

21 AMM REPORT



Digitizing Skills and HR Management Focusing on 'New Normal' in post-COVID-19 Pandemic Situation.

3rd December 2020



AMM REPORT

2021



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The HRDN Annual Members' Meeting 2020, themed "Digitizing Skills and HR Management Focusing on 'New Normal' in the Post-COVID-19 Pandemic Situation", explored the critical role of digital transformation in reshaping human resource management and skills development in Pakistan. This pivotal conference brought together leading experts and thought leaders to discuss strategies for workforce resilience, skill development, and operational efficiency in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Take aways from the event included:

- **Digital Transformation in HR:** Emphasized the role of digital tools in addressing skill gaps and streamlining HR processes, highlighting initiatives like NAVTTC's Smart Labs to enhance digital learning.
- Evolving Role of HR: Focused on how HR must evolve from an administrative function to a strategic partner, utilizing data-driven decision-making, improving employee engagement, and ensuring business continuity.
- Government's Digital Strategy: Showcased Pakistan's national digitization agenda, highlighting the collaboration between the public and private sectors to advance digital skills, e-commerce, and technology-driven workforce development.

The report also reviewed HRDN's performance during 2019-2020, showcasing the adaptability of the network through initiatives like the Virtual Learning Café, which fostered digital skill-building during the pandemic. Recommendations for HRDN's future efforts include expanding regional outreach, strengthening membership engagement, and aligning activities with the SDGs.

Ultimately, the conference reinforced the importance of digitization in the future of HR and workforce development, positioning HRDN and its stakeholders for success in a digital-first economy.



BACKGROUND / INTRODUCTION

The HRDN Annual Members' Meeting (AMM) is a critical event for the Network, offering its members vital opportunities for growth and engagement. The 21st AMM, held on December 3, 2020, was notably impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, necessitating a shift to a fully online format. This transition ensured continued participation and provided a space for virtual interaction, transcending geographic barriers.

This year's meeting was centered on the theme "Digitizing Skills and HR Management Focusing on 'New Normal' in Post-COVID-19 Pandemic Situation," which addressed the accelerated need for digital transformation across HR management and skills development. The pandemic highlighted the importance of adapting HR strategies to the new digital landscape, and the AMM served as a crucial platform for discussing these evolving trends.

Over 70 members participated in the event, with a further 395 viewers joining via HRDN's official Facebook live stream. The meeting gathered experts from diverse sectors, such as government, academia, NGOs, and the private sector, facilitating a collaborative dialogue on enhancing HR management practices in response to the global crisis.

Additionally, the AMM provided a comprehensive review of HRDN's activities in 2020, along with the introduction of innovative digital learning methods and virtual platforms that kept the community connected during challenging times. This report delves into the outcomes of the event, focusing on the solutions discussed and the forward-looking steps HRDN is taking to empower its members in the rapidly changing HR and skills development environment.

PROCEEDING OF THE EVENT (21ST ALL MEMBERS' MEETING - 2020)

Welcome Address:

Dr. Roomi S. Hayat, Chairperson, HRDN, formally inaugurated the 21st All Members Meeting (AMM) with a warm welcome to all esteemed members and stakeholders. Expressing profound gratitude, he reflected on HRDN's 21 years of transformative impact and its evolution into a premier platform for human resource development, knowledge exchange, and capacity building. As HRDN embarks on its 22nd year, he reaffirmed the organization's commitment to advancing sustainable development, digital transformation, and strategic human capital investment.



Dr. Roomi provided an insightful overview of HRDN's inception and strategic growth trajectory. Established in 1999 by a coalition of visionary development professionals, HRDN was founded to address the critical need for a dedicated platform focused on human resource development. What began as an initiative with just eight (8) founding members has now expanded into a thriving network of over 1,000 organizations and professionals across diverse sectors. He emphasized HRDN's unwavering commitment to fostering collaborative engagement, influencing policy, and implementing high-impact initiatives that drive sustainable change.

Elaborating on the theme of the 21st AMM, Dr. Roomi highlighted the imperative of digital transformation in shaping the future of skill development and human resource management. He underscored two critical areas of focus:





- **1. Digital Skill Development** Empowering individuals with the necessary digital competencies to thrive in an evolving economic and technological landscape.
- **2. Digitalized Human Resource Management Systems** Enhancing organizational efficiency through technology-driven staffing, workforce planning, and performance management solutions.

He noted that while the COVID-19 pandemic posed significant global disruptions, it also accelerated digital adoption and unlocked new opportunities for growth and innovation. Organizations and individuals who embraced digital advancements experienced exponential efficiency gains and market expansion, particularly in emerging economies like Pakistan, where digital payment systems have grown exponentially.

Dr. Roomi emphasized that while digital skill development is gaining momentum globally, it remains a relatively underdeveloped domain in South Asia. He called upon HRDN members and stakeholders to collaborate in shaping a robust digital learning ecosystem, ensuring equitable access to knowledge, skills, and capacity-building resources, particularly for youth and underserved communities.

Concluding his address, he reaffirmed HRDN's role as a catalyst for innovation, policy advocacy, and strategic partnerships, urging members to leverage this platform to drive transformational change in human capital development across the region.

TECHNICAL SESSION: DIGITIZING SKILLS AND HR MANAGEMENT IN THE 'NEW NORMAL'

The post-COVID-19 landscape has fundamentally reshaped the way organizations operate, making digital transformation a necessity rather than an option. While virtual discourse and online collaboration were once considered unconventional, the participation of industry leaders, policymakers, and HR experts in this session underscored the remarkable adaptability of professionals in embracing the 'New Normal'.

This highly engaging panel discussion focused on the status of digitization in Pakistan, analyzing its impact on skills training and human resource management (HRM). The session featured expert insights, supported by informative video presentations that emphasized digitization as the inevitable future for professional development and workforce management.



SYED JAVAID HASSAN – CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL VOCATIONAL & TECHNICAL TRAINING COMMISSION (NAVTTC)

Mr. Syed Javaid Hassan highlighted the critical role of digitization in bridging the skills gap in Pakistan. He pointed out that while the country requires training capacity for at least one million professionals annually, existing resources can only accommodate 400,000. He emphasized that traditional, physical training centers are costly and insufficient in meeting this demand, making digital training solutions the only viable way forward.

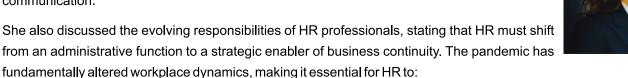


To address this challenge, Mr. Hassan introduced the Smart Labs initiative, a groundbreaking project aimed at establishing 75 digital learning hubs across Pakistan. These labs will provide learners with accessible, technology-driven training programs, reducing dependence on

conventional classrooms. He underscored that while digitization removes physical barriers to education, its success depends on developing a robust ecosystem of skilled trainers and digital infrastructure.

MS. SABAHAT BUKHARI - OD/HR CONSULTANT

Ms. Sabahat Bukhari provided practical insights into the transformation of HR practices in response to COVID-19. She emphasized the pivotal role of digital collaboration platforms, such as Microsoft Teams and Office 365, in enhancing remote work efficiency. Despite initial resistance, these tools have proven instrumental in driving productivity and ensuring seamless communication.





- Foster employee engagement despite remote work limitations.
- · Develop data-driven policies for performance evaluation and workforce management.
- Adopt an evidence-based HR approach, where decisions are backed by measurable metrics.
- Ensure that HR is no longer viewed as a passive, process-driven function, but rather as an agile, proactive force within organizations.

She concluded with a strong assertion: HR policies must evolve at the same pace as the workplace itself. Outdated approaches are no longer sustainable in an environment where adaptability and innovation define success.



MR. SHOAIB AHMAD SIDDIQUI - FEDERAL SECRETARY, MOITT

Mr. Shoaib Ahmad Siddiqui provided a **macro-level** perspective on **Pakistan's national digitization strategy**, emphasizing the government's commitment to a Digital Pakistan. He highlighted the policy reforms and strategic initiatives being rolled out to promote e-commerce, digital HRM solutions, and technology-driven skill development programs.



Key take aways from his address included:

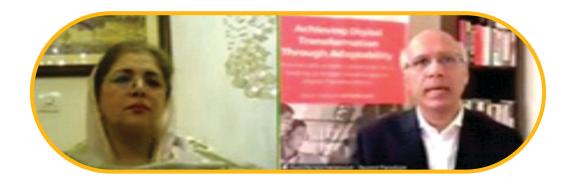
- Public-private sector collaboration is crucial for mainstreaming digitization across industries.
- Government policies are actively incorporating digital frameworks across education, workforce development, and business operations.
- Several Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) have been signed, focusing on expanding digital access and training opportunities nationwide.

He reinforced the idea that digitization is not merely an option but an economic imperative, ensuring that Pakistan remains competitive in the global digital economy.

MR. FARHAN MEHMOOD, CEO, BEYOND PARADIGM

Mr. Farhan Mehmood emphasized the critical role of digitization in today's rapidly evolving landscape, highlighting how the COVID-19 pandemic served as a catalyst for its accelerated adoption. He stressed that the success of digital transformation relies on people's acceptance, as it seamlessly connects individuals and facilitates access to information.

Drawing a parallel with educational curricula that must be regularly updated to remain relevant, he asserted that digitization is not just an innovation but an essential requirement of the modern era.





WAY FORWARD

This panel discussion underscored that digitization is not merely an option but a necessity for the future of workforce development in Pakistan. Experts highlighted the critical role of technology-driven solutions in bridging skill gaps, enhancing HR efficiency, and ensuring business resilience in an ever-evolving landscape.

While challenges such as infrastructure limitations and workforce adaptability remain, the discourse reinforced a collective commitment from policymakers, HR leaders, and industry experts to drive Pakistan toward a digitally empowered future. With strategic investments, forward-thinking policies, and innovative approaches, organizations can harness digital transformation as a key driver of sustainable growth and long-term success.

HRDN'S ANNUAL PERFORMENCE (2019-2020)

Ms. Robeela Bangash, **CEO - HRDN**, presented a comprehensive review of the organization's performance and key achievements for the year 2019-2020. She commenced by highlighting the **20th All Members' Meeting**, which focused on the critical issue of Youth Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) — a topic that had previously received minimal attention at the governmental level. The event was highly interactive and inclusive, featuring participation from transgender and minority communities, and incorporated youth-led initiatives under UNDP, further strengthening HRDN's commitment to inclusivity and empowerment.



HRDN's **nationwide networking initiatives** were another significant milestone, with revival events held in **Lahore and Peshawar** aimed at enhancing youth engagement, participation, and leadership. These local chapters played a pivotal role in fostering collaboration and capacity-building among members. Additionally, HRDN organized a series of **training sessions and workshops**, equipping members with critical skills and knowledge to enhance their professional capabilities.

One of the most **noteworthy events of 2020** was the **awareness session on COVID-19**, organized immediately after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a global pandemic. Recognizing the urgent need for action, HRDN also spearheaded training sessions on youth participation in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), engaging over **10 Universities** to foster a deeper understanding of the global development agenda.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, HRDN seamlessly adapted by shifting its activities to **virtual platforms**. In collaboration with Beyond Paradigm, the organization launched the "**Virtual Learning Cafe**", an innovative initiative designed to enhance digital skills training and foster continuous learning in the evolving digital landscape.

HRDN's performance over the year exemplifies resilience, adaptability, and an unwavering commitment to its mission of empowering individuals and organizations through knowledge-sharing, capacity-building, and inclusive development.



MEMBERS' JUNCTION: STRATEGIC INSIGHTS & ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTION

The Members' Junction session, led by Ms. Fauzia Bilqis Malik and Mr. Sohail Bangash, both Lifetime Members of HRDN, served as a pivotal moment for shaping the strategic direction of the network. This session provided an invaluable opportunity for HRDN members to share critical insights and suggestions, ensuring the Secretariat's alignment with evolving member needs and the broader development landscape.

Throughout the session, participants expressed their appreciation for HRDN's resilience in organizing the 21st All Members' Meeting despite the challenges of the pandemic. They highlighted the importance of such forums in fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing across the development sector.



Key Strategic Recommendations

The session resulted in key strategic guidance for the network, focusing on areas critical for its future growth and impact:

- HR Management Guidelines: Developing comprehensive frameworks to support organizations in navigating the postpandemic workforce and adapting to the new normal.
- Regional Outreach Expansion: Strengthening HRDN's presence in Balochistan and Sindh to ensure broader regional engagement and inclusivity.
- Membership Engagement: Streamlining processes to guide non-members through the pathway to becoming part of HRDN, enhancing network growth.
- Provincial SDG Integration: Actively involving SDG units at the provincial level, aligning local and national development initiatives with HRDN's goals.

This session marked a defining moment for HRDN, with members providing strategic guidance that will steer the network towards even greater effectiveness and outreach in the coming years.



VOTE OF APPRECIATION: ACKNOWLEDGING KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

On behalf of HRDN, Ms. Robeela Bangash, CEO of the Network, expressed sincere gratitude for the collective efforts that ensured the success of the event. She extended her heartfelt thanks to the panel members for their valuable and insightful contributions, and to the sponsors for their unwavering support. Ms. Bangash also acknowledged the active participation of both members and non-members, whose feedback enriched the discussions, and the senior members who dedicated their time to attend and contribute meaningfully. Concluding the session, Ms. Bangash expressed her appreciation to all participants and conveyed her anticipation for continued collaboration and future successes.



A Pictorial View Annex-A





PROFILE OF SPEAKERS / PANELISTS

Mr. Roomi Hayat, Chairperson, Human Resource Development Network (HRDN)

Mr. Roomi S. Hayat is regarded by most of his contemporaries as the leading authority in the field of Capacity Development. He is equally renowned for his Management, Institutional and Rural Development expertise as well as Employable Skills for Youth.

His ground breaking work with UN Agencies for Rural Support Programs, Training Need Analysis, Material Development, Evaluation Mechanism and Post Training Utilization Study has been acknowledged. The recent focus on capacity development and skill enhancement, especially Vocational Skills in Pakistan has taken its guidance from Mr. Hayat's pioneering work.



He is CEO of IRM; the largest specialized capacity development Institute in Pakistan which is also a channel of his Change and Result oriented constructive thinking. He is also the founding Chairperson of HRDN, an international network of HR professionals, besides being on the Board of Directors of many organizations.

His advice is sought by organizations, Government officials and consultants dealing on a macro level in diverse fields of Management Policies, Programs for literacy and post literacy, Rural Economy, Gender Equality, Youth Employment and Institutional Development. He holds two Master Degrees in Rural Sociology and Mechanical Engineering from Pakistan and USA respectively. He has represented Pakistan on international forums in SAARC and Asia pacific and Europe with regards to Youth, Education and Employment.

Mr. Hayat's name has almost become synonymous with Human Resource Development across Pakistan and his prolific contributions in the field of HRD for over two decades took him to all continents of the world.

SYED JAVAID HASSAN, CHAIRMAN NAVTTC

Mr. Syed Javaid Hassan is a seasoned leader with over 30 years of experience across investment banking, insurance, consulting, non-profit, and government sectors. As Chairman of NAVTTC, he has been instrumental in shaping vocational training policies in Pakistan, including leading the Ministry of Education Task Force that developed the "Skills for All" strategy. His leadership at the Hunar Foundation was marked by significant expansion and diversification of funding sources, ensuring its long-term sustainability. Mr. Hassan has also served as CEO of IGI Insurance and held senior roles in Hong Kong's leading investment banks and London's financial sector. His expertise spans strategic planning, policy development, global market expansion,



governance, stakeholder engagement, and organizational growth, with a proven ability to optimize business processes and drive continuous improvement.



MS. SABAHAT BUKHARI - OD / HR CONSULTANT

Ms. Sabahat Bukhari is a seasoned HR and organizational development consultant with over 20 years of expertise in recruitment, learning and development, HR transformation, and diversity and inclusion. She is a certified psychometrics specialist and executive coach, currently championing diversity and inclusion initiatives in Pakistan's industries. Her extensive experience spans global markets, advising organizations on DEI strategies that enhance profitability and operational excellence. Known for her thought leadership in DEI, she has been recognized with prestigious awards like the IFC Gender Diversity Award and GDEIB Award, and actively contributes to global forums such as the World Economic Forum. Ms. Bukhari also provides



tailored HR services, including recruitment across various sectors, DEI assessments, strategy formulation, and training, ensuring sustainable progress in inclusion practices.

MR. SHOAIB SIDDIQUI – FEDERAL SECRETARY OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATION (MOITT) – PAKISTAN

Mr. Shoaib Siddiqui is an accomplished civil servant with a distinguished career spanning over three decades. A civil engineering graduate, he joined the District Management Group in 1984. Notably, he is the only officer to have served as Deputy Commissioner in three districts of Karachi and as Director of Protocol for the Government of Sindh. His leadership journey includes key roles as Additional Secretary in the Education and Literacy Department, Executive District Officer for the City District Government Karachi, and Special Secretary in both the Home and Finance Departments. He also led the Karachi Mega City Program, a significant development project supported by the Asian Development Bank. Additionally, Mr. Siddiqui served as Secretary



for the Livestock and Fisheries Department and the Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Government of Sindh. His extensive experience in government administration, infrastructure development, and policy implementation highlights his expertise in public sector management.



MR. FARHAN MEHMOOD, CEO BEYOND PARADIGM

Mr. Farhan Mehmood, CEO of Beyond Paradigm, is a distinguished HR professional and a valued member of HRDN, where he, alongside his team, played a pivotal role in facilitating online webinars during the lockdown period. As the technical facilitator for HRDN's meetings and webinars, Mr. Farhan significantly contributed to the organization's digital learning journey.

With over 25 years of diverse experience in Human Resource Management, Mr. Farhan is a Certified KPI Practitioner by The KPI Institute Australia and a Qualified Associate of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development UK. His expertise spans multiple industries across the UAE and Pakistan, including Healthcare, Telecommunications, IT Systems

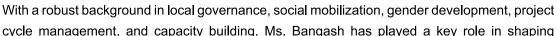


Integration, Pharmaceuticals, Hospitality, Retail, and more. He has consistently delivered exceptional organizational results, supporting leadership teams and driving sustainable growth in the region.

MS. ROBEELA BANGASH, CEO,

Human Resource Development Network (HRDN)

Ms. Robeela Bangash, CEO of HRDN, is a seasoned development expert and a founding member of the organization. She spearheaded HRDN's first HRD Congress in 2003, successfully securing donor funding and establishing the platform for numerous subsequent national and international events.





HRDN's strategic direction. Her experience extends to serving as an International Advisor to the Ministry of Education in Kabul, through the World Bank, where she led critical evaluations, mid-term reviews, and inception missions.

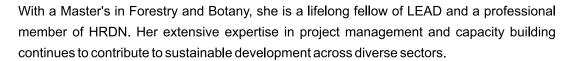
Her expertise in disaster risk management, health/WASH, livelihoods, and the development of training materials and reports positions her as a leader in driving impactful development initiatives. Ms. Bangash's comprehensive approach to capacity building and her focus on delivering measurable results continue to shape HRDN's success in the development sector.



FAUZIA BILQIS MALIK, PROGRAM COORDINATOR-IUCN PAKISTAN

Ms. Fauzia Bilqis Malik is a highly experienced development professional with over 26 years of experience in both national and international organizations. Currently, she serves as the Manager of the Islamabad Program Office for IUCN Pakistan. She has previously held key leadership roles, including Executive Director at HRDN and Project Coordinator for the Farm Forestry Support Project at Helvetas Pakistan.

Ms. Malik's career includes senior positions at CRS, Catholic Relief Services, and HALCROW Rural Management, where she specialized in M&E for on-farm water management. She has also conducted numerous project assessments, evaluations, and training sessions in soft skills, leadership, and team building.





SOHAIL BANGASH, HEAD OF OPERATIONS-PPAF

Sohail Khan Bangash is an accomplished professional with over two decades of experience in project management, enterprise development, and training. As the Operations Lead for the GRASP Project at PPAF, he has successfully implemented high-impact initiatives focused on poverty alleviation and enterprise growth. His expertise spans program design, strategic planning, value chain assessments, and gender mainstreaming. A certified Master Trainer by the IFC and an HRDN Lifetime Member, Mr. Bangash has led projects in Pakistan and Afghanistan, driving capacity building, training, and business incubation for marginalized communities. He is recognized for fostering public-private partnerships and delivering sustainable, impactful solutions in development.



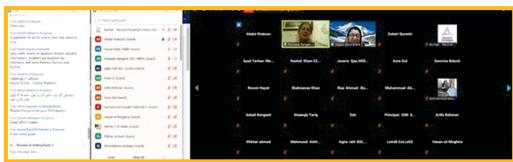


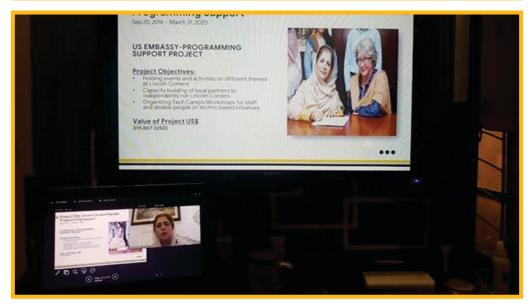
A Pictorial View Annex-B















Press Release Annex-C



CURRENT AFFAIRS

National Herald Tribune



CPEC related projects' completion to usher in era of prosperity in KPK: Asad Quiser

Weid And TI Pakistan and WEF have appreciated NAB's

anti-corruption efforts CHABDIAN NAB

PDM denied permission for Lahore rally

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KPK to recruit 1,900 lecturers on to launch Second merit: Kamran Bangash

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Digitalizing Skills and HR Management focusing on 'New Normal' in Post COVID-19 Pandemic situation

Relief package distributed to the people of Lepa Valley by Shifa Foundation





Human Resource Development Network network #7, Sunrise Avenue, Park Road Near COMSATS University Chak Shahzad, Islamabad, Pakistan