A critical analysis of inculcation and application of core values by Indian railway officers

Dr. Sonali Bhushan Deogirikar

[1](Assistant Professor, Commerce Department, K. J. Somaiya College of Arts and Commerce/ University of Mumbai, India)

Abstract: *Value is a specific code of conduct or end state of existence which is personally or socially preferable to an opposite code of conduct. Every organization has cultivated certain core values which make the organization effective and efficient. The basic problem with respect to government institutions is how such institutions can be made people oriented. Their original structure, the rigid value system, and the traditional ways of operations are the factors that make any organization ineffective. Indian Railways has rich legacy of values and norms that have helped it sustain its place in the country. Basic cultural values in railways have been influenced by the fact that it is a public transportation system. The bureaucratic style of functioning lays down hurdles in the path of developing organizational values.* ***Key words:*** *Indian Railways, Organizational values, Mission*

I. Introduction

Indian Railways being a service enterprise at national level, the purpose of its very existence lies in serving the society. Indian Railways run by Government of India follow the tradition bound value system. No other competing system of transport or technological innovation has enabled a change at the scale that has been brought about by the invention and adoption of railway. 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. The organization primarily a service entity is directly linked to providing smooth transportation facilities to the society at large. The values existing in the present set up and the extent to which they are followed constitute the key research problem in this study. Discipline, punctuality, integrity, honesty, work ethics can be considered as basic work values. The core values are also inculcated in the organization with the help of stories, self-behavior and role plays. It is a strong belief of researcher that core work values when implemented effectively, will help to enhance the performance of railways. It will bring professionalism in their working style.

Dave Ulrich states that organizational values is a pattern of basic assumptions those are taught to the new personnel as the correct way to perceive, think and act on day to day basis. A culture typically is created by a founder or a top level manager who forms a core group that shares a common vision. This group acts in concert to create cultural values, norms and climate necessary to carry on this vision. There can be a dominant culture but also a number of sub cultures. A dominant culture is a set of core values that can be shared by a majority of the organization's members. A sub culture is a set of values shared by a small percentage of the organization's members.

Huhtala Mari describes the increasing importance of ethics in business. According to her research, ethical organizational values have received growing interest in business ethics research. It has been recognized that besides 'getting the job done', it is also important how it gets done and that valuing ethical practices can be a significant asset to the organization. It is also important to acknowledge that even good employees can make unethical choices if their environment does not emphasize ethical values and pressures them to fulfill short-term financial goals at any cost. When ethical values and practices are implemented in the organization, employees feel engaged and committed to the organization, and they feel less pressure to compromise the organization's standards. The research focuses on following objectives:
1. To study the basic core values in Indian Railways.
2. To evaluate the inculcation of organizational values in Indian railway officers
3. To examine the reasons of limited application of organizational values.

II. Hypothesis

Value sharing in the department is independent of qualification and designation of officers.

The values like discipline, honesty, ethical behavior, integrity are the principal aspects that should govern the work of railway staff. There is deterioration of these values in society at large. The malpractices are rampant which result in 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.

III. Operational Definitions

Indian Railways (Aklekar Rajendra) which had a modest beginning in 1853 has since then been an integral part of the nation -- a network that has held together a population of one billion. A self-propelled social welfare system that has become the lifeline of a nation, Indian Railways has woven a sub-continent together and brought to life the concept of a united India. The railways in India are the largest rail web in Asia and the world's second largest under one management. With a huge workforce of about 1.65 million, it runs some 11,000 trains every day, including 7,000 passenger trains.

A railway zone (G. S. Khosla) is divided into a number of divisions. The divisional system has been evolved over half of a century. In view of the multiplicity of organizational patterns on which company railways were based, the organizational uniformity was a slow process. The recognizable system of working on the company railways was the district or departmental system under which the administrative headquarters of a railway was divided into a number of major departments. The districts were generally small which could be conveniently managed by a single departmental officer. The limitations of the geographical boundaries and extension of jurisdiction posed the problem of coordination. Hence, there used to be frequent delay in the departmental system of decision making. The pattern of districts was changed to divisional system of working. Two or more districts were combined to form a division and it became the working unit of a railway. With the introduction of divisional system, there was a conceptual change in the machinery of management. A division became a geographical and administrative entity into which merged the departmental organization at the district level.

Organization (B. S. Moshal) is a man-made system formed by and operated through human beings. Human behavior plays an important role in relation to the existence and functioning of the organization. An applied field of organizational theory where various principles and concepts are applied on human behavior for study and investigation is organizational behavior. It helps in not only understanding human behavior at work but also devise the ways to make human behavior more positive and contributory in the pursuit of organizational goals. It seeks to coordinate and integrate individual goals. It is a systematic and multilevel analysis. It is a multidimensional phenomenon.

Value (Stephen Robbins) is a specific mode of conduct. Values tend to be relatively stable and enduring. Values lay the foundation for the understanding of people's attitude and motivation and also influence the perceptions. They represent basic convictions. Values have both, content and intensity attributes. The content attribute say that a mode of conduct or end state of existence is important. The intensity attribute specifies its importance. Value system is a hierarchy based on a ranking of an individual's values in terms of their intensity. Values are of two types. Terminal value refers to desirable end state of existence. These are the goals that a person would like to achieve during lifetime whereas instrumental values refer to preferable modes of behavior or means of achieving terminal values. Values represent stable long lasting beliefs about what is important. They are evaluative standards that help to define what is right or wrong, good or bad. Terminal values are desired state of existence which is worth striving for. The challenge and reexamination of established work values constitute important cornerstones of the current management revolution all over the world. Values differ across cultures. Cultural values should be considered while understanding the behavior of people in different countries.

IV. Material and Methods

Study Design: Indian Railways is divided into several zones, which are further sub-divided into Divisions. The number of zones in Indian Railways increased from six to eight in 1951, nine in 1952 and sixteen in 2003 and now seventeen. Each zonal railway is made up of a certain number of divisions, each having a divisional headquarters. There are a total of sixty-eight divisions. Central zone of Indian Railways is too large to be covered under the study. It consists of five divisions—Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Solapur, Bhusawal. Considering the total strength of central zone, it was beyond possibility to cover all five divisions geographically. Therefore the study is undertaken with special reference to Mumbai division. It covers Mumbai city, Mumbai suburbs, Thane, Navi Mumbai and Raigad part.

Study Location: This study was undertaken at the eleven departments of Mumbai Division, Central Zone of Indian Railways, Mumbai, India.

Study Duration: December 2016 to December 2017.
Sample size: 172 officers.

Sample size calculation: Systematic sampling was used to select sample from population. Railway officers are divided into three classes viz. class A and class B. Class A officers are called Senior Divisional Officers whereas class B are called Assistant Officers and class C are called supervisors. The total numbers of class A officers are 77, class B officers are 145 and class C officers are 325 in 12 different departments.

Table no.1: Designation of Respondents (Railway Officers)

Sr. No.	Designations	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Officers	67	39.00
2	Assistant Officers	85	49.40
3	Supervisors	20	11.60
	Total	172	100.00

The highly authoritative people in the department were questioned about their working style, work culture and work environment. The designation details are provided through table no.1. The role of these officers is basically overall administration of the department and the staff. They also act as a liaison between the departmental employees and the general administration of the division.

Subjects & selection method: There are total twelve departments in Mumbai Division. The Senior Divisional Officers of each department decides the working style of their own department. They set a particular pattern of work in implementing the higher level decisions in their day to day work. Timely execution of decisions and policies depends on the higher level officers. Following table shows the number of departments in Mumbai Division and the number of respondents selected from each department.

Table no. 2: Name of the department presently working

Sr. No.	Department	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Personnel	8	4.70
2	Accounts	8	4.70
3	Administration	2	1.20
4	Commercial	14	8.10
5	Electrical	24	14.00
6	Engineering	30	17.40
7	Mechanical	23	13.40
8	Medical	13	7.60
9	Operating	33	19.20
10	Signal and Telecom	13	7.60
11	Safety	2	1.20
12	Stores	2	1.20
	Total	172	100.00

The department wise selection of the respondents was done on the basis of number of higher officials in that particular department. Almost all the Class A and Class B Officers are covered in the study as their number is comparatively less. The representation given to the department varies because of difference in its strength. Certain departments are huge and classified into different types of nature of jobs. The departments like Electrical, Engineering, Mechanical and Operating are large in size. Hence their administration is also comparatively widespread. Their percentage of respondents is 14, 17.40, 13.40 and 19.20 % respectively. Departments like Personnel, Accounts and Commercial are mainly dealing with administrative matters of the Division. Hence the number of officials is less. Personnel and Accounts department is represented through 4.70 % of the respondents and Commercial department has a representation of 8.10 %. Stores and Safety departments are also small in size. They both have 1.20 % of the representation in terms of the respondents. Proportionate representation to each department is given by the researcher in this study.

Inclusion criteria:
1. The administrative officers of different demographic profile and different work profile are included in the study.
2. Mumbai division office of central zone is included for the convenience of geographical coverage.
3. Qualification and designation are the demographic profiles included in the study.

Exclusion criteria:
1. Other demographic profiles like age, marital status, gender, geographic location are excluded as they are irrelevant for the study.
2. The subordinates are excluded from the study as the number is huge.

Procedure methodology

This study is based on primary data collection. Direct visits to departments of Mumbai division were the major source of primary data collection. Almost equal representation was given to each department. Since Mumbai is headquarter of the whole central zone, even the headquarter departments have also been covered while gathering the information. A structured questionnaire method was used to collect data. The demographic profile, value systems adopted by the officers is covered through the questionnaire.

Statistical analysis

Data was analyzed using SPSS. The researcher has applied the Chi Square test.

V. Result

One of the aspects of demographic profile considered by the researcher is educational qualification. A person's attitude and perception majorly depends upon his educational background. The emotional maturity of the person is largely related to his level of education. Higher education along with experience facilitates skillful dealing with the subordinates. The table no. 4 shows the educational qualification of the respondents.

Table No. 4: Educational Qualifications of the Railway Officers

Sr. No.	Educational Qualifications	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Under Graduate	7	4.10
2	Graduate	125	72.70
3	Post Graduate	30	17.40
4	Others	10	5.80
	Total	172	100.00

Class A and Class B railway Officers are appointed through the Union Public Service Commission examinations. Nearly 73% of the respondents are graduates. They appear for the UPSC examinations after completing their graduation from a particular stream. The post-graduation degree is obtained by 30 respondents and only 7 are under graduates. The under graduates are mainly from the supervisor's category as they are most senior staff of the department. The graphical representation of the educational qualification of respondents is given below.
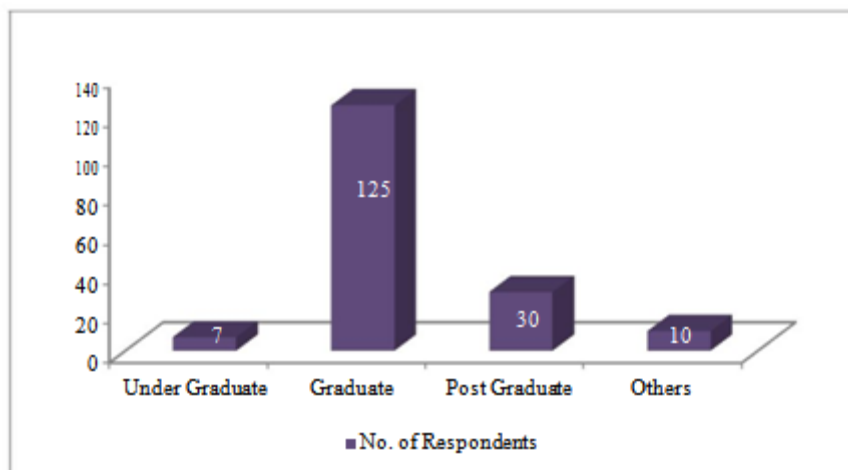
The type of skills required at higher level management is mainly human skills and leadership skills. The officials at these higher posts are very well versed with the leadership techniques to be applied to control the subordinates. The 10 respondents have obtained a professional degree in some or the other field. These officers were seen using their administration skills more effectively than others. There is a growing trend in Railway officers to appear for the professional exams but unfortunately few of them are seen utilizing their skills for the well-being of their subordinates. The higher qualifications are obtained mainly from promotion purpose and nothing else. Previously graduation was a great milestone to get the post of officers. Today the trend has shifted to post graduation and other professional qualification. Changing time brings revolutions in the ideas and concepts of people who in turn implement them into the organization. The support of higher level management is equally necessary to implement the dynamic concepts into the working of an organization. Indian Railways being the example of bureaucratic functioning slowly marches towards such dynamic concepts. The living of people is dependent on the easy and smooth transit to different parts of the states. By keeping this existence purpose in mind Indian Railways has framed the mission and objectives as follows-Mission of Indian Railways

We Shall
1.   Protect and safeguard railway property, passengers and passenger area.
2.   Ensure the safety, security and boost the confidence of the traveling public in the Indian Railways.

The researcher has made an attempt to understand the level of penetration of organizational values amongst the officers in Mumbai division. Officers were asked about the mission of Indian Railways. The awareness of the mission will lead to its actual implementation in the work.

Table no. 6: Knowledge about Mission of Indian Railways

Sr.	Knowledge about Mission	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	No	17	9.88
2	Yes	155	90.12
	Total	172	100.00

The statistics above shows that 90.12 % of the respondents are aware about the mission of Indian railways. Most of them generalized the concept as they did not know the exact wording of the mission. Only 9.88 % of the respondents were not aware about mission.
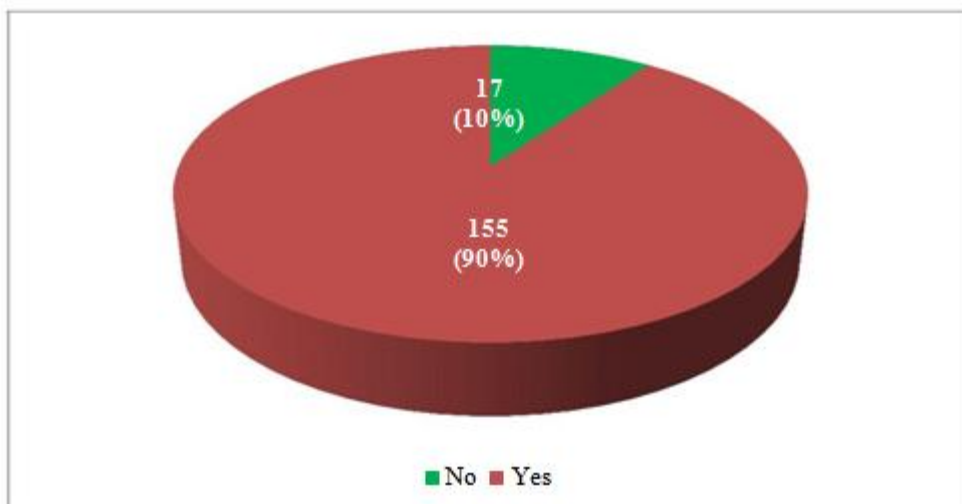
Table no. 7: Core Values and Their Application in Railway Departments

Sr. No.	Application of core values	Yes		No	
		No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
1	No consideration is given for values	129	75.00	45	25.00
2	Values are not shared	125	72.70	47	27.30
3	Values matter at only top level	100	58.10	72	41.90
4	Values are widely shared	38	22.10	134	77.90

The values like integrity, dedication, loyalty are shared by the superiors in the department. Many of the officers are of the opinion that these values are not transferred from their superior authorities. Value sharing and consideration is essential for creating a strong base. But unfortunately according to 100 officers values matter only at the top level and they are not penetrated in the lower layers of administration. The graph above is an appropriate representation of the opinions of the respondents. No consideration is given to the values according to 75 % of the officers. Nearly 73 % feel that values are not shared widely. As per the opinion of 58.10 percent of the officers, values matter only at top level. Only 22.10 % of the officers say that values are widely shared.
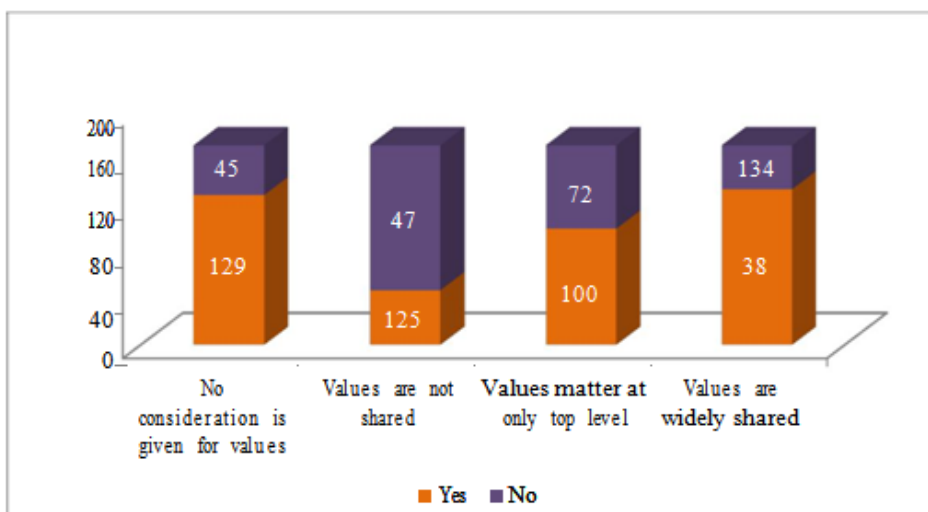
Hindrances in the Development of Core Values as perceived by Railway Officers at Higher Level:

Any person working in a particular organization interprets the work environment in his own way. The officers at departmental level were questioned about the obstacles or hindrances in the development of core values in the organization. Five obstacles were identified by the researcher in development of core values. Interference from superiors, pressure of work, political interference, absenteeism and malpractices are the major reasons. The table shows the statistics of perception of officers about hindrances in development of core values.

Table No. 8 shows Hindrances in the Development of Core Values

| Sr. No.	Hindrances in the development of core Values	Yes		No	
		No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
1	Interference from superior	116	67.40	56	32.60
2	Pressure of work	46	26.70	126	73.30
3	Absenteeism	106	61.60	66	38.40
4	Malpractices	10	5.80	162	94.20
5	Political Interference	61	35.50	111	64.50

Interference from superiors in the development of core values is the main reason according to 67.40 % of the respondents. Every officer has his own working style. He communicates and motivates his team in his own way. But the downward written communication from the higher authorities discourages the departmental officers from establishing a desired culture.

Pressure of work is not the obstacle in inception of values according to 73.30 % respondents. The job profile of every departmental member is fixed and it is the same for years together hence there is no work pressure as such. Since last few years, there is shortage of staff due to voluminous retirements and non-refilling of vacancies. This adds the workload of the already existing employees. The targets to be achieved with limited number of employees within stipulated period of time increase the stress levels of officers. It in turn reflects through their behavior with subordinates. It leaves officers with very little time for development of values and supportive work culture.

Absenteeism is the major problem in the department according to 61.60 % respondents. The blame can be put on large number of leaves granted to the employees. Being the government organization, employees get the benefit of variety of leaves. In addition to that women employees are sanctioned additional leaves like child care leave for two years. It can be applied for by the women employees any time they wish. Certain rules are to be followed for application of such leave. The picture in any department of Mumbai Division is such that at least 30 percent of the staff is absent on regular basis. This disturbs the overall setting of the department and hence the work environment.

Malpractices in the department were identified as one of the tentative obstacle in development of values. According to 162 respondents, there are no malpractices taking place in their department. Even though most of the respondents have denied the possibility of malpractices, the researcher observed that the officers were hesitant to disclose the information. Stores department is the most ill reputed department in Mumbai division. Materials management is the corrupt work area and it demoralizes the honest employees. There are possibilities of frauds and bribing in case of tenders to be invited and selected for the material and machinery required. Even though only 10 respondents support the presence of malpractices, the volume is quite high.

Political interference is also denied by 111 respondents but still 61 respondents accept the fact that there is political interference in various decisions at departmental and divisional level. The political pressure works mainly in case of promotions and transfers of employees. Recruitment is another area where there is large scope for political influence. Especially people from outside Maharashtra are more active in this area.
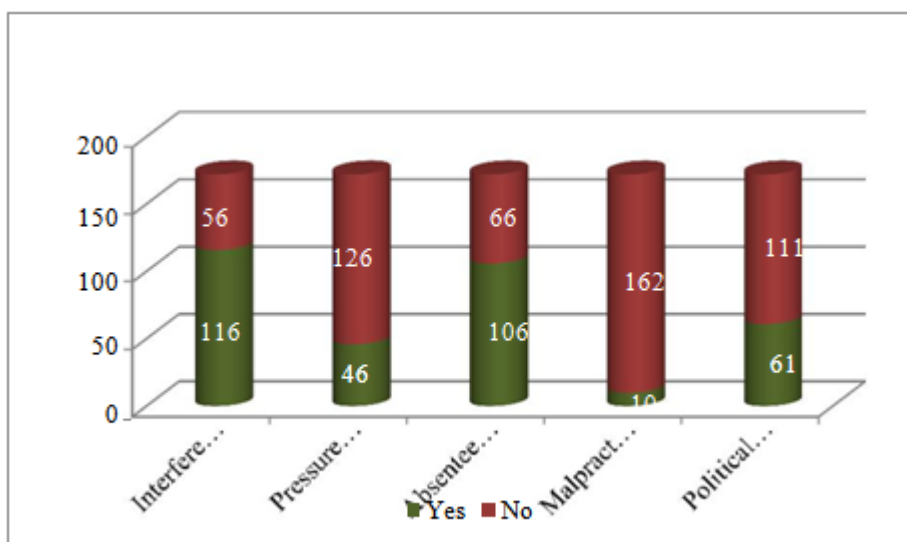
VI. Discussion

Value sharing in the department is independent of qualification and designation of officers.

Value sharing is analyzed against qualification and designation of officers. The researcher made an assumption that value sharing is independent of the qualification and designation of officers. In short it means officers of all designation share values equally. Also their qualification does not matter in terms of value sharing. Chi Square test gives following results.

Table 9: Summary of Chi Square Test for Value Sharing

Sr.	Variables	Chi Square Value	I	Chi Square Value	I
		Qualification		Designation	
1	No consideration for values	0.246	A	0.000	R
2	Values are not shared	0.003	R	0.000	R
3	Values matter only at top level	0.000	R	0.356	A
4	Values are widely shared	0.002	R	0.012	R

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

The value sharing by officers was interpreted in four different ideas. Either there is no consideration for values or values are not shared. Values matter only at top level or values are widely shared. According to general analysis by the researcher values are not shared in the department and they matter only at top level. Officers of different qualifications agree that there is no consideration for values. They disagree with the statement that values are widely shared and values matter only at top level. Hence, this hypothesis is accepted for variable 1 and rejected for variables 2, 3 and 4 against qualification of officers. Analysis of designation of officers against value sharing is showing contras results. The designations are mainly officers, assistant officers and supervisors. The hypothesis is accepted for variable 3 and rejected against variables 1, 2 and 4 against value sharing. The analysis of the hypothesis proves that designation and qualification of officers affect the value sharing in the department to considerable extent. The approach of the officers become wide as they move upward in terms of designation. They become part of management and are highly concerned in maintaining the positive work environment in the department. Their attitude towards employees becomes more constructive. Value sharing in the department is rare amongst railway officers. There are many reasons for it. Even though officers are aware about the organizational values, they are not keen on sharing them. Some of the officers sincerely try for this but many times the unwillingness of subordinates or any other reason restrains them from doing so. Values are highly considered at higher level but less penetrated till lower levels of hierarchy.

VII. Conclusion

Values tend to be relatively stable and enduring. They lay the foundation for the understanding of people's attitude and motivation and also influence the perceptions. They represent basic convictions. The work related values can be inculcated by the officers in their department if they really strive hard towards it. Eradication of corruption is most important. Transparency in the work can change the mind set of employees and they will become more open towards management. While studying the history of Indian Railways, it was observed by the researcher that the culture of railways is impacted and shaped by the British colonial culture. After so many years of independence, the organization has still the impact of the rigid culture. There is need to bring about reforms and replace the present culture. The role of work culture is a vital aspect in the efficient functioning of railways which should connect to the society in the light of changing global environment. Work culture in a railway office affects the morale and self-respect of an employee. Being the public service entity they are expected to follow a particular code of conduct. The officers are keen on developing values in the department. The problems like corruption and shortage of funds hamper their noble intentions. Due to shortage of staff the additional burden is created on the existing employees and automatically stretches the superior subordinate relationships. The role of participative management is vital in case of railway officers. It is observed by the researcher that the Railway Ministry and Railway Board convey their policy decisions to the zonal managers and he in turn passes them on to the divisional officers. The duty of divisional officers is mere implementation of these decisions. The departmental officers are pressurized by the divisional manager to achieve the targets. There is no participation of these officers in policy decision. Railway should inculcate this practice of participative management which will make its policy decisions more realistic. The actual problems and practical difficulties faced by the departmental officers can be discussed face to face and can be considered while finalizing these decisions. There will be sense of recognition and ownership in the minds of officers. Their interest and enthusiasm for work will increase and they will work wholeheartedly for achieving the organizational goals.

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