally sickness.

In addition to the foregoing, students were cut off from face-to-face teaching from their teachers. Interestingly, the government tried to institute e-learning to compensate for the time loss of learning in the schools. However, the facilities to boost this measure are in short supply in Nigerian schools (Adeoye, Adanikin & Adanikin, 2020). Where the facilities exist, the students were unable to hook on in their various homes during the lockdown due to the high poverty rate in the country. The foregoing assertion is closely related

to the documented existing body of knowledge which shows that as much as 40.1% of Nigerians live below the national poverty threshold of N137, 430 (\$354.66) per annum, which translates to N376.52 per day (less than \$1) (Proshare, 2020). This suggests that an average Nigerian household cannot afford the financial requirements to acquire virtual learning technology tools like laptops, iPads, internet-enhanced mobile phones and data expenses which would have facilitated their connection to e-learning. It also implies that even where the facilities might be available, the purchase of data becomes a barrier. This is coupled with the epileptic and incessant fluctuation in the electricity supply. Thus, many parents resigned to the fate of home-based-learning which was not effective. Rural schools were hardest hit as they could not have their teaching online like some few opportune urban counterparts due to the lack of ICT facilities and data bundles. Moreover, it is not all those residing in the urban centres, that were able to afford to pay for data to engage their children in online teaching due to loss of income occasioned by the lockdown that restricted them from going about their daily earnings. A social investment programme like school-to-school, immunization programmes, etc delivered to the pupils in nursery and primary school were also disrupted. Consequently, the morbidity rate for children related sickness like measles, polio, etc, would also increase.

Related to the above in the area of education was the investment in mission-critical research on vaccines and medicines to cure and prevent COVID-19, which was another policy measure in the right direction. Federal Government of Nigeria approved over N200 million, through the Tertiary Education Trust Fund to sponsor some corona virus research proposals, mainly from universities and the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) (Umeh, 2020, tetfundadmin, 2020). This approach would have no doubt enhanced treatment options. However, research enabling factors like well-equipped laboratory and library in the Nigerian university that could have facilitated the execution of the research are lacking and inadequate. The implication of the foregoing is that money would have been released for some individuals to embark on researches that will end up not producing any tangible results, thereby, increasing the costs of managing the pandemic. Resources committed to the

purported unfruitful researches should have been diverted to other sectors of the economy to boost development activities. The so-called “mission-critical” researches crippled research in social science, humanities and other critical areas. This suggests that the acquisition of knowledge in the abandoned areas and their contributions to the development of the Nigerian state was halted during the lockdown. Additionally, physical national and international conferences were completely shutdown due to the lockdown. This invariably means that knowledge dissemination, networking opportunities for collaboration and job-seeking were equally shut down. Though some scholars resorted to virtual conferences, however, virtual conferences have fewer advantages, especially in the area of networking and informal interactions that could stimulate a robust and cordial relationship among scholars.

In an attempt to cushion the effects of the lockdown measures, the government of Nigeria made it a priority to inject reasonable financial and other resources for the management of the pandemic and the resultant lockdown policy measures. According to Human Rights Watch (2020), the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria specifically stated when announcing the lockdown that the government would put in place measures to “preserve the livelihoods of workers and business owners to ensure their families get through this very difficult time in dignity.” Towards implementing the foregoing pronouncement, the President of Nigeria, promised conditional cash transfers, distribution of food ration, to be specific, 77,000 metric tons of food to the poorest and most vulnerable households. Despite the huge resources injected into the management of the pandemic crisis, little or none of the packages reached the poor to cushion the effect of the lockdown in Nigeria (Agbede, Anazia, Awodipe, Thomas-Odia, Diamond, Adeowo, Ezeilo, 2020). It was reported that the Federal government planned to use the National Social Register of the Poor and Vulnerable Households set up in 2016 by the Buhari Administration containing 2,644,493 households to effect cash payment of 20,000 Naira (US\$ 52) for four months to fight poverty (Business Day, 2020, Human Right Watch, 2020). No doubt, this kind gesture of the government would have alleviated the hardship of the poor and the vulnerable to some extent. However, it has attracted criticism that the 2,644,493 poor and vulnerable households identified in

the National Social Register of 2016 were far less than over 90 million Nigerians living in abject poverty or less than \$1.90 a day (Oriola 2020). It was in response to the inadequacy or partial coverage of the National Social Register that the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria deemed it fit to expand the 2.6 million households to 3.6 million. This was still a small figure compared with the quantum of people who are poor in Nigeria. Apart from the aforementioned shortcoming of the cash transfer, details with regards to who benefited from the cash palliative programme as well as the parameter used to reach out to the beneficiaries were not made known (Agbede, Anazia, Awodipe, Thomas-Odia, Diamond, Adeowo, Ezeilo, 2020).

Another interesting measure introduced to cushion the effect of the lockdown was the announcement by the central bank of Nigeria to provide credit facilities to the tune of 50 billion Naira (US\$ 128.5 million) to support households and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise affected by the COVID-19 (Central Bank of Nigeria [CBN] (2020). This fund was disbursed by The Nigeria Incentive-based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL) Microfinance Bank on behalf of the CBN (Anaeto, 2020). From the arrangement, a household could get up to 3 million Naira loan (US\$ 7, 700). As fantastic as this arrangement sounds, it was clouded with stringent conditions that did not augur well with the economic development of the beneficiaries and the Nigerian state at large. For instance, conditions such as the provision of collateral, a holder of bank account, an initial five percent interest rate and nine percent after the first quarters of 2021 were attached (CBN, 2020). The issue is that some of the conditions will not help matters, for instance, many poor households in Nigeria may not have a proof of collateral such as personal property, less than 30 percent have a bank account and the hidden interests charged to the loan are highly discouraging. The final option left for the poor Nigerians is to forfeit the benefits that come with the credit facility and sink more into poverty, a bane to national development.

In addition to the above, the Federal Government of Nigeria directed on the 23rd March 2020 that civil servants on grade level 12 and below should stay and work from home and grade level 13 and above should continue to stay and perform their duties in their offices, but should limit the number of visitors they receive

(Yakubu, 2020, Oyero, 2020 ). Interestingly, the development was intended to make the policy of social distancing effective and cater for the welfare and safety of Nigerians from the dreaded virus. On the other hand, the policy increased out-of-pocket expenditure on healthcare for Nigerians. This occurred majorly because skeletal services were rendered during the lockdown in many government hospitals due to the directive that “only grade level 13 and above should be in the office and should reduce the number of visitors to their offices”. The hospital personnels leveraged on the directive to attend to a few patients daily. Patients that were unfortunate to be attended to resort to seeking service of the private hospitals. This is so appalling because the public hospitals host the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) of many Nigerians. With little or no choices left, patronizing private hospitals with their orientation for outrageous charges become the option of last resort for many Nigerians. Incidentally, catering for other household necessities becomes difficult, as the available money has to be diverted for the healthcare needs of the households in the private hospitals.

Another area where the lockdown measure in Nigeria was unreservedly criticized was the decision taken by the Federal government of Nigeria on the 9th of April to grant pardon and clemency to inmates in custodian centres across the country, formerly prisons, but now christened as Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS), to maintain social distancing among the prisoners (Chiedu, 2020). Prisoners are known to live, work, eat and even sleep closely to one another within a very strict and restricted close range. Considering the fact that the arrangement will aggravate the spread of the COVID-19 among prisoners, the Federal government of Nigeria decided to decongest the Nigerian prisons. Thus, 7,813 inmates were freed across the country from correctional centres (Pulse, 2020). As much as this was a step in the right direction to curb the spread of the COVID-19, inmates were released without proper rehabilitation and the inherent danger in the action taken by the government is that the crime rate will increase in the society.

In addition, there are some key challenges to the response to the pandemic according to Moti and Vambe (2020) which include “poor community awareness, ignorance and denial of the pandemic;--cultural and religious conservatism; state-centric and uncoordinated response:

On the basis of responsiveness, accountability, transparency and inclusiveness of government responses, the national parliament has been more responsive and proactive than the executive. However, the indefinite suspension of parliamentary legislative activities to curtail the spread of the coronavirus robbed it of an opportunity to hold the executive accountable;-- state – society trust deficit;-- limited public health facilities and personnel – including laboratories and isolation centres;-- increasing attrition of health service providers;-- overwhelming informal economy, poverty and exclusion”.

Furthermore, the lockdown hits harder on the poor in the rural areas as the domestic remittances from the urban migrants to their relatives in the rural areas were halted given that the income of those who provide social support to them reduces as a result of the quarantine restriction. This assertion is in tandem with the survey of British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC] (2020) which reported that a total of 42% of people surveyed in Nigeria have reported losing their jobs during the coronavirus pandemic, while 79% reported a loss in income. This situation worsened the shortage of or lack of public transfers from the governments at various levels to the people in the rural areas. Therefore, in an attempt to reduce the plights of the rural dwellers, the government decided to transfer cash to the citizens conditionally and unconditionally (Inyang, 2020). But the question is how sufficient were the cash transferred? How many people were covered? What were the criteria used to make the transfers? There were public outcries in many places that the governments were selective in their approach to the conditional cash transferred. For instance, the Oyo State Government condemned the cash palliative on the ground that 80% of the cash transferred were wasted and 20% were meagre and inconsequential, and challenge the FG to provide the parameter used to identify the vulnerable and poorest households in Oyo State of Nigeria (Ige, 2020, Punch, 2020).

### **Imagining the Future Consequences of the Lockdown Policy Measure**

This section discusses and lays more emphasis on the consequences of the lockdown policy measures the Government of Nigeria adopted to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in the short and long term on the development of the Nigerian state. So many issues have

been raised and critiqued in the foregoing section. Some of these issues will be revisited to enable us envisage their possible consequences on the development of the Nigerian state in the future.

The monumental loss of income during the lock period can severely restrict the ability of poor households to invest in the education of their children in Nigeria in the near future. This will have negative effects on the outcomes of human capital that may be needed in the production and rendering of services for the country in the long run in Nigeria. Apart from the foregoing, these categories of people will constitute social vices in the Nigerian society. Out of frustration, they will engage in different types of crimes. This will not be ruled out because there is an adage that “an idle mind is a devil’s workshop.” Again, due to limited ability to pay children school fees, many will resort to a sudden decision to relocate to the village, thereby constituting as an additional burden to the existing limited facilities on the already abandoned and forsaken remote areas of the country. Lost of jobs by the informal sector workers will also reduce the social support payment or the domestic remittances, which they provide from time to time to their family members in the rural areas. Many informal sector workers in the city will in the near future leave for their hometown in search of a social safety net and basic sustenance, because the lockdown rescue packages by the government did not trickle down to them.

Alternatively, many in the near future would want to endure and stay in the city by taking the option of selling their productive assets due to the loss of a job to finance family responsibility like school fees. When productive assets are sold, further production and lifetime earnings will cease. The proceeds from the sales will only cushion the socioeconomic quagmire they are encountering momentarily, but will definitely plunge them further into chronic poverty. The larger society will always be at the receiving end, because when the proceeds from the sales of the assets are exhausted, the affected individuals may take to other illegitimate activities to make ends meet. All these put together will invariably retard the development of the Nigerian state.

Furthermore, food security is already threatened in Nigeria. The future of food supply is already bleak because the lockdown spanned into the farming season. The lockdown restricted movement of persons and

seedlings from one part of the country to the other. The interruption of the seedling supply chain will hamper the future agricultural harvest. The resultant effects will be a shortage of food supply in the near future. This will lead to an increase in the prices of food items, which will eventually impact negatively on people within the lower-income bracket. The income of the farmers will also decline due to the reduction in agricultural activities occasioned by a disruption in the supply of agricultural inputs. The country at large may have no choice but to resort to the importation of food items in the future. The adverse effects will be a colossal capital flight from the country, thereby sinking the country further into economic dependency, which is antithetic to the development of any nation.

Besides, unemployment will soar high in the future. Many organisations in Nigeria are currently laying off their staff in the formal and informal sectors and many are also threatening to lay off their staff in the future. Therefore, the unemployment rate that will be orchestrated by the lockdown in Nigeria will be high in the future. Olaniyi, Iloani & Usman (2020) affirmed this when they quoted Vice President of Nigeria, Yemi Osinbajo who predicted: “that unemployment may rise to 33.6 percent, which means a total of 39.4 million people will be jobless by the end of 2020 if the country fails to take prompt pre-emptive measures”.

### **The Way Forward**

From the preceding section, it becomes clearer that the predicted economic and social costs of the lockdown will be significant in the future, therefore, it becomes imperative to suggest some broader set of the strategic frameworks of intervention that can help mitigate such costs. This paper, therefore, suggests that acritical policy interventionist approaches must be put in place to cushion the devastating effects of the lockdown policy measures. Given the above, this paper suggests the adoption of some socioeconomic recovery programmes. Some of these programmes include, but are not limited to the following.

a. Reductions in the price of some essential commodities like food, fuel, etc as palliative is a *sin qua non*. The government should put in place Commodity Price Regulatory framework to regulate prices of commodities. The price of the affected commodity can be gradually increased when the economy recovers from

pandemic shocks. Also, a food distribution initiative of the government should be made a regular exercise even after the pandemic has ceased, especially in the areas that were worst hit by the pandemic.

b. Suspension of school fees after the COVID 19 and improving the teachers' welfare will encourage teachers and students to be committed when schools resume. Due to the loss of job or reduction in the income of the parents, the government of Nigeria should intervene by suspending the school fees of the students. This may appear fairly difficult in the private schools, but if the government step in with some financial assistance, especially to those schools that are up-to-date in the payment of their taxes, the welfare of the teachers and the students will be adequately taken care of. Besides, the government should intensify school feeding programmes in schools as this will impact positively on student retention, learning, and nutrition.

c. Regular grants, soft loans, tax holiday, waiver, etc, should be extended to the informal sector after the COVID-19 as this will support their survival and discourage plans to lay off workers in the future. It will also help them to be in business and sustain their daily earnings, instead of resorting to relocating from the city to the village which will amount to an additional burden to the villagers who are already in deep-seated abject poverty before COVID-19 and thereby aggravating the already existing underdevelopment in the rural areas. Albania and the Dominican Republic used these interventionist approaches. For instance, Albania deferred the tax submission deadline from March 1st to June 1st and in the Dominican Republic, firms that suspended operations due to the COVID-19 attracted a subsidy of RD\$8,500 per formal worker. Nigerian government should emulate such a kind gesture.

d. The government of Nigeria should defer charges to salary deducted like the payroll tax, FG housing loan, etc in the formal sectors for a reasonable period after the COVID-19. This will enable workers in the formal sector to recuperate, and this will go a long way in improving their standard of living.

e. The government should create job opportunities that will accommodate jobless Nigerians that would have inevitably lost their job due to the lockdown embarked upon by the government. Agricultural programmes that will bring large hectares of land under cultivation in the

774 local governments in Nigeria should be encouraged. This will provide direct and indirect social and economic assistance opportunities for millions of Nigerians.

f. Government should also ensure that response measures include governments cutting unnecessary overhead as well as recurrent expenditures and ensuring judicious use of all loans, grants and donations.

#### **Conclusion:**

The foregoing has demonstrated that the COVID-19 has ramifications beyond the health sector but affects the entire economy that has suffered major contraction besides the recession that preceded the outbreak. Thus, decisions to be taken involve multi-departmental and multisectoral collaboration. (Mkhize & Reddy, 2020). The paper reveals that the lockdown measures introduced to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria is a step in the right direction, because of the potentials inherent in them to curb the spread of the virus from one person to the other. However, the paper reveals that the socioeconomic pains such as poverty, sudden and radical review and changes in expected revenues and expenditures of most states in Nigeria, unemployment, fall in demand and disruption in the supply of goods and services, increase in out-of-pocket expenditure on health services and the closure of the educational system which are fallouts of the policy are highly devastating to the development of the Nigerian state at the present. The paper, therefore, concludes that the pains are likely to persist and cause more damages to the national development, if socioeconomic recovery programmes that will guarantee socioeconomic inclusion are not put in place. Consequently, the paper suggests some plausible socioeconomic inclusive remedies that will facilitate socio-economic recovery of the Nigerian state such as job creation, investment in social programmes to support the poorest and the vulnerable members in Nigeria, provision of social amenities for the masses, decreased interest rate and provision of emergency loan packages to support businesses in financial difficulty. The study concludes by arguing that a stitch in time saves nine, therefore, every attempt to procrastinate putting in place endogenous socio-economic plans that would nip in the bud the effects of the lockdown policy measures stands the chance of plummeting the country socioeconomic environments into dangerous disasters and mess worse than the pandemic itself in the long run.

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## Interplay of Gender and Executive Stress: A Review

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**ABSTRACT :** *With the ever-increasing competition and desire to stay ahead, the levels of executive stress are on the rise. Working executives have to be constantly on their toes to meet not only their professional needs but also their personal ones. Stress-related symptoms or health issues can vary among individuals. Although members of different genders work in the same sector or profession but they are exposed to different types of work demands and stresses. Several studies suggest that stress-inducing factors for females and their coping mechanisms are different than that of males and, therefore, it can be stated that there are, to some extent, gender differences in the ways of dealing with stress. This research paper is focused on the exploration of these issues.*

**Keywords:** Stress, Executives, Gender difference

### Introduction

The root of the word ‘stress’ lies in the Latin word ‘stringer’, which means to ‘draw tight’. Technically, the word ‘stress’ was used for the first time by Hans Selye (1974). He described stress as “the force, pressure or strain exerted upon a material object or person, which/who resists these forces and attempts to maintain its original state” (p.14).

A certain amount of stress is experienced by every individual but executives have additional stress related to their jobs or profession. Longer working hours, combined with innumerable demands of the job, newer and more complex technologies, performance parameters, downsizing, job insecurity, tremendous workload and work culture are the prime stressors in an executive’s life.

Cooper & Hens (2015) have mentioned the same fact in their report. As per their work, executives from developing countries suffer from work overload, time pressure, fatigue due to deadlines, long working hours and lack of training. This further brings out a number of

other issues like health, work-life balance and poor performance.

**1.1 Objectives of the study:** Although work-life stress is an issue of common concern for the working professionals, it has got greater impact on women executive as they are supposed to carry out the burden of dual responsibilities. The paper aims to explore the causes of stress and its symptoms for female executives and to identify role of gender in the level of stress, its causes and coping strategies.

**1.2 Scope of the study:** It is a descriptive research paper based on in depth review of literature and to qualitatively justify the issues raised here. The study involved the extensive coverage of literature to bring out the difference in the causes of stress and coping mechanism for male and female working executives.

**1.3 Significance of the study:** It is observed that there is increased participation of women in main workforce in India. According to the World Bank (1992) Indian women make up one-third of the labour force. Nowadays she is not only the homemaker but also the breadwinner.

Stress has been a prime concern that leads to certain problems in the lives of women professionals. Factors affecting the women executives are long working hours, tight schedule of work, dual responsibility, etc. These factors may additionally prove to cause extraordinary dilemma among women executives. The study is important not only for the female executives but the organizations as well so that they can frame customised policies/remedies for managing the stress of their employees keeping in mind the gender diversity of their workforce.

### **I. CAUSES OF EXECUTIVE STRESS**

Work-related stress is also said to be the cause for the rise in job related sicknesses and accidents especially in developing nations which are undergoing rapid industrialization. Additionally, due to globalization, more and more personnel are being absorbed by or are interacting with multinational firms (MNCs). International communication networks that merge satellite, wireless technology and the Internet have resulted in the emergence of novel work styles like tele working, remote working, virtual networking, etc. which have resulted in the constant availability of individual on the job. The stress experienced at this new style workplaces has been described by Lessard and Baldwin (1999). They have explored the increasing cross-cultural chaos in organizations due to cross cultural work force further leading to work-related stress. Employees are likely to experience stress if they feel absence of motivation and lack of social interaction with other employees. The other common causes for work-induced stress include uncertainty about the function employees are expected to perform, contradictory anticipations in context to performance, and poor interpersonal relations with colleagues. Burnout has become a common phenomenon due to prolonged exposure to stress.

‘A study on Job stress & the Buffering effects of Supervisors’ by Cummins (1990) asserted role conflicts, role ambiguity, heavy workload, underutilization of skill, insufficient resources and lack of participation as main causes of job stress. Dastur (1990) has mentioned work group climate & powerlessness as dominant causes of stress for Indian managers. Prejudice, discrimination, tight work schedule and unnecessary interference in work are considered as main sources of stress by McDonald & Korabi (1991). Same view has been

maintained by Rajeshwari (1992) where structural rigidity, poor physical working conditions are identified as major stressors. Study undertaken by John Schoper (1993) supported the fact that physical environment as well as social causes are the main stressors. He also propagated that 75% of the health issues are due to stress related changes in one’s lifestyle.

ACTU (2005) identified the causes of stress as lack of communication & consultation, increased workload, job insecurity, lack of restructuring, poor working conditions, insufficient training, inadequate staff & resources and long working hours.

Excessive noise, poor illumination, safety hazards, badly designed office space, lack of privacy, poor quality of air are the causes of stress mentioned by Evans & Johns (2000). Heavy responsibilities, lack of support, role overload, lack of creative environment, personality misfit, fatigue, lower self-esteem, etc. are identified as stressors among executives (Mehta, 1996). In another study carried out by Sinha & Sinha (2018), role erosion, role overload and inter role distance were considered to be the main contributors towards the organizational role stress. It was further found that income and work experience also have significant impact on the stress level of the employees. Stress not only affects individual health but also their performance which indirectly affects the survival of organization. This is because, if efficient employees are not able to give their best for their organization due to stress, it would lead to fall in overall productivity of the organization in an increasingly competitive market (Singh, 2009). Twelve aspects identified by Srivastava and Singh (1996) that cause executive stress include doubts about the function to be enacted, disagreements pertaining to the role, group pressures, low revenues, low self-worth, being responsible for the performance of others, internal dissatisfaction, function overload, having limited power, tiring working conditions, unsatisfactory interpersonal relations with colleagues and limited involvement.

**III GENDER & CAUSES OF STRESS:** Women executive due to long working hours combined with familial responsibilities have become too stressful. It has been reiterated by Davidson and Cooper (1988). According to them work-family edge is the prime source of stress for female managers and specialists.

A research undertaken by Srivastava and Krishna (1997)

indicated that females who undertook part-time jobs had lower stress levels and enjoyed a better mental well-being as compared to females who had full time jobs. A study undertaken by Kumar and Murthy (1998), indicated that the most common stressors for female managers included office politics, disagreements at work and home, travelling to the place of work, absence of opportunities, issues at the place of work and issues pertaining to taking care of their kids. The major pressures that women managers encountered were worry, nervousness and tiredness, absence of focus, frustration and well-being.

Females are expected to be superwomen to cope with the competing demands or find other ways of handling the overload at work or at home (Gordon, et al, 1997). Okolo (1993) identified lack of role models of executive women due to their scarce presence in top managerial positions. Sophia J. Ali (1994) investigated the problems of women in career development. Most of the women employees were dissatisfied with career development programs and women were discriminated in career-development opportunities.

Twin roles of women cause tension and conflict due to the social structure which is still male dominant (Wentling, 1994). Home-work conflict is a source of stress for working women, as has been propagated by Ray et.al, (1994). They also found that social support from intra & extra organization sources would help individuals from such stress.

Gyllensten (2005) indicated that the level of stress of females is higher than men. She also mentioned the causes of female stress were mainly due to multiple roles, lack of career progress, discrimination, stereotyping, etc.

Tyagi and Sen (2000) discovered that women managers experienced more stress compared to their male counterparts and supervisors. Deosthalee (2000) found that male engineers experienced more stress compared to female engineers at the managerial level. No crucial variations in the stress level were discovered by Chattopadhyay and Dasgupta (1999) amongst female executives who were married as compared to female executives who were single.

A comparison of Indian and American female clerks indicated that the cause of stress amongst American clerks was absence of control/freedom while amongst Indian clerks was absence of a framework and clarity in

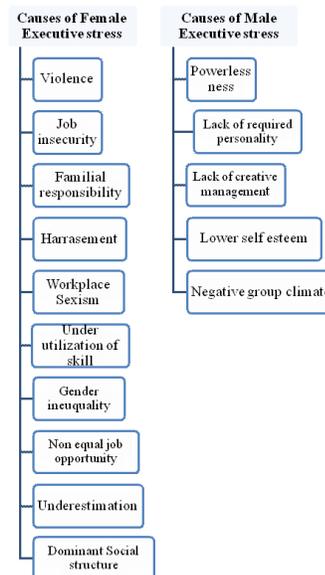
the job (Narayanan, Menon & Spector, 1999).

Jamali, et al. (1996), carried out a study to investigate the presence of glass ceiling type barriers in the Lebanese banking sector, based on the perceptions of Lebanese top and middle level women managers. The responses were collected through questionnaire from 61 top and middle level women managers of 12 different banks in Lebanon. It was found that the common perception of the glass ceiling theory was not found to be valid in Lebanese banks and it reflects progressive evolution of Lebanese banking sector over the past few decades.

The extent of interference from family was significantly higher in the earlier life-cycle stage than in the later stage. About two thirds of the women indicated that they intended to leave their job after second child, mainly due to the rising cost of child-care services. They received the minimal support from their supervisors and tended to cope with conflict using reactive role behavior and personal role redefinition strategies. Cause of stress among married women was found to be work-life imbalance in BPOs. More than two-third of the respondents stated that they experienced work-life imbalance primarily on account of interference of work with personal life (Gunavathy and Suganya, 1995)

Even though Male & Female have similar stress trigger, their responses to stress are not same because they are inextricably linked to gender.

**Fig.1 Causes of Female & Male Executive Stress**



(Source: on the basis of literature reviewed)

#### **IV IMPACT OF STRESS**

Survival in the VUCA world is adding to the stress of the working population. The ability of manage volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity differs from person to person and from members of one gender to another. Stress has been on the rise because of the drive to achieve and also due to the availability of hyper technology, virtual organizations, global competitions and consumerism. Higher work stress results in inflammatory responses to stress which is connected in cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, hypertension, and various other physiological and behavioural disorders. The same has been reported by Bhattacharya, S. (2006) in his article. He propounded that repeated stress causes extra burden for the heart, blood vessels and kidneys.

Stress doesn't only affect the physical and psychological health of the employees, but also impacts the productivity and functioning of an organization. In recent years executives are seen increasingly suffering from mental tensions, anxieties, stress, depression, frustrations etc. Changes at physiological, psychological or even behavioral levels could be regarded as consequences of stress. Severe stress can create confusion in comprehension of information. People may become emotionally numb and respond in a flat apathetic fashion to events around them. Stress can lead to deterioration in one's normal social relations as well. Stress may also contribute to poor academic performance, insomnia, drug abuse, excessive anxiety, nervousness, dejection and depression. Stress may cause physical illness such as asthma, hypertension, migraine, headache, ulcers, etc. (Greenberg, p 158).

#### **V MANAGING STRESS: THE COPING STRATEGIES**

An individual uses different types of coping strategies to tackle the stress. It plays a vital role in determining the impact of stress. Generally, there are two types of strategies i.e. problem- focused and emotion- focused (Parker & Ender, 1996). In a problem focused strategy, individuals try to modify the situation by changing either something in the environment or it's interaction with the environment. The objectives are to take a direct action, to collect information, to wait for perfect opportunity or to seek social support when required (Bishop, 1994). Whereas in emotion-focused strategies, the objective is

to to develop positive attitude, to accept the fact, to try to distract the mind of the stressful situation, try to ventilate distressing feelings & to seek support for emotional reason. Based on this theory different authors have asserted their views regarding coping strategies preferred by members of different genders.

Liu & Spector (2005) have propagated two kinds of social support i.e. emotional & instrumental. Women, especially, seek emotional social support because it provides encouragement and acceptance. Study by Underwood (2000) also supports the similar view that most of the women prefer to seek a social support which enhances positivity, gives sense of belonging and self-esteem.

According to Gaur and Dhawan (2000), working-women employ light-heartedness and taking initiatives as methods to handle stress. Furthermore, Aditya and Sen (1993) inferred that women dealt with stress better as compared to male executives. The cause behind this could be the fact that women are more open to accepting emotional support from others while dealing with stress; on the contrary, men attempt to alter the stressor or employ a coping policy which is not as efficient.

A recent research has shown that women have different coping mechanism. Researchers from UCLA, after analyzing data based on numerous behavioural studies of humans and animals, have concluded that women cope with stress by the means of performing behavior that results in the protection of oneself and one's children. This is known as 'tending and befriending' coping method. While men respond to the stress by resorting to fight-or-flight response. They either confront the stressor or flee from it. Repetti and Wood (1997) suggested that mothers are particularly caring and loving towards their children. High levels of stress at work tends to induce nurturing response in them. The study on executives of Mumbai by Srivastava (2012) has highlighted that women are more likely to engage in sedentary social activities like reading, spending time with friends or family etc. while men prioritize on having healthy relationship and healthy lifestyle for managing stress.

A study Lim & Teo (1996) indicated that female IT professionals experiencing stress tend to seek social support by talking to one another while men were more prone to suppress their emotions and dealt with problems

in a very logical and unemotional manner. Females were better at handling their stress as they could express it amongst their family members at home and their colleagues at work. A study by Daga & Hussain (2001) on 300 Indian working women reported that social support acts as a buffer against stress.

Akkinnusin (1994) has showed greater behavioural stress amongst women than men. Under the given conditions females either quit the organization or withdraw temporarily from work. Men prefer a defensive style more often than women.

**TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

No	Parameter	Title of paper	Author	Findings
1.	Causes	Effect of Type A Personality on Stress-strain Relationship: A Study on Private Sector Managers	Srivastava, S.	Managers who experience greater occupational stress will also experience lower level of work satisfaction, higher levels of emotional exhaustion, feelings of depersonalization, feelings of personal accomplishment and anxiety and illness.
		Are you killing yourself	Dastur, R.H.	The dominant cause of stress amongst Indian managers was found to be working group climate, negative group climate & powerlessness.
		Executive stress	Mehta N.	Lack of creative environment, heavy responsibilities, role overload, lack of support, lower self-esteem were identified as major causes of executive stress.
		Women in the legal profession in Nigeria: Problems & prospects	Okolo I.	Very few women are found to hold top managerial positions which results into lack of female role models at top positions
		Manual of occupational stress index	Srivastava and Singh	Twelve aspects were identified that caused stress on executives including doubts about the function to be enacted, disagreements pertaining to the role, group pressures, low revenues, low self-worth, being responsible for the performance of others, internal dissatisfaction, function overload, having limited

				power, tiring work conditions and unsatisfactory interpersonal relations with colleagues and limited involvement.
		Organizational Role Stress of Employees in the Banking Sector	Sinha & Sinha	They identified role erosion, role overload and inter role distance to be the main contributors towards the organizational role stress.
2.	<b>Gender difference in level of stress</b>	Home /work stress & Burnout who can help?	Ray et.al	Source of stress for working women was identified as work - home conflict. It was found that social support from intra & extra organizational sources help individuals from stress.
		The role of Gender in work place stress	Gyllensten	Women reported higher level of stress compared to men, however several studies showed that multiple role, lack of career progress, discrimination & stereotyping were the sources of stress at work.
		A study of role stress and coping strategies among managers and supervisors in a public sector organization	Tyagi & Sen	It was discovered that women managers experienced more stress compared to their male counterparts and supervisors.
		Real and Ideal Gender - Role Conflict: Exploring Psychological Distress Among Men	Ming	Decentralized organizations where women were at the top positions, contributed towards breaking the glass ceiling. Women were also found to be responsible for their own growth & empowerment through better education and career development.
3.	<b>Gender difference in coping style</b>	Hostility, coping, and health.	Repetti	Males have been found to keep themselves away from home displaying 'flight response' during high levels of work stress. It suggests that females have different coping style from males as they rely more on their family support to cope with stress.
		Stress & coping strategies among executives' technocrats	Ahmed et.al	Men preferred a defensive style more often than women.
		Effects of daily stress at work on mothers' interactions with	Repetti, R. L., & Wood, J.	A difference in nurturing and caring tendencies amongst mothers was identified under high

<p>Studies in stress and its management.</p>	<p>D.M Pestonjee, U. Pareek &amp; R. Agarwal</p>	<p>The commonly preferred coping tactics of women executives included chatting with husbands/ peers/ parents/ managers/ co-workers/friends about the issue and making endeavors to enhance the details related to the stress faced . Taking a step back from the situation for some time, getting involved in socio-cultural activities and adopting a healthy lifestyle by practicing yoga, meditation or other forms of exercise.</p>
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**VII CONCLUSION & SCOPE FOR FUTURE STUDY**

The paper has explored the gender as a differentiator in the causes, impact and coping strategies of stress. An in-depth analysis of the existing literature in the area was conducted to arrive at the conclusion that males and females not only differ biologically but their responses to the work place stress is also vastly different. Females on the one hand rely on emotional & social support, light hearted talks, relaxation, and meditation and in the extreme circumstances quitting the job. Males on the other hand prefer defensive strategies, fight responses, aggression, substance addiction etc. to cope with the stress.

The paper is limited in its approach as it is primarily qualitative in nature. Further studies can be undertaken using suitable quantitative tools to establish the difference in the approach towards stress by members of both genders.

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