There is no area of management that will not benefit from systematic and purposeful record-keeping, report writing, auditing and research. Certainly, the HR department cannot function effectively and achieve its goals unless it believes in the proper maintenance of records; writing and preserving reports on relevant issues; auditing HR policies, procedures and practices; and conducting research on HR issues.
HR Records

The term ‘records’ refers to the preservation of information in files and documents so that they can be used whenever required. Proper record-keeping is essential for the smooth working of any establishment, however small it may be. Some of these are statutory requirements; other records are for reference. As the number of employees grows, it becomes more and more difficult to remember all details and, as such, they have to be recorded. HR records may include not only the employees’ complete particulars, or negative notes like notes on indiscipline, but also positive records such as their achievements, promotions and training, so that such details may be used for their further growth. This information is vital for effective and efficient use of human resources.

The HR department keeps such records of all employees with the result that not only record-keeping is up to date and accurate but also the records are handy.

Uses of HR Records

Following are the important uses of HR records:

1. Individual functional departments usually do not keep HR records of employees working with them; this information is centralised in the HR department and supplied whenever required. It may be used at many occasions such as promotion, demotion, transfer and awards.
2. Payrolls may be prepared from these records easily and accurately.
3. Government frequently asks for different kinds of information relating to the workers, which may be supplied on the basis of such records.
4. Training needs may be determined from these records.
5. Full details of any employee at one place facilitate judging his/her work dispassionately.
6. It helps in conducting research in the areas of HRM and IR.

Types of HR Records

The HR records may relate to

1. Personal records of the employee: This may include the lace file number; the name of the employee; his/her father’s name; date of birth; sex; place of birth; height; weight; native place; marital status; number of children and other dependents; languages known; present address; permanent address; academic and professional qualifications; hobbies; previous experiences with full details of the jobs held in the past, their scale of pay, pay last drawn, duration of the stay at the particular post; job held at present, whether the present job is ad hoc, temporary or permanent; date of joining the present job; the department where posted now; date of confirmation, pay scale of the present post; date of joining PF; whether the job is pensionable; transfers from one department/post to another department/post; record of different types of leaves due/availed, accumulated or encashable and so on; medical history; details of periodical medical examinations last conducted and next due on; disciplinary action taken,
if any; awards received or distinction achieved, if any; performance appraisal; and any other relevant information or remark about the employee.

2. **Records of job description:** These are very helpful at the time of job evaluation, job pricing, recruitment and selection, training and development, promotions and transfers, and so on.

   Description of various jobs is kept job-wise or department-wise. A copy of relative job description may go into the individual employee's personal file.

3. **Records of recruitment and selection:** It may include the number of sanctioned posts, number of posts already filled, number of posts still lying vacant, sources of manpower supply for different types of jobs, methods used for advertising vacancies, procedure of selection of candidates for different posts and so on.

4. **Evaluation and training records:** Such information is essential for personnel evaluation and assessing their training needs. Evaluation and training records comprise evaluation by superiors, performance appraisal, training timetables and records. These are kept by the HR department.

5. **W&S administration:** Records relating to wages and salaries are also very useful for different purposes. W&S administration records show the initial wages on which the employee started and his/her salary escalation over the years. Sometimes, this information is also supplied to the government, trade unions, chamber of commerce and industry, and so on.

6. **Industrial disputes:** Records relating to all industrial disputes may also be recorded by the HR department. All industrial disputes are recorded, and any employee's special role in them is also recorded in his/her personal file. The terms of settlement are also recorded therein.

7. Records pertaining to disciplinary action.

8. Records pertaining to leave, transfers, promotions, demotions and so on.


10. Social security records.

11. Safety records and so on.

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**Elements of Effective Record System**

The basic object of an HR record system is to supply information whenever it is required. It should give all essential details but should not be so complicated that a lot of time has to be spent to find the desired information. It would be worthwhile to discuss with the department concerned about the nature of information to be stored in the HR department to satisfy the possible requirement. Record-keeping is an expensive exercise and record management deserves the attention of the HR manager himself/herself.

It also has to be discussed and decided that how long information of a particular type is to be retained. Also, the system should be reviewed every now and then to check if the arrangement meets with the requirements.

Another question to be decided is how many copies of a particular record are to be kept. It is often seen that as a measure of precaution, so many copies are made that it becomes a problem to find any use for them. So, these copies keep on cluttering files. One does not feel like throwing them away or destroying them lest they could be needed again. This is an interesting situation and the manager has to know when to destroy extra copies of records.

Proper filing systems are essential for retrieval of the information at the time of need. Many companies advise on office systems, and the suggestions can be very useful. Well-known names are Roneo,
Remington, Godrej and so on. They also give suggestions on procedure manuals which list out procedure for classification of records.

**Effective Record-keeping**

1. The object of records should be very clear.
2. As far as possible, it should be clear in the beginning itself as to what use the records will be put to.
3. Records should be within limits of control. They should contain only that much of information which could actually be made use of.
4. It should be possible to retrieve the information quickly. There is no use having information if it is not available at the right time.
5. The form to be completed should be clear and standardised. There should be no confusion so that information is uniformly kept.
6. Up-to-date entries should be made in the records, otherwise they can be more misleading than being of use.
7. It may be helpful to give every form a number for easy identification.
8. The people who will ultimately supply the information should be consulted while designing the forms. Their involvement and advice would be helpful in this respect.
9. Record-keeping is a work of art. It should be use-oriented and accurate.
10. Full use of computerisation of information be made. Necessary software be developed/

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**HR Reports**

**Meaning and Definition**

The term ‘report’ refers to an account or statement explaining in detail an event, happening, situation or evaluation of some product proposed for manufacturing in future or the like. Therefore, the reports may be prepared on anything under the sun. But, here we are concerned with the reports on the matters related to HR issues such as employment, recruitment and selection, training and development, promotions and transfers, disciplinary actions, IR, labour welfare, social security, safety, research, W&S administration, extent of absenteeism, resignations—department-wise/month-wise/cause-wise—negotiations with unions and grievances.

On the basis of HR records maintained by an organisation, the HR department of the organisation may be able to prepare significant reports for the top management and departmental heads/supervisors. This way, HR department could also be fulfilling its obligation as a staff department. For example, a timely report to the production manager on absenteeism may draw his/her attention to the problem and he/she may take remedial action. He/she may take it as an index of brewing unrest or find it as a sign of low morale. A report to the supervisor on individual workers may help him/her control them at the right time and also indicate how the supervisor is handling his/her workforce. Comparative data help in action, say, at the time of reduced availability of manpower when more of the casual labour will go for agricultural work. Comparison of similar records of previous years helps highlighting specific problems
of certain areas. The reports have, of course, to be relevant and selective; in case of too many reports, the meaningful reports will get filed along with the less useful ones.

Proper use of the records can create a better and more effective HR department and better manpower management. A good report will not only collect and correlate data but also interpret it. Reports can be prepared on all personnel functions such as recruitment and selection, appraisal, W&S administration, training and IR. Report writing is a work of art. It should not give data for the sake of data only, but with the definite purpose. It must be useful, timely and accurate.

### Types of HR Reports

The HR reports to be prepared by the HR personnel department may be of the following types:

1. Regular or routine reports
2. Periodic reports
3. Special reports

Regular reports are prepared and submitted by the HR department to the top management and government on regular basis such as rate of labour turnover and extent of absenteeism.

On the other hand, periodic reports, which are prepared periodically, may contain the information relating to the topics such as

1. Extent of absenteeism
2. Training programmes conducted internally and staff sent out for external programmes and follow-up reports
3. Details of promotions, transfers and terminations
4. New IR policies
5. Resignations—department-wise, month-wise, cause-wise
6. Negotiations with unions, grievances filed, grievances settled, awards and so on

Special reports are usually on some unusual happening or a matter of extraordinary importance. For example, there may be a special report on a disastrous accident occurred in the factory.

HR reports are an index of the way manpower is being handled within the organisation. Combined with the special reports on personnel, a manager can perform his/her manpower control functions effectively. Control depends on feedback in the form of reports and information. If this feedback is accurate and timely, then it will greatly help him/her to take corrective course of action.

### HR Audit

As organisations have tended to grow bigger, so have the staff departments along with line functions. A time comes when each of them becomes so big that one does not get a fair idea of how they are doing unless special effort is made and studies undertaken. For the line functions, some indices are available. In production, for instance, performance can be judged by how much was produced, to what extent
schedules were adhered to, at what cost manufacturing was done, what was the unit cost and so on. These figures in themselves are important and take added meaning when they are compared with, say, previous year or years or with the planned and budgeted figures. Similarly, the marketing department's efficiency can be judged by the quantum of sales, sales vis-à-vis competitor's sales, cost of sales, territories covered, new customers explored, old customers retained and so on.

However, in the case of departments like HR, such yardsticks are not readily available. Essentially, they have to be evolved according to an organisation's requirements. Today, HR departments have become big and employ sizeable staff and specialists. As such, some kind of audit needs to be undertaken to ascertain the functioning of the department. Hence, HR audit comes in the picture.

**Meaning of HR Audit**

HR audit refers to an examination and evaluation of HR policies, procedures and practices to determine the effectiveness of HRM.

Edwin B. Flippo defines HR audit as follows:

“The audit is a systematic survey of all the activities of a personnel programme and the manner in which these activities are undertaken.”

**Objectives of HR Audit**

Following are the major objectives of HR audit:

1. To review the management policies and programmes relating to manpower planning, recruitment, selection, placement, promotion, transfer, training and development of employees, administration of employees compensation and welfare with a view to determining the effectiveness of these programmes.
2. To evaluate the extent to which line managers have implemented HR policies and programmes.
3. To evaluate the HR staff and employees. There is no legal obligation for audit of this nature for HR department. It is simply a tool for managerial control of programmes and practices.

**Scope of HR Audit**

HR audit should cover all aspects of the working of the HR department. Audit should start with the objective prescribed for HRM. It can, for example, be broken up into five main areas:

1. HRP
2. Organising the human resources
3. Staffing
4. Motivating the human resources
5. Controlling
In planning HR requirements, audit can be made of the effectiveness of past forecasting and scheduling to ascertain how the needs were identified in time. If forecasting was not accurate, ways be found to improve it in future.

Job description usually needs a revision in the light of changed conditions. New sources of recruitment have to be found. In finding and training manpower, the HR department may gauge its performance. Need may be felt to make the HR department itself more aware of the requirements of line departments. Psychological tests may be evaluated from time to time to check their usefulness.

Staffing is one area where the working of the HR department is judged critically. When the HR department is given the responsibility of selection, much depends on its expertise which can make or mar the selection. Motivating is the most important aspect of management. The HR department will have to test morale on all counts that go into high motivation and compare them with previous records in the industry. Facilities such as lighting, ventilation, sanitation, recreation and maintenance of canteens must be evaluated in terms of their effectiveness.

Appraisal systems have to be similarly tested from time to time. Safety programmes need careful scrutiny from time to time. In brief, there are many areas in which an HR audit can be usefully conducted.

**Types of HR Audit**

The main types of HR Audit are shown in Figure 21.1.

![Types of HR Audit](image)

**FIGURE 21.1** Types of HR Audit
HR Research

Every field of management is bound to be benefited from systematic and purposeful research. Obviously, the field of HRM is in great need of more systematised knowledge and sound principles. There should be less ‘by guess and by gosh’ and more accurate prediction on human behaviour in an industrial environment. It will not be too much to say that research reflects the philosophy of HRM adopted by a company. Therefore, if the HRM is to retain the status of a legitimate field and profession, research must be the foundation of it.

Meaning and Nature of HR Research

‘Research’ can be defined as ‘systematic and purposive investigation of facts with the object of determining cause-and-effect relationships among such facts’. It is from research that we establish principles which define the relationship between two or more phenomena.

So far as ‘HR research’ is concerned, Jucius says, ‘Personnel research, if defined simply, is the task of searching for and analysing facts to the end that personnel problems may be solved or that guide lines governing their solutions may be deduced’.

Research is being used to solve problems in every major area of human activity. It increases understanding and opens doors to improved practices.

Therefore, research is an important tool of management also and can make impressive contributions to the process of management of human resources.

Because of individual differences in human beings, the job of an HR researcher is more difficult, and sometimes even disappointing and frustrating, as compared to other researchers where the subject matter is other than human beings. HRM is interdisciplinary and, therefore, utilises the knowledge of many disciplines. Many researches being conducted by psychologists are being made use of in the field of management. So is the case with the findings of researches being conducted by economists, sociologists and the like.

There is yet much to know in the field of HRM. The areas of procurement, development, compensation, integration and maintenance of manpower offer a host of subjects for conducting research and improving the level of performance. The fundamental purpose is to improve the philosophy and practices of personnel management in general. It is eclectic in approach in as much as it typically involves multiple fields of knowledge, including psychology, sociology, economics, statistics, engineering and management.

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1 Flippo, Principles of Personnel Management, 568.
2 Flippo, Principles of Personnel Management, 559.
3 Ibid.
4 Jucius, Personnel Management, 488.
Significance of HR Research

HR research is extremely useful in the various aspects of HRM, human relations and IR. According to Jucius,6 personnel research is useful because it

1. Measures and evaluates present conditions
2. Predicts future conditions, events and behavioural patterns
3. Evaluates effects and results of current personnel policies, programmes and activities
4. Provides an objective basis for revising current personnel policies, programmes and activities
5. Appraises proposed policies, programmes and activities

Types of HR Research

Broadly speaking, research may be of two types:

1. **Pure or basic or exploratory research**: This type of research is discovery of knowledge for its own sake. Pure research is designed to provide understanding for its own sake; the researcher just wants to learn and know. Basic research is not bothered for its implications. The use of this type of research in HR areas is rare.

2. **Applied or operational research**: This type of research is directed towards the solution of a particular problem. It seeks answers to the existing problems. Hence, the benefits of this type of research are immediate, visible and can be easily felt. The operational research can be short term as well as long term, depending on the nature of the problem for which the answer is being sought through the research. The well-known example of long-term research in the HR area is that of one conducted in the Western Electric Company by Elton Mayo and his associates.

Methods/Techniques of HR Research

Following are the main scientific methods normally used by HR researchers:

1. **Controlled experiments**: In a controlled experiment, all the variables are kept constant and only one variation is introduced into the situation to find out its impact on output or the like. The ensuing output result is attributed to this single variant factor. Such type of research is rare because it is really difficult to have a rigid control over all the variables, more so in the case of human beings. One of the important controlled experiments in the area of HRM was the Hawthorne study of the Western Electric Company, Chicago (USA), conducted by Elton Mayo and his team, starting from 1927.

2. **Case studies**: Such studies provide a systematic investigation of the relationships that have been significant in a particular situation. In a case study, it is easier to make an in-depth and

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thorough investigation of a particular situation because of its limited universe. A case study usually suggests hypotheses which may be put to test in additional studies. Thus, a case study helps additional intensive research.

3. **Historical studies:** The method involves systematic investigation on a time span. All past records and documents pertaining to the problem of research are systematically investigated, and, if need be, interviews of former employees may also be conducted to find out the trends and causes responsible, arriving at certain conclusions. All good organisations maintain records of HR problems such as labour turnover, wage structure, absenteeism, accidents and sickness. Such records are minutely and systematically scrutinised and thoroughly studied for research purposes.

4. **Surveys:** This method is very commonly used in order to collect original data with the help of a questionnaire or structured interview. It aims at finding out the current practices, attitudes or approaches with regard to the problem of research and then makes an attempt to relate certain results to a particular cause(s). Many trade unions and even employers’ associations conduct regular surveys in order to collect information on matters such as wages, hours of work, OT and workers’ priorities.

5. **Simulation:** Of late, simulation of performance has become a very popular method of research in several areas. Role-playing is a specific type of performance simulation used for research by behavioural and managerial researchers. Computers are making this method very popular. The process begins with the statement of hypotheses (generated by theory). Then computers help to derive a system of mathematical models expressing these propositions. Thereafter, the computer can solve the model's equation and simulate outputs.\(^7\)

6. **Statistical studies:** Statistical studies lay emphasis on quantification, statistical manipulations and inferences. Hence, they collect quantitative data and then analyse it, classify it and interpret it. They try to work out averages, trend regressions and correlations. The future of statistical studies appears to be quite promising because of the availability of modern data-processing equipment.

7. **Mathematical models:** With the availability of computers, the use of mathematical models in management research is getting popular. Mathematical models attempt to develop and test designs that can explain behaviour in terms of mathematical processes.

**Research Needs in HRM**

The HR problems are so complex that practically in all the areas of HRM, namely procurement, development, compensation, integration, maintenance and separation,\(^8\) there is a wide scope of research. It may include labour research, supervisory research, executive research, research in selection procedures, research in salary and wages, research in training programmes, research in motivation, research in human relations and IR, research in trade union procedures and practices, and research in HR policies, philosophy and principles.

\(^7\) See Yoder, *Personnel Management and Industrial Relations*, 725.

\(^8\) For details of topics in the area of HRM, see Flippo, *Principles of Personnel Management*, 575–76.
Responsibility of Research

HR research should not be confined to any single group, department or agency. However, there should be a separate research section in the HR department which should establish a research programme, provide research facilities and have necessary experts. A separate research section also helps in making research popular. However, it should not be forgotten that research is not the prerogative of any particular category of people. No doubt the management has to take a lead in this direction, but, at the same time, the cooperation of the line supervisors, executives and other employees should also be sought. They should also be encouraged to put forward their own research projects. Even outside agencies such as universities, institutes, private and government research bodies and other research agencies should also be involved and necessary cooperation sought from them.

HR research is an applied research. It is a purposive and planned research programme. According to its objective, the HR research can be of two types—pure and applied. Pure HR research attempts to find out new HR philosophy and practices, while applied research is mainly concerned with the research in various functional areas of HRM such as procurement, compensation, development, maintenance and integration.

Sources of Information

Research needs a lot of information. It is, therefore, essential to know as to from where the relevant information can be collected. In the field of HRM, there are a lot of books, a vast number of research papers, a good number of research studies already conducted and many a management association/body operating at local, regional, national and international levels, from where data can be obtained. Besides, there are a lot of executives at middle, senior and very senior levels, functioning in the area of HRM and other relevant areas in a very large number of organisations. Again, there are a good number of newspapers, periodicals, magazines, research journals, government publications and so on related to HRM which contain a lot of information related to HRM (see Annexure 22.1). All of these and some other agencies can be a source of information, which can also be sought through questionnaires, personal interviews and interaction with concerned people and organisations. Besides, there are very useful international publications (see Annexure 22.2) which are of general value in the HRM field. Then, there is a lot of literature, journals and periodicals in allied fields such as psychology, economics and sociology which are also very useful in conducting research in HRM field.

Who Conducts Research in HRM Field?

Pure and applied research studies in the area of HRM have been/are being conducted by a variety of people and institutions such as management institutes and universities, various government agencies, private research organisations, company HR departments and line managers. However, there is still a great need of quality research in the area of HRM in our country. Both the industry and the government should come forward to extend financial assistance to the researchers and institute some fellowships on regular basis. The HR executives and academia for universities and institutes should collaborate and conduct research on current problems being confronted by the HRM in Indian industries.
Translating HRM Research into Practice/HR Manager as a Catalyst

Doing research is one thing and implementing it is another. It does not serve much purpose if the research cannot be translated into practice. It is here that the role of an HR manager comes into vogue. The HR manager is the catalyst—a change agent who should own the responsibility of implementing the change necessitated by research. Such organisational changes may call for a change in (a) structure or technology or both and/or (b) a therapeutic approach. In the former, there is usually some pressure on the employees because it may involve change in technology and operating procedures, wider span of culture, job enrichment, decentralisation of authority, a new set of circumstances posing unexpected challenges and the like. In the latter; that is, therapeutic area, employees are counselled and encouraged to modify their behaviour as required. At times, some sort of training may also be required. Since HR officials are supporting staff and have limited formal authority, more use of the therapeutic approach is recommended.

As a change agent, an HR manager should move step by step to smoothen the implementation of a change as follows:

1. **Unfreezing the status quo:** Instead of forcing a change, it is a better proposition to involve the employees and let the self-doubts be generated among them about the appropriateness of the current practices. Make them want and feel a need to change. In case there are external and internal pressures, there will be receptivity to change. For example, if there is a threat of closure to a firm because of its inability to withstand the *external* competition, the employees are likely to accept any change if it is likely to be instrumental in providing a lifeline to the organisation.

   Besides, the trade union and the government—two of the major external sources of pressure—have to give strength to the HR manager as a change agent. For effecting change, support from the top management is also very important. It strengthens the hands of the HR manager. Collection of relevant data and facts also supports the HR manager in playing his/her role as a change agent.

2. **The action plan:** Having generated self-doubts towards the appropriateness of the existing practices, the next step to be undertaken by the HR manager is to prepare action plans for effecting change, which should not only be technically sound but also, and more importantly, acceptable to those who are supposed to implement the same. It needs a reciprocal relationship between the HR manager (the change agent) and the changee(s). The HR manager may suggest ways and means tentatively in a diplomatic manner and involve the changees, seek their suggestions and make them feel that final decisions have been taken only after giving proper weightage to the viewpoints of the changees. It is equally important to assure the changees that the change will not affect them adversely, especially their security of job and earnings. The trade unions have to be taken along and Theory 'Y' instead of Theory 'X' has to be followed.

3. **Refreezing the new status quo:** It is usually noticed that initially the efforts to introduce a change show results but only temporarily, until and unless fundamental changes in attitude and behaviour are also simultaneously brought about. This requires change in the total culture and, therefore, the total system, including the relevant sub-systems, which should be
redesigned from scratch so that all these can be supportive to the desired model. Appropriate and timely rewards help in sustaining and reinforcing the changed attitudes and behaviours.

**Challenges of the Future**

In the industrial societies and in a globalised market place, human problems are likely to be multiplied and more complex. In case such problems are not properly solved, it will be difficult for organisations to sustain themselves. It is here that HR research comes into picture. All the existing and likely to emerge HR problems need in-depth investigation, leading to finding out solution of these problems. Some of the main present trends and anticipated developments in the field of HRM will demand greater attention and research into the following areas:

- Reducing employee alienation within organisations
- Increasing human and organisational creativity and productivity
- Expanding HR manager roles in helping the private organisation to meet its ever-increasing social responsibility
- Expanding HR manager roles in designing organisations

Due to automation, excessive division of labour, clash between changes in basic social forces and relatively few responding changes in the design and management of organisations, employees feel alienated within the organisation. High rate of absenteeism and turnover, dislike of jobs, aggressive attitude, strikes, violence, demonstrations, and short and ill tempers are some of the indications in this direction. Today's employees are far more enlightened and educated, eager for self-expression and less obedient to arbitrary authority. The challenge that lies ahead is reconciling clashes of values and thus reducing employee alienation to the extent possible. Research will be in how to integrate human and organisational values. Job enlargement, job enrichment, job re-engineering, viable group formation and so on will need greater focus.

Ever-increasing competition, declining productivity and increasing inflationary pressure, today and tomorrow, will invite research efforts in how to make employees more innovative and how to increase productivity bargaining, how to tap the vast reservoir of talented human pool, how to promote employees' participation in goal setting and other decision-making processes, how to promote quality circles, how to improve quality of work life, how to seek willing cooperation of the employees and such other related questions.

In future, HR managers will have a greater responsibility in assisting the organisations to define and execute their social responsibility. In our country, the government has become very cautious of the social responsibility of the organisations. Hence, HR managers will have to be very active in this direction, and increased HR research with regard to various social issues will be required in future. Meeting all these challenges will also require a change in the design of the organisational structure. An HR manager will be expected to have skills and knowledge that can be made use of in creating the organisational design that can be effective at both the social and the technological fronts.

Hence, HR research will be required to unravel the unexplored human mysteries and integrate the individual and organisational goals.

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HR Research History

Although some research studies related directly or indirectly to personnel management/HRM have been conducted from time to time, it were the studies of F. W. Taylor, during the 1880s, that focused on improving efficiency. Towards the end of the 19th century and the start of 20th century, a lot of research contributions were made in the field of industrial psychology. The contributions made by Bingham, Munsterberg, Link, Tenman and so on deserve special mention, especially in the area of selection of employees. The Hawthorne experiments (1927–32) conducted at Western Electric Company laid the foundation of human relations approach. The First World War (1914–18) gave further impetus to research studies in psychology. Some studies conducted by the Industrial Fatigue Board (UK) in the areas of employee health, industrial accidents, fatigue and the like are also worth mentioning. The Second World War (1939–42) encouraged research especially in the area of IR. Since then, there is explosion in the research activities related to personnel management/HRM. Many large business enterprises conduct research in HRM and related topics. Several institutes and universities conduct research on HR-related issues. A lot of periodicals and research journals have been publishing research articles on HR-related research. A number of books have been published on HR-related problems and have widened the area of HR research in future.

So far as HR research in our country is concerned, a noticeable beginning was made when Tatas laid the foundation of School of Social Work at Bombay about eight decades ago with the objective of imparting training to young graduates in the area of labour welfare so that the products of the school could initiate welfare work in factories and other organisations on scientific lines. Labour Bureau, Shimla/Chandigarh, has also been doing commendable work so far as research studies, collection and competition of statistics on wages, total earnings, strikes and lockouts, industrial disputes, trade unions and other issues relevant to factory workers are concerned. It publishes Indian Labour Year Statistics and so on. It also publishes Indian Labour Journal, a monthly publication, which contains research articles, statistics and so on. Established in 1963, Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources has been publishing a quarterly journal, namely Indian Journal of Industrial Relations, which publishes research articles, book reviews, case studies and so on issues related to industrial labour and the like. V. V. Giri National Labour Institute publishes a quarterly journal, namely Indian Journal of Labour Economics, which contains research articles on trade unions, collective bargaining, WPM, quality circles and so on. Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi, which was established in 1968, has also been instrumental in promoting research on social and other relevant issues. Besides, a large number of management institutes, universities and some large industrial organisations are involved in conducting HR-related research.

Steps in Conducting Social Research

It is always advisable to follow a set procedure while conducting social research. The steps involved are as follows:

- **The Problem:** The starting point in designing social research is to perceive a problem. The statement of the problem must cover the genesis, indicators, symptoms, facts and the background, which led to the present problem. Quite often what we see and notice are only the symptoms of the problem, and the problem may actually lie among the factors, issues, records
and grievances coming up from time to time in the organisation. A problem is usually a statement in an interrogative form. Thus, a problem may be: What are the factors that lead to job dissatisfaction? The goal of research is to seek answer to such a question(s).

- **Selection of hypothesis:** Once the problem is defined, there is a need to formulate a tentative or provisional explanation of that problem in the form of a proposition. This tentative explanation (provisional explanation) is called the hypothesis, the validity of which is yet to be tested. Hypotheses are formulated on the basis of relevant existing theory (theories), belief of others, previous reports and one’s own beliefs and convictions regarding the problem.

- **Research design:** Research design refers to the overall plan of research, including a cutline. It tells us about the object of the research, type of data required and its method of collection, sample of study, analysis and interpretation of data, cost and labour involved, level of accuracy of desired results and so on. There are separate types of research designs for each of descriptive studies, exploratory or formulative studies, experimental studies and diagnostic studies.

- **Sampling:** There are two methods of collecting data for HR research, namely sample method and census method. In the former method, data are obtained about only a part of the universe which is called a sample. Based on the sample data, conclusions are drawn for the entire population. Hence, it is very important to choose the right type of sample as also the right sampling techniques. The various types of samples include random sample, systematic sample, stratified sample, cluster sample, quota sample and purposive sample.

- **Data collection:** There are several methods of data collection, namely (a) experimental/laboratory data collection which includes both laboratory experiments and field experiments, and these two always generate raw data, that is, the primary data, and (b) non-experimental/descriptive methods which include field and library methods. Library method usually generates secondary data.

- **Preparation of a working guide:** A working guide is a sort of action plan. All the research-related activities have to be identified and listed, and a flow chart of the process is to be prepared so as to ensure that everything is in place and happens as chartered out.

- **Analysis and interpretation of data:** Analysis and interpretation of data need objectivity, appropriate skills and accurate judgement, failing which the results will be misleading.

- **Report writing and publication:** Research findings are meant to be publicised so that the same can be used for practical purposes. Research findings can be written in many forms, depending mainly on the purpose of research. However, the form should be simple and the practical utility of the research should be emphasised.

HRM Strategy

Keeping in view the importance of record-keeping, the management should formulate its strategy in such a way that it becomes easier to identify which records are necessary to be maintained and for how long and in what manner. Similarly, there should be adequate provision in the strategy for getting needful audit carried out in a scientific manner and at the least cost so as to secure and edge over its competitors.
In the same way, the management strategy should focus on carrying out research in the areas where it is necessary according to the requirement of the organisation. The management strategy should encourage innovativeness, analytical faculty and solving problems the organisation is confronted with.

**Chapter Review**

1. HR 'records' refer to the preservation of information in files, computers and documents so that they can be used whenever required. Some of these are statutory requirements and others are for reference. HR records are useful at the time of promotion, transfer, giving awards, preparing payrolls, chalking out individual and collective training and development programmes, conducting research in the areas of employee management and IR, and so on.

2. There are many types of records that are preserved such as records of personal details, job descriptions, recruitment and selection, training and evaluation, W&S administration and industrial disputes. The main elements of effective record system include what type of information is to be kept in record, for how long the record is to be kept, how many copies of it are to be kept, what type of filing system should be there and the like.

3. An effective record-keeping is one in which there is clarity of its objectives and its probable use, retrievability is quick, there is standardisation, there is mechanism for its updating and it is use-oriented.

4. An HR 'report' is an account or statement, explaining in detail an HR event, happening, situation, evaluation and so on. It not only collects and correlates data but also interprets it. HR reports may be 'regular/routine' reports, 'periodic' reports and 'special' reports.

5. HR 'audit' is concerned with the examination and evaluation of HR policies, procedures, practices and so on for the purpose of determining the effectiveness of HRM in an organisation. HR audit may include all aspects of the working of the HR department such as HRP, recruitment, selection, training, motivation and controlling. HR audit can be on the basis of scope (i.e., procedural audit like job analysis or wholeman audit like commitment) or on the basis of nature (such as policy audit, L’escale audit).

6. HR 'research' is the task of searching for and analysing facts to the end that HR problems may be solved or necessary guidelines may be prepared. Systematic and purposive research in HR areas is a must, and it should be an ongoing process.

7. HR research evaluates the effects and results of current HR policies, programmes and activities, and provides an objective basis for revising/updating them. HR research may be of two types, namely pure/basic/exploratory research and applied/operational research.

8. The main techniques/methods of HR research comprise controlled experiments, case studies, historical studies, surveys, simulations, statistical studies, mathematical models and so on.

9. HR problems have become very complex in all the fundamental areas of HRM. Hence, in-depth studies are required to find out their solutions/guidelines. In order to conduct HR research, there should be a separate section in the HR department, though it may take help of all concerned in the organisation besides associating universities, management, institutes and other agencies as per requirement.
**Key Terms**

- Applied research
- Case studies
- Controlled experiments
- Exploratory research
- HR audit
- HR records
- HR research
- Historical studies
- Industrial dispute
- Job description
- Mathematical models
- Operational research
- Periodic reports
- Personal records
- Pure/basic research
- Recruitment
- Regular/routine reports
- Selection
- Simulation
- Special reports
- Statistical studies
- Surveys
- Training
- W&S administration
- Wholeman audit

**Discussion Questions**

1. Discuss what HR records are all about. Also discuss why organisations preserve HR records.
2. Discuss the types of HR records usually preserved by organisations.
3. Discuss the elements of effective record system and also discuss the features of an effective record-keeping.
4. Discuss what HR reports are and their types.
5. Discuss what HR audit is. Also discuss the objectives of HR audit.
6. Discuss what can be included under the scope of HR audit. Also discuss the types of HR audit.
7. Discuss what is meant by HR research and why it is very important for HRM.
8. Discuss in detail the various types of HR research.
9. Discuss, quoting suitable examples, the techniques or methods of HR research.
10. Discuss who should conduct HR research and why?

**Individual and Group Activities**

1. In a group of two members, visit some big organisation and discuss with the HR officials there as to what type(s) of HR records they preserve in their organisation.
2. As an individual, discuss with the HR officials all relevant aspects of HR records and prepare a report whether their record-keeping is efficient and effective.
3. Visit some big manufacturing organisation and discuss with the HR officials there as to what types of HR reports they usually prepare in their organisation and also whether such an exercise has proved fruitful.
4. In a group of two members, discuss with the HR officials of a big manufacturing organisation the types of HR audit conducted in their organisation.
5. As an individual, visit some big organisation employing over 2,000 employees and discuss with the HR officials there whether there is a separate HR research section in their HR department and what type of HR research is conducted in their organisation and how far it has proved useful.
Record-keeping

A small-scale company has been in existence for the last 10 years, manufacturing shoes, and has been enjoying a good reputation in its region. It has around 100 employees, 80 per cent of whom have been in the company since its inception. All supervisory and managerial personnel also have not seen any significant change in the number of total employees during the last five–seven years. The old faces continue to supervise and manage employees. Due to the long and continuous association of managerial personnel with the operative staff, almost every manager knows a lot of details about their subordinates. Hence, whenever a need of any training, promotion or transfer arose, it was taken care of on the basis of personal knowledge and memory of the managerial personnel. Hence, there were no specific documents or records available about the employees of the company.

About a month back, an assistant manager of the company left his job to join elsewhere on a senior position. The company promoted one of his subordinates Ajay to the position of assistant manager. Another subordinate Kartik raised objections to the promotion of Ajay and stated that he was better than Ajay in almost every respect, whether it was length of service in the company or rewards given by the company, performance appraisals, training undergone, loyalty displayed and the like. Ajay also claimed his superiority over Kartik in all the aforesaid respects. However, there was no dependable record of documents to resolve the issue.

Questions

1. What led to the present mess with regard to claim made by both Ajay and Kartik?
2. What went wrong with the company, and what should have been done by the company during its past?
3. Were you the HR head of this company, how would you resolve the present case?

Glossary

Applied or operational research: It is directed towards finding out the solution of a problem.
Case studies: It is the systematic investigation of the relationships that have been significant in a particular case (situation). Because of its limited universe, a case study enables an in-depth and thorough investigation.
Controlled experiments: In these, all the variables are kept constant and only one variation is introduced into the situation to find out its impact on output or the like.
Historical studies: In these, all past records and documents pertaining to the problem of research are systematically investigated to find out the trends and causes responsible, arriving at certain conclusions.
HR audit: HR audit is a systematic survey of all the activities of an HR programme and the manner in which these activities are undertaken.
Job description: All relevant data/information about the job such as duties, responsibilities, accountability and hazards involved.
Mathematical models: These models attempt to develop and test designs that can explain
behaviour in terms of mathematical processes. Computers play an important role in this direction.

Periodic reports: These are prepared periodically, say weekly, quarterly and so on, and submitted to the authorities concerned, for example, promotions or transfers affected quarterly.

Personal records: These may include the name of the employee, his/her father’s name, date of birth, sex, height, weight, marital status, address, qualifications, experience and other personal details.

Pure/basic/exploratory research: It is related to the discovery of knowledge for its own sake. The researcher just wants to learn or know.

Records: Records refer to the preservation of information in files, documents and computers so that they can be used whenever required.

Regular or routine reports: These are prepared and submitted on regular basis and are submitted to the authorities concerned, for example, daily production report and daily report of absenteeism.

Special reports: These are prepared on the happening of something unusual or extraordinary, for example, some accident in the organisation causing injury to a good number of workers.

Statistical studies: In these, quantitative data is collected, analysed, classified and interpreted, and then averages, trends, regressions and correlations are worked out. Computers are used frequently.

Surveys: These involve collection of data with the help of a questionnaire or structured interview to find out current practices, attitude or approaches with regard to the problem of research and then make an attempt to relate certain results to a particular cause(s).

Annexure 21.1

List of Useful Periodicals, Magazines, Journals and Government Publications for Conducting Research in HRM Field

1. Publications, Reports and So On of the Central Government
   a. Ministry of Labour and Employment
      • Annual Reports of the Ministry of Labour and Employment
      • Organisation of the Ministry of Labour & Employment (13th Edition)
   b. Directorate General of Mines Safety, Dhanbad
      • Quarterly Bulletin for Metalliferous Mines
      • Annual Report of Directorate General of Mines Safety
   c. Directorate General of Employment and Training, New Delhi
      • Monthly Review
      • Annual Report of the DGE&T
      • Census of Central Government Employees as on 31 March 2001
   d. Ministry of Railways
      • Year Books
      • Annual Report and Accounts of Indian Railways, 2008–09
   e. Central Provident Fund Organisation, New Delhi
      • Annual Reports (English and Hindi)
   f. Labour Bureau, Shimla/Chandigarh
      • Indian Labour Journal (Monthly)
      • Indian Labour Year Books
      • Statistics on Industrial Disputes, Closure, Retrenchment and Lay-off in Industries in India
• Consumer Price Index Numbers for Industrial Workers—Annual Reports
• Consumer Price Index Numbers for Agricultural and Rural Labourers (Base: 1986–87 = 100)—Annual Reports
• Wage Rates in Rural India 2009–10 (Agricultural Year)
• Report on the Socio-economic Conditions of the Scheduled Tribes Labour at Barbil (1999)
• Pocket Book of Labour Statistics
• Shram Sankhyiki Laghu Pustika
• Ninth Digest of Indian Labour Research 2010
• Report on the Working of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, for the year 2009

g. V. V. Giri National Labour Institute, Noida
• Labour and Development (Biannual)
• Award Digest (Monthly)
• Shram Jagat (Bimonthly)
• Shram Vidhan (Bimonthly)
• Child Labour and Law—An Overview (Bilingual)
• Minimum Wage: An Overview
• Language Not Merely a Vehicle of Expression (Bilingual)
• Child Labour: Training Manual for Trade Union Leaders
• Child Labour: Little Gudiya (Hindi)
• Child Labour: Tools for Convergence
• A Profile

h. Ministry of Surface Transport
• Annual Reports

i. Ministry of Communications
• Annual Reports

j. Ministry of Women and Child Development
• Annual Reports

k. Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport & Highways
• Annual Reports

l. Ministry of Finance & Company Affairs
• Economic Survey 2009–10
m. Ministry of Human Resource Development
   • Annual Reports

n. Ministry of Rural Areas Development
   • Annual Reports

o. Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation
   • Annual Reports

p. Employees Provident Fund Commissioner
   • Annual Reports

q. Central Board for Workers Education
   • CBWE News and Samachar (Monthly)
   • Workers’ Education Journal (Quarterly)

r. National Sample Survey Organisation
   • Unorganised Manufacturing Sector in India 2000–01—Key Results (Report Nos. 477 and 478)
   • Results of a Pilot Survey on Suitability of Different Reference Period for Measuring Household Consumption (No. 475)

s. Central Statistical Organisation
   • Selected Socio-Economic Statistics—India, 2000
   • Annual Survey of Industries Quick Estimates
   • National Accounts Statistics 2004
   • Directory of Sample Survey in India—51st Annual Report—2002
   • Energy Statistics 2001–02
   • Selected Socio-Economic Statistics—India, 2000
   • Statistical Abstracts

r. International Labour Organisation
   • Statistics on Occupational Wages and Hours of Work on Food Prices: October Inquiry Results 2000–01

2. Publications, Reports and So On of the State Governments
   a. Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Andhra Pradesh
      • Price Wage and Index Numbers

   b. Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Bihar
      • Bihar at a Glance, 2004

   c. Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Gujarat
      • Socio-Economic Review, 2007–08
      • Statistical Outline Gujarat, 2007

   d. Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Goa
      • Index of Industrial Production in Goa

   e. Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Himachal Pradesh
      • Economic Survey 2007–08
      • Economic Review of Himachal Pradesh
f. **Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Jammu & Kashmir**
   - Economic Review of J&K 2006–07
   - Compendium of Evaluation Studies 2007–08
   - Annual Price Review 2007–08
   - J&K in Indian Economy

g. **Government of Maharashtra**
   - Hand Book of Basic Statistics of Maharashtra State
   - Economic Survey of Maharashtra 2007–08
   - Economy in Figures 2007
   - Women and Men in Maharashtra 1998
   - Labour Gazette and Industrial Court Reporter

h. **Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Manipur**
   - Economic Survey of Manipur 2007–08
   - Price Statistics of Manipur 2006

i. **Government of Rajasthan**
   - Annual Report

j. **Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Tamil Nadu**
   - Statistical Hand Book of Tamil Nadu

k. **Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Delhi**
   - Labour Statistics

l. **Government of Puducherry**

m. **Government of Tripura**
   - Labour in Tripura

n. **Government of Odisha**
   - Labour Statistics

o. **Government of Uttarakhand**
   - Estimates of State Domestic Products of Uttarakhand

3. **List of Selected Journals of Labour Interest Published in India**

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<td>Labour Law Reporter</td>
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<td>Andhra Pradesh Labour Bulletin</td>
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### Annexure 21.2

**List of Useful International Periodicals, Magazines and Journals in the HRM Field**

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**Annexure 21.2**

**List of Useful International Periodicals, Magazines and Journals in the HRM Field**

- Academy of Management Journal
- Academy of Management Review
- Across the Board
- Administrative Science Quarterly
- Advanced Management Journal
- American Journal of Sociology
- Arbitration Journal
- Business Horizons
- Performance
- California Management Review
- Compensation Review
- Employment Service Review
- Fortune
- Harvard Business Review
- Human Organization
- Human Resource Management
- Industrial and Labor Relations
- Industrial Management Review
- Industrial Psychology
- Industrial Relations
- Journal of Applied Behavioral Science
- Journal of Applied Psychology
- Journal of Industrial Psychology
- Labor Law Journal
- Management Review
- Monthly Labor Review
- Organizational Behavior and Human Dynamics
- Organizational Dynamics
- Personnel
- Personnel Administrator
- Personnel Journal
- Personnel Management Abstracts
- Personnel Psychology
- Psychological Abstracts
- Public Personnel Management
- Supervision
- Training and Development Journal