

Executive Summary

Indian Railways (IR) is a great national asset, a single transport network, connecting far flung areas of the country. It is infrastructural backbone of Indian economy. With around 65000 RKms of track network & total traffic earnings of around Rs 1,39,838 crores, it is one of the largest transportation and logistics networks of the world which runs around 19,000 trains per day. It runs around 12,000 passenger carrying trains to carry over 23 million passengers per day, connecting about 8,000 stations spread across the sub-continent. It is equivalent to moving the entire population of Australia. It runs more than 7,000 freight trains per day, carrying about 3 million tonnes of freight every day.

However, IR is passing through a challenging phase today. It is facing stiff competition from other segments of the transport sector of Indian economy. Total share of the transport sector in GDP of the India is around 6.7%. The share of IR in overall GDP has been static at 1% and has, in fact, gone down to 0.9% in 2012-13, against the corresponding share of road transport of 4.9% of GDP.

Although the Traffic Density on IR is quite high as per world standards, the growth of the network is not commensurate with the growth of the traffic. Due to resource crunch, the expenditure on Railways, as a percentage of total transport expenditure, has been declining over last few decades. Railway expenditure, as percentage of transport sector expenditure, used to be about 56% in 7th Plan (1985-90). It has reduced

to 30% in 11th Plan (2007-12). IR, in last two decades, has remained under-invested whereas the road sector has witnessed a surge in investments. In the last 64 years, while the freight loading has grown by 1344% and passenger kilometres by 1642%, the Route kilometres have grown by only 23% and Doubling & Multiple route length by only 289%.

The above growth pattern has resulted in large scale congestion of the system, affecting the speeds of movements. Most of the Zonal Railways are in the range of optimal and higher than optimal utilization of line capacity. On High Density Network (HDN) routes, 65% of the sections are running at 100% line capacity or above. Due to under-investment, there has been severe congestion on the network. As a consequence, the system has become unable to accommodate more trains and increase the speed of trains. Due to the lack of physical capacity over IR on key trunk routes, it has not been able to accommodate the increasing traffic demand and more & more traffic is getting diverted to other transport segments, especially the road segment.

In such a competitive environment, IR has to focus on continuously improving its operational efficiency, with optimal use of all its resources, especially human resource, so that the consequent generation of surpluses or internal resources could be used for building the capacity and making the organisation more competitive. Loco running staff, comprising of loco pilots, traction loco controllers/power controllers and chief loco inspectors, constitute one of the most important and critical components of the human resource of IR. The loco pilots drive the trains

and are responsible for safe and timely movement of the trains to their destinations. They are primarily responsible for safety and punctuality of the train operations.

Duty of a loco pilot is quite challenging. He does not have any regular and fixed working hours. Periods of duty at a stretch are around 10 hours and may exceed 10 hours, depending on the congestion of the traffic and spatial distribution of the crew changing points. Stressful driving conditions, lack of regular sleep cycles & fixed periodical rests take a toll on physical wellbeing of the loco pilots.

Most of the times, they are away from their headquarter stations, away from their families and friends. Inability of fulfilling their familial and social obligations also makes their lives more stressful. Rapid technological advancements in locomotive fields make their tasks further challenging. With reducing tolerances on safety and punctuality aspects of the train operations, norms of punitive action against loco pilots for any lapse have become quite severe.

All these factors have been affecting the morale and motivation levels of the loco pilots quite adversely. It may have undesirable effects on their performances and consequently, on overall operational efficiency of IR. It may, therefore, be desirable to study the present motivation levels of the loco running staff in order to have a better understanding of their likely impact on competitiveness of the IR in the times to come.

Every organisation has to strive continuously for improving its operational efficiency in order to maximise its profits and achieve desired growth trajectory amid a cut throat competition. It requires optimal use of all its resources, especially the human resource. Human resource is the most important and precious resource of any organisation. The performance of the human resource i.e. employees of any organisation, depends upon the motivation levels of the employees.

Improvement of motivation level of this critically important segment of the human resource of the Indian Railways will translate into significant improvement in its operational efficiency. Accordingly, the objectives of the proposed study are as follows:-

- To identify present levels of motivation of different grades and ranks of the loco running staff of Indian Railways, with a special focus on Delhi Division of Indian Railways.
- To analyse trends of variations and deviations in the motivation levels of the loco running staff.
- To identify reasons for such variations and deviations in the motivation levels of the loco running staff and to suggest viable remedial measures to improve the motivation levels of the loco running staff.

The study has been conducted on a sample of the population of the loco running staff over the Delhi division and the adjoining divisions, having representatives of different categories of the loco running staff. 500 nos. of employees have been considered in the study. This study utilizes Clayton Alderfer's Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG theory) of Motivation for the analysis. This theory was chosen for its simplicity, practicality and capacity to facilitate the identification of specific sources of motivation in the workplace.

Primary data has been collected through specially designed questionnaire. Section-1 of the questionnaire focussed on personal profile of all the respondents to be surveyed. Details about personal habits such as smoking, chewing tobacco/gutka and drinking habits were also sought. It was done in order to testify the results from different angles. Section-2 of the questionnaire contained items on thirty three motivation factors.

The data collected was analysed demographically as well as item wise. Based on the above analysis, conclusions are drawn. The running staff exhibits low motivation levels on "Existence" motivation factors, indicating under-fulfilment of "Existence" needs. They exhibit moderate motivation levels on "Relatedness" motivation factors, indicating satisfactory level of fulfilment of "Relatedness" needs. However, they exhibit high motivation levels on "Growth" motivation factors, indicating a high level of fulfilment of "Growth" needs. They also exhibit moderate motivation levels on "ERG" motivation factors on overall basis, indicating satisfactory level of fulfilment of "ERG" needs on overall basis.

The above responses validates the stipulation of Alderfer's "ERG" theory of motivation that higher level motivation needs of an individual may be fulfilled even if his/her lower level motivation needs remain un-fulfilled.

Assistant Loco Pilots and Loco Pilots Shunting exhibit under-fulfilment of the "Existence" and "Relatedness" motivation needs. Loco Pilots Goods and Loco Pilots Passenger exhibit under-fulfilment of the "Relatedness" motivation needs.

The running staff of ANVT, NDLS and HNKM headquarters of Delhi division of NR, MB headquarter of Moradabad division of NR and AGC headquarter of Agra division of NCR exhibit low motivation levels on "ERG" motivation factors. The running staffs of the above headquarters also exhibit their low motivation levels on "Existence" and "Relatedness" motivation factors. Besides the above, the running staff of GZB, TKD & SSB headquarters of Delhi division of NR and TDL headquarters of Allahabad division of NCR exhibit low motivation levels on "Existence" motivation factors.

The traction stream of the running staff does not have any significant impact on the levels of fulfilment of their motivational needs and consequently on their motivational levels. Out of 500 respondents, only two respondents belong to female gender. However, they exhibit much higher motivation levels, as compared to their male counterparts.

The running staff, in the age groups of up to 25 years, 25 to 35 years and 35 to 45 years, exhibit low motivation levels on "Existence" motivation factors. The running staff, in the age group of up to 25 years, exhibits low

motivation levels on "Relatedness" motivation factors also. However, the running staff, in all age groups, exhibit high motivation levels on the "Growth" and over all "ERG" motivation factors

The marital status of the running staff does not have any significant impact on the levels of fulfilment of their motivational needs and consequently on their motivational levels. The running staffs, with nuclear families, exhibit higher motivation levels as compared to their counterparts with joint families. The running staffs, with up to three dependent family members, exhibit higher motivation levels, as compared to their counterparts with a higher number of the dependent family members.

The running staffs, with Railway service of less than 15 years, exhibit lower motivation levels, as compared to their counterparts in other service length groups. The responses of the running staffs, in the other service length groups, do not exhibit any significant variations in the motivation levels.

The native place category, the educational qualifications, the mode of recruitment of the running staff does not have any significant impact on their motivational levels. The predominant majority of the respondents does not smoke, consume tobacco/gutka and consume alcohol. These habits of the running staff do not have any significant impact on their motivational levels.

The above data has also been analyzed item wise also. Based on the above analysis and the conclusions, viable remedial measures have been recommended to improve the motivation levels of the loco running staff.