

# **Exploring Human Resource- Role of Work Culture and Working System in Indian railways**

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## **ABSTRACT**

**Key Words:** Work Culture, Work Environment, Organisational Values, Human Resource Policies, Job Satisfaction,

### **Background**

Indian railways have the longest tradition in terms of values and norms followed in the organization. The role of Railways is vital. It has a challenging task with the changing economic, social, demographic and environmental scenario. Efficiency and performance of railways depend on work culture of its various departments.

### **Objectives of the study**

The study intends to highlight the behavioral attitudes of various railway employees working on different fronts. The researcher is interested in a study of work culture, its impact on employees, their job satisfaction levels, commitment to the job.

### **Research Methodology**

The study of work culture was undertaken with special reference to Mumbai division. Direct visits to departments of Mumbai division were the major source of primary data collection. Questionnaires were prepared for two categories. First is for the officers and other is for the operating and clerical staff. The researcher has collected qualitative and quantitative data from different respondent segments. The researcher has applied Chi Square and ANOVA tests for testing the hypotheses. SPSS package is used for analysis.

### **Results**

1. With respect to salary and perks, health and welfare facilities, officers and supervisors are satisfied irrespective of their age, education and length of service. For all other human resource policies, they differ in their level of satisfaction on the basis of either age or education or length of service.
2. Values at top level are independent of designations of officers whereas all other variables are dependent upon the designations.
3. There is no significant difference in the perception of different age group employees with respect to increments, working hours and facilities to women employees but for all other variables, their opinion differs according to different age groups.

### **Conclusions**

1. Inadequate strength of the staff is the most common problem with almost all the departments. The number of staff required and the number of staff available for performing that job is always disproportionate. This creates additional burden on the already existing employees.
2. Shortage of funds is the main reason for all the inconveniences like lack of adequate technology and machinery, furniture, proper water and sanitation facilities according to the opinions of the respondents.
3. The working conditions in the workshops and loco sheds are vulnerable as there are no adequate facilities for the workers. According to many of the respondents, there is heavy absenteeism problem in workshops and the mechanical department.
4. From the overall opinions of the respondents, it can be concluded that most of them are aware about the purpose and mission of the Indian Railways. When they were asked about this particular concept, many of them answered in different ways but the ultimate meaning was one. The service motive of Indian Railways is very well understood by the employees.
5. Human resource in Indian Railways is huge in number and also of varied demographic profile. Employees working for longer period have more faith and loyalty towards the working system and values of the organisation whereas employees working for a short duration are more benefit centric.

# Exploring Human Resource- Role of Work Culture and Working System in Indian Railways

## Introduction

India becomes second most populous country in the world as per 2011 census. Transportation in the Republic of India is an important part of the nation's economy. India's public transport systems are among the most heavily used in the world. India's rail network is the second largest network in the world. The history of rail transport in India began in the mid nineteenth century. It helps to unite the integral, social, economical and cultural foundation of the country. It is also the giant facilitator in terms of employment opportunities.

Being the business capital of India, a large majority of the Mumbai's population are migrants from the other States of India, in search of better employment opportunities. Mumbai's public transport consists primarily of rapid transit on exclusive suburban railway lines augmented by commuter rail on main lines serving outlying suburbs. Efficiency and performance of railways depend on work culture of its various departments.

## Rationale of the study

Indian railways have the longest tradition in terms of values and norms followed in the organization. It is run by Ministry of Railways which plays a vital role in deciding the work culture in railway departments. The Railway Boards execute the decisions taken by the Railway Ministry. Railway is a system which comes into contact with public in general. The existing work culture, job profile of employees, leadership styles, incentives and working conditions influence the efficiency and effectiveness of railways. As huge number of employees of different age groups is working in the organization, there is a need to understand the changing working patterns and also the attitude of employees. The working environment constitutes the major part of work culture. When employees are clear about vision and objectives of the organization, there will be clarity in the nature of job which automatically leads to their efficiency. Moreover, the cordial relations between the levels of management results into the sense of belongingness among employees. The training and motivation to the employees results into the development of confidence and self respect. These components are the direct outcome of the prevailing work culture in the organization. Railway employees, administrative or operating staff have to face the commuters daily in various roles. As the railway network is huge and so the number of commuters, many a times, situation goes out of control. The number of railway staff is less in proportion to the continuously alarming number of commuters. This creates tension and stress among the railway staff. The mechanical and operating work on the field becomes heavy in different weather conditions. Accordingly, the response of the railway employees also changes. Their capacities as human being are limited and also have constraints to behave rationally in different situations. Thus, the study intends to highlight the behavioral attitudes of various railway employees working on different fronts. On this background, the researcher is interested in a study of work culture, its impact on employees, their job satisfaction levels, commitment to the job.

## Review of Literature

1. Mishra Vimal<sup>1</sup> states about the racial discrimination in terms of employment pattern in Railways. In the early years of Indian railways, the officers and supervisors used to be only Britishers whereas drivers and guards were East Indians. The third and fourth class employees were 'Natives'. Europeans protested stongly when the native guards and station masters were appointed on some stations in 1870. The natives were always treated inferior.
2. Wilton Nick<sup>2</sup> has a different approach towards concept of work culture. It is a mechanism by which the organisation can improve the productivity via an emphasis on values which are congruent with what is needed by customers and clients of the organisation. Another way culture might influence productivity is via strategy. Organisations today typically have a mission statement or strategic plan document which provides a blue print for their operations. In addition to positive influences on organisation success, Robbins et al (1998) noted that there can be potentially dysfunctional influences on organisation culture, especially if the culture is strong. He identified three ways in which culture might be a liability for the

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<sup>1</sup> Mishra Vimal, *Pashchim Railway ki Prastuti- Mumbai Local*, Synergy Creations, Mumbai, 2008, p29.

<sup>2</sup> Wilton Nick, *An introduction to Human Resource Management*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 2011, p 48.

organisation, as a barrier to change- if the shared values are not consistent with developing the organisation to enhance its effectiveness, as a barrier to diversity- which can occur particularly as a strong culture which puts pressure on individuals to conform to an existing set of values and norms and as a barrier to mergers and takeovers- cultural incompatibility between the merging companies, can create significant difficulties and hindrances in the merger process.

### **Need for the study**

The study deals with a variety of aspects related to the work culture and working conditions in the internal administration of Indian railways. The policies of Railway Ministry and decisions by Railway Boards are extremely important in deciding the work environment of railway departments. The general managers of divisional levels are the superiors, who decide the work environment of departmental level. They have to follow good human resource practices, while effectively implementing the government regulations. Railways being the principal transport system responsible for the easy commutation of people and goods have to work for the progress of the society which requires a planned order of work related system and values. This organization, primarily a service entity is directly linked to providing smooth transportation facilities to the society at large. This automatically increases the work pressure on its employees. The values existing in the present set up and the extent to which they are followed is the key research problem in this study. Considering the long tradition of Indian railways and huge number of employees, the researcher has following objectives in mind for the study –

- 1. To study basic work culture, values and working system in Indian railways.**
- 2. To analyze the impact of organizational culture on the performance of employees in railways.**

### **Methodology of the study**

A sample design is a definite plan for obtaining a sample from a given population. The study of work culture was undertaken with special reference to Mumbai division. It covers Mumbai city, Mumbai suburbs, Thane, Navi Mumbai and Raigad part. The researcher has determined the geographical coverage of the study, the relevant population, methods of sampling frame, the techniques of data collection and hypotheses testing.

#### **Geographical coverage of the study**

The study is undertaken in the geographical region of Maharashtra State with an emphasis on Mumbai division which covers the following areas:

##### **Mumbai Division**

- Mumbai CST - Dadar - Kurla - Thane
- Thane – Airoli – Sanpada (Trans Harbour Line)
- Kalyan Jn-Kasara-Igatpuri (Inclusive)
- Kalyan Jn-Neral Jn-Karjat Jn-Lonavala (Inclusive)

### **Population of the study**

The universe of the study is all employees of Mumbai division. All administrative levels are covered under the study. There are total twelve departments in Mumbai division and each division has strength of different number of employees. The hierarchy of staff at Mumbai division is shown in table 1.1 below.

### **Sampling frame**

The study has covered a set of respondents from railway employees working at different levels in Mumbai division. This has been specified in the table below. There are twelve departments in Mumbai division. The following table shows the universe size and the number of respondents selected for the study.

**Table 1: Sample size of the railway staff in Mumbai division**

<b>Name of the Department</b>	<b>Universe size</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (Approx)</b>
<b>Personnel</b>	857	34	4%
<b>Accounts</b>	165	07	4.24%
<b>Administration</b>	15	02	13.33%
<b>Commercial</b>	4104	164	4%
<b>Electrical</b>	6107	244	4%
<b>Engineering</b>	6382	250	4%
<b>Mechanical</b>	3411	135	4%
<b>Medical</b>	1377	55	4%
<b>Operating</b>	6906	275	4%
<b>Signal and Telecom</b>	1939	75	3.86%
<b>Safety</b>	154	05	3.24%
<b>Stores</b>	15	02	13.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>31432</b>	<b>1248</b>	<b>4%</b>

Source: Compiled from the field study.

#### **Data analysis**

The researcher has collected qualitative and quantitative data from different respondent segments. The data being varied in nature required statistical treatment by using different techniques. The researcher has applied Chi Square and ANOVA tests for testing the hypotheses. SPSS package is used for analysis and testing of hypotheses.

#### **Results and Discussion**

The research intends to mobilize the work related values that are adored in the railway organization. It emphasizes on the ideal set of values and the action that can be taken to attain the most cherished work related values. The researcher has taken into consideration the work culture in lower level employees as well as higher level officers. The lower level staff includes clerical and operating staff whereas the higher level staff includes the officers and supervisors. Values which were considered as variables were equity, discipline, team work and superior subordinate relationship.

**H1: There is no significant difference in the perception of human resource policies amongst officers belonging to different age, education and length of service.**

The researcher has made comparison among the railway officers and supervisors at various departments in Mumbai division on the basis of age, education and length of service. For testing this hypothesis, ANOVA test is used. The perception about the job was indicated by various variables like priority given to job related factors leading to job satisfaction. The researcher has taken various fourteen important variables that include adequate salary, fringe benefits, promotion, transfer, performance appraisal etc. Their job satisfaction level was analyzed against their demographics.

**Table 2: Summary of ANOVA test for H1**

Sr.	Variables	ANOVA Value	I	ANOVA Value	I	ANOVA Value	I
		Age		Education		Length of service	
1	Salary and Perks	0.826	A	0.752	A	0.099	A
2	Increments	0.136	A	0.001	R	0.019	R
3	Working Hours	0.005	R	0.928	A	0.066	A
4	Shift Duties	0.010	R	0.000	R	0.020	R
5	Training	0.129	A	0.000	R	0.000	R
6	Leave Conditions	0.001	R	0.031	R	0.192	A
7	Promotion Policy	0.030	R	0.015	R	0.005	R
8	Transfer Policy	0.063	A	0.048	R	0.000	R
9	Performance Appraisal	0.211	A	0.004	R	0.004	R
10	Decision Freedom	0.544	A	0.045	R	0.195	A
11	Health Welfare	0.929	A	0.384	A	0.078	A
12	Discipline	0.233	A	0.005	R	0.017	R
13	Rewards	0.643	A	0.000	R	0.000	R
14	Facilities To Woman	0.001	R	0.007	R	0.182	A

Source – Compiled from field survey

(I – Interpretation; A – Accepted; R – Rejected)

The above table indicates that hypotheses for variables 1, 2, 5, 8-13 across age groups are accepted whereas variables 3, 4, 6, 7, 14 are rejected. Hypotheses for variables 1, 3, 11 across education are accepted and variables 2, 4-10, 12, 13, 14 across education are rejected. Hypotheses for variables 1, 3, 6, 10, 11, 14 across service are accepted whereas for variables 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13 across length of service are rejected.

With respect to salary and perks, health and welfare facilities, officers and supervisors are satisfied irrespective of their age, education and length of service. For all other human resource policies, they differ in their level of satisfaction on the basis of either age or education or length of service.

## **H2: Value sharing in the department is independent of qualification and designation of officers.**

The values like discipline, equity are the principle aspects that should govern the work of railway staff. There is deterioration of these values in society at large. The malpractices are rampant which give setback to such values that can develop a healthy work culture. This hypothesis was tested on the basis of questions asked to higher level officers in different departments. They were asked about these values, its importance to the staff and sharing of such values in their organization. Chi Square test was applied to analyse the results.

**Table 3: Summary of Chi Square test for H2**

Sr.	Variables	Chi Square Value	I	Chi Square Value	I
		Qualification		Designation	
1	No consideration for values	0.390	A	0.000	R
2	Values are not shared	0.000	R	0.000	R
3	Values matter only at top level	0.000	R	0.318	A
4	Values are widely shared	0.000	R	0.011	R

Source – Compiled from field survey

(I – Interpretation; A – Accepted; R – Rejected)

Hypotheses for variables 1 across qualification are accepted and for variables 2, 3, 4 are rejected. The qualification of officers and value consideration are independent whereas opinions about sharing of values and value consideration at top level differ according to the qualification of officers.

Hypotheses for variable 3 across designation are accepted and for variables 1, 2, 4 are rejected. Values at top level are independent of designations of officers whereas all other variables are dependent upon the designations.

**H3: There is no significant difference on any of the 14 parameters describing human resource policies of employees belonging to different age, income, gender and length of service group.**

The researcher has analyzed the human resource policies and their perception by the employees at various departments in Mumbai division on the basis of age, income, gender and length of service. For testing this hypothesis, ANOVA test is used. The researcher has taken various fourteen important variables that include adequate salary, fringe benefits, promotion, transfer, performance appraisal etc. Their job satisfaction level was analyzed against their demographics.

**Table 4: Summary of Chi Square test for H3**

Sr.	Variables	ANOVA Value	I	ANOVA Value	I	ANOVA Value	I	ANOVA Value	I
		Age		Income		Gender		Length of Service	
1	Salary and Perks	0.000	R	0.000	R	0.800	A	0.006	R
2	Increments	0.390	A	0.000	R	0.995	A	0.000	R
3	Working Hours	0.463	A	0.000	R	0.398	A	0.000	R
4	Shift Duties	0.589	A	0.001	R	0.005	R	0.000	R
5	Training	0.000	R	0.965	A	0.011	R	0.000	R
6	Leave Conditions	0.021	R	0.000	R	0.466	A	0.000	R
7	Promotion Policy	0.009	R	0.000	R	0.463	A	0.000	R
8	Transfer Policy	0.011	R	0.000	R	0.301	A	0.010	R
9	Performance Appraisal	0.000	R	0.000	R	0.879	A	0.097	A
10	Decision Freedom	0.024	R	0.000	R	0.313	A	0.000	R
11	Health Welfare	0.000	R	0.023	R	0.597	A	0.000	R
12	Discipline	0.000	R	0.000	R	0.050	A	0.000	R
13	Rewards	0.000	R	0.013	R	0.039	R	0.000	R
14	Facilities To Woman	0.865	A	0.000	R	0.000	R	0.067	A

Source – Compiled from field survey

(I – Interpretation; A – Accepted; R – Rejected)

Hypotheses for variables 2, 3, 4, 14 across age are accepted whereas all others are rejected. It indicates that there is no significant difference in the perception of different age group employees with respect to increments, working hours and facilities to women employees but for all other variables, their opinion differs according to different age groups.

Hypotheses for variable 5 across income are accepted and the rest are rejected. It proves that except training, all other variables and the income groups of employees are dependent.

Hypotheses for variable 4, 5, 13 and 14 across gender are accepted and the rest are rejected. This interprets that shift duties, rewards, training and facilities to women employees are independent of the gender of employees whereas all other variables differ according to the gender.

Hypotheses for variables 9 and 14 across length of service are accepted and the rest are rejected. Performance appraisal and facilities to women employees are independent of the length of service whereas other variables change with respect to length of service.

## **Conclusions**

### **General Conclusions**

1. From the overall opinions of the respondents, it can be concluded that most of them are aware about the purpose and mission of the Indian Railways. When they were asked about this particular concept, many of them answered in different ways but the ultimate meaning was one. The service motive of Indian Railways is very well understood by the employees.
2. Inadequate strength of the staff is the most common problem with almost all the departments. The number of staff required and the number of staff available for performing that job is always disproportionate. This creates additional burden on the already existing employees.
3. Employees are aware about the grievance settlement procedure but they are not satisfied with the existing situation. According to them, the actual functioning of this procedure should be made more efficient and quick.
4. Shortage of funds is the main reason for all the inconveniences like lack of adequate technology and machinery, furniture, proper water and sanitation facilities according to the opinions of the respondents.
5. Even though medical facilities are provided by railways, the facilities are not modern and also the medicines provided in the railway hospitals are expired. There are lot of procedural formalities to be completed when one wish to avail the medical help.
6. The working conditions in the workshops and loco sheds are vulnerable as there are no adequate facilities for the workers. According to many of the respondents, there is heavy absenteeism problem in workshops and the mechanical department.

### **Specific conclusions**

#### **Specific conclusions related to officers and supervisors**

- 1 Majority of the officers and supervisors have rendered more than 25 years of service to Indian Railways. It helps automatically to carry forward the organizational values in the department. Majority of them experience interference from superior in their administrative matters. They also experience lot of pressure of work at top level. They also have to face the common problem of absenteeism in their departments. There is no political interference or malpractices like bribe etc. exist in their department.
- 2 Officers and supervisors communicate with subordinates in writing and most communication is generated at top level. The communication is generally work related. Officers have concerns with the subordinates about their problems in work as well as family life.
- 3 Organizational values are highly shared by officers and supervisors. The values inherited by them and followed since many years are purposefully inculcated in new generations of employees.
- 4 According to officials at higher level, employees must follow proper channels as per the rules of the organization. There is no particular style of leadership followed by them. Being the Government entity, the functioning of the organization is as per specific rules and regulations.
- 5 Majority of the higher level officials motivate their subordinates through written words and a pat on back. Some of them assign the special task to the efficient employees which create a sense of confidence in their mind. They also recommend eligible employees for promotion.
- 6 Officers and supervisors interact with people according to their expertise related to the official work. Some of them are socially connected with their staff. This creates a sense of trust and belief amongst employees.

#### **Specific conclusions related to clerical and operating staff**

- 1 Majority of the clerical and operating staff are the members of the union. There are three different official unions functioning in railways. Employees have faith in their working style. They have faith in unions for solving their job related problems. Certain employees have joined union only for namesake and they are not actively involved into their activities.
- 2 Majority of the employees experience stress occasionally. Operating staff like motormen and guards have high stress levels as they have field responsibilities and are connected directly to the



life of public. Also the condition of gang men and khalashis is vulnerable as they have to work on railway tracks at any given time of the day and in all seasons.

- 3 The training facilities available for different category of employees are good but employees have to travel to faraway places to attend these training. They have to stay away from their families for a long period of time for the same. It disturbs their family life.
- 4 The working schedule of operating staff increases their stress level and disturbs their work life balance. Although they are given lot of facilities to compensate for this taxing schedule, they are not happy with it.
- 5 The promotion and transfer policies are dissatisfactory for railway employees. The employee has to wait for a long duration to get his job transferred to his place of convenience. Also, some of the employees have experienced favoritism when it comes to promotion of a staff.
- 6 The performance appraisal pattern of railways is highly criticized as it treats both, the efficient and the inefficient employee at the same level. The additional efforts put by an employee are not considered and are not given any importance. It is very discouraging according to them.

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