

Job Satisfaction in the Higher Civil Services : A Study of the Rajasthan Accounts Service Officers

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Introduction

Human rather than capital is the key to development and services in a society. Performance and efficiency of institutions depend to a great extent upon the employees engaged to carry out various activities of administration. Late Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi once said, "If Government has to do more for the people, its employees must play a more dynamic and more creative role as the instrument for implementing government policies and programmes" (Goel 1984 : 3). Speaking about the personnel's role in development, Farrel Heady (1979 : 270) says that "the importance of administration is almost universally recognized amongst commentators on development, visually an effective bureaucracy is coupled with a vigorous modernizing elite as a prerequisite for progress". Therefore, of the three components required for effective and efficient administration and developmental tasks for welfare in a society; namely, men, money and material machine (M³), it is more the men (human element) than any other component which determines the quantity and quality of performance and out-put of an organization. After all, the contribution of money and material to achieve goals of the organization depends substantially upon their manipulation by the 'men' (employees). "Good administration is a composite of effective organization, adequate material facilities and qualified personnel... Even poorly devised machinery may be made to work if it is manned with well-trained, intelligent, imaginative and devoted staff. On the other hand, the best-planned organization may produce unsatisfactory results if it is operated by mediocre or disgruntled people" (Sharp 1961:19). Hence, to pay attention to the administration of personnel is an essential need for performance of the Government. In the personnel administration, job satisfaction of the civil servant is one of the most important factors that determines the performance of the Government.

The Problem

The efficiency and effectiveness of a big organization like public administration depends not only upon factors like high salary for employees, promotional opportunities, advancement, status of job, identification with job, formal and informal relations within the organization but also upon efforts of employees (civil servants) to perform their duties which are the net product of their job-satisfaction. "Job satisfaction, in simple words, is an individual's emotional reaction to the job

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itself. It is a person's attitude towards the job. People spend a sizeable amount of their time in work environment. From any minimally humanitarian point of view, they expect that portion of their lives to be more or less pleasant, agreeable, satisfying and fulfilling" (Dubin 1981 : 236). In an organization like public administration there are several factors related to job satisfaction such as job-security, satisfactory working and service conditions, easy and routine work/ fixed working hours, status, prestige and value of the job, opportunities for personal development, opportunities to learn and improve one's job, dynamics and challenges in the job, adequate administrative and political leadership, incentives and creativeness in the job, delegation of authority for quick disposal of work, equitable salary and remuneration, properly and timely recognition for good and hard work, scientific and objective method for performance evaluation, properly effective training facilities, satisfactory policies and programmes of Government and interpersonal relationship among various administrative groups. Contrarily, job dissatisfaction reflects high rate of resignations, regular absenteeism, disprompt and inefficient working, worst performance, negligence of work, regular on strike, malpractices in functioning, unhealthy interpersonal relationship and lac of clear-cut policies of transfer.

In India the problem of employees' job satisfaction has not yet received sufficient attention of the investigators, though it is a felt need of a developing democracy and welfare state. Moreover, in Rajasthan the job satisfaction among the civil servants has remained almost a neglected factor in social research. Here, an attempt has been made to determine the status of job satisfaction among the Rajasthan Accounts Service Officers (R. Ac. S.). The R. Ac. S. who take decisions and advice the Government in financial and accounts matters belong to the middle management level of the administration. They are selected through a competitive examination conducted by the Rajasthan Public Service Commission and hold the positions such as Treasury Officer, Financial Adviser, Senior Accounts Officer, Chief Accounts Officer and Joint Director (Accounts).

Objectives

The study was carried out with the objectives as follows :

1. To examine the socio-economic background of the R.Ac.S. officers which influences their job-behaviour and attitudes.
2. To know about the service conditions of the officers determining their job-behaviour.
3. To find out the officers' perceptions about the job, job-nature, job contents and job-environment and also to know the work attitude which contributes to better performance.
4. To analyse and examine the interpersonal relations among various groups in the departments/sections under the officers with view to the job-satisfaction.
5. To ascertain the factors like initiative, job motivation, recognition of good work, acceptance of job changes, work innovation and creativeness, which contribute to positive attitudes of the officer towards their job.
6. To identify the factors contributing to or hampering the improvement of administrative efficiency and effectiveness.
7. To assess the work identification of the officers.
8. To know how much authority and discretionary powers the officers have for taking inde

pendent decisions.

9. To test the applicability of Harzberg's hygiene maintenance theory and Maslow's need hierarchy theory in the situation.
10. To suggest suitable measures increasing job satisfaction in the civil services, particularly R. Ac. S. officers.

Methodology

The study is based on oral information elicited through structured interviews administered to the officers posted at all the 31 districts of the State and all the big departments of the Government of Rajasthan. The total cadre strength of R. Ac. S. officers in Rajasthan Government decided by the Government is 500 (475 cadre posts + 25 training reserves, leave reserves, etc.). Of the 475 officers, 77 officers were interviewed through purposive sampling procedure. The questionnaire consisted of 125 questions for collecting information contained three types of questions : 1-open ended, 2-multiple choice and 3-dichotomous answer. The questions covered 10 variables such as socio-economic background service conditions, interpersonal relations in the organization, initiative, job motivation and recognition of work, acceptance of job changes, work innovation job changes, work innovation job creativeness. The study was conducted during August 1996 – August 1999.

Findings

The following are the major findings emerging from the study.

1. The R. Ac. S. officers mainly came from the urban families of civil servants or of some other service background.
2. The average age of the officers is 42.1 years and had less than 15 years service in R. Ac. S. cadre.
3. They joined this cadre due to their own desire as, in their view, the Government job has high prestige, status, salary and prospects.
4. Majority of the officers felt that their jobs are usually interesting and important to the Government as well as to the society.
5. A majority of the officers believed in human relations approach.
6. A majority of the officers felt that the work allocation and responsibilities in Government were based on competence and rational method of selection.
7. The officers in general expressed doubt about the integrity of Government servants in the wake of complaints of malpractices in administration like bribery, economic influence, corruption, delays, negligence, etc. which adversely affected job dissatisfaction. Officers felt that their service matters are intervened by politicians and higher authorities. They do not have enough authority and discretionary powers to decide things on their own. Their employees do not perform their duties and responsibilities efficiently.
8. In general, they were satisfied with their service conditions. Factors like no incentives and proper recognition of extra and hard work, thankless job, no exposure etc. were most unsatisfactory aspects of their service. As such they feel, their service is the best prestigious state service, based on rules and regulations. But they are dissatisfied with their Annual Performance Appraisal Report system. Which, in their opinion, should be filled by the higher officers of their own cadre than the I. A. S. officers.

9. Generally, the officers have friendly relations with their superiors, colleagues and subordinates.

10. A majority of the officers informed that they favoured the idea of their sons or daughters for joining the civil services. Instead, they feel that services in a private business organization are more efficient than the civil services.

Suggestions

The following suggestions emerged from the views expressed by the R. Ac. S. officers for improvement in the services.

1. Higher educational facilities should be increased at village level, so that villagers can also compete for the higher civil services.
2. R. Ac. S. officers should be given training strictly related to finance and accounts.
3. Time to time refresher courses should be conducted by the Government for providing training or updating the officers' knowledge regarding their job.
4. The nomenclature of the service should be changed so as to be the Rajasthan Finance and Accounts Service and the service conditions be restructured accordingly.
5. At least after every 6 years an officer should be promoted or given next higher grade and the promotion should be made through a written examination conducted either by the Government department or R. P. S. C.
6. The APAR should be made more objective by having all entries in it related to the nature of work of the employees. The APAR should be filled by the higher officer of their own cadre than an I.A.S.
7. A clear transfers and postings system should be laid down so that an employee can know about the time of his transfer.
8. Defaulters in the service should be penalized.
9. More authority and discretionary powers should be given to them for quick decisions at their level.
10. Officers should be encouraged to express their views and suggestions regarding the improvement in administrative procedure and Government policies. Political interference should be decreased or curbed totally in day-to-day administration and service matters of the personnel.
11. There should be proper and due reward system for doing hard and extra work.
12. There should be proper maintenance of records, proper work distribution, sufficient equipments like desks, chairs and stationery, etc., supervision by superiors, co-operation and co-ordination among peer-groups and subordinates.
13. Tax should not be deducted in case of the Government employees.
14. From time to time administrative process should be reviewed and restructured according to the changing requirements of administrators.
15. Facilities and opportunities should be increased for individual creative work in Government departments.
16. Committees of legal status should be constituted in the Government offices and departments at every level in administrative hierarchy to meet at regular intervals, discuss the problem of their personnel and give suggestions to solve them.

Conclusion

The over all impression the study gives is that the R. Ac. S. officers are moderately satisfied with their jobs and environment because they are in the Government service wherein all aspects of employees such as recruitment, promotion, salary, working conditions, administrative procedure, superior-subordinate relationships, initiative and motivation, authority to take decisions and nature of jobs, are based totally on finance and accounts rules and regulations. Due to the fixed finance and accounts rules and regulations they feel less pressures and tension than the other administrative officers in administrative hierarchy at state level. A +65 mark of their job satisfaction indicates that they are not highly satisfied individuals. As they are operating at middle levels of Maslow's need hierarchy, we can not call them the self-actualised individuals. They appear to be satisfied upto the level of social needs and +50 mark of self-esteem needs.

The findings of the study also bring out that Herzberg's Motivation Hygiene Theory is not fully applicable in the case of the Rajasthan Accounts Service officers who have a +50 level of job satisfaction. Besides the hygiene factors of job security, easy and routine work, fixed working hours, status, prestige and value of the job, working conditions, salary and cordial interpersonal relationships, only one or two motivational factors are confirmed upto the mark of 65% to 70%. The remaining motivational factors such as recognition for accomplishment, challenging work, increased responsibilities and authority, personal growth and development are not confirmed. The study confirms that the job satisfaction of the officers in Government sector is deteriorating day-by-day. In a nutshell, the R. Ac. S. officers are satisfied upto certain level but not upto the optimum level as desired and required in an era of globalization and privatization.

Note : The paper is a synoptic extract of a project report submitted to the ICSSR, New Delhi in 2000.

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