Personnel problems are commonly present in all organisation particularly in big organisations like the Railways. All aspects of Personnel Administration of N.F.Railway have been detailed in the foregoing chapters. What are our conclusions? I have tried to sum up in brief the conclusion arrived at in different chapters.

The N.F.Railway has employed about 1300 employees (including Officers) to look after the personnel problems of about 88500 employees of entire N.F.Railway. That is, there is one person for every 72 employees to deal with personnel problems. For every 215 employers there is one Personnel Officer to supervise the work of personnel matter of the entire N.F.Railway. Other departmental officers are also empowered to take decision in the personnel problems (like granting leave) of the staff of their departments.

Considering the routine nature of the job, the staff provided for dealing with the personnel branch seems to be adequate. But proportional adequacy does
not mean the overall smooth running of the organisation, since it depends upon the distribution of work to particular unit of the Personnel Branch. As such, it is not uncommon in the Personnel Branch at Maligaon Headquarters that some are overburdened while others loiter about or gossip with their colleagues.

The overall pressure of work seems to be normal. Even then, abnormal delay in settling up some cases are apparent in this department. Complex cases are generally referred to the Railway Board and there may be delay in their disposal. But some cases are delayed abnormally in the department itself. Further, some cases were not finalised even after 5/6 years or more for obvious reasons. This unnecessary delay naturally caused discontent among the employees concerned, leaving scope for criticism.

Therefore, effective supervision and close watch is necessary to find out the difficulties and a perfect and integrated machinery may be set up in the Personnel Branch for the quick disposal of all cases. That is, the Personnel Branch should be re-organised and work distribution should be rationalised.

Classification of the services is not free from doubts. It is not based on the nature of the work done - rather related to the pay scales only. It is not based
on scientific or clearly intelligible principle either - such as the nature of the work done or duty and responsibility. For instance, while there is difference in the qualification required for Class I and Class II services, there is almost no difference in the nature of the work done.

Further, classification is not comprehensive nor is it uniform. It is admitted that complete uniformity in all the departments may not be possible or practicable for the special conditions of the nature of the job. Yet, to minimise the lapses and to pave the way for an objective evaluation of the performance of personnel, as well as to foster the growth of corporate consciousness among the employees, a classwise promotional system may be provided in all the departments. This, of course, be implemented after rendering a definite period of service by an employees with requisite qualification. This will result in the overall improvement of the morale of the services and prevent the development of caste rigidity and exclusiveness among the employees. The administration will also be benefited by an increased productivity of its employees.

Recruitment to the higher grade (group 'A' executive level) is done through U.P.S.C. after observing certain definite formalities and prescribed formul e.
After initial appointment, the officers are sent to different zonal railways (including N.F.Railway) after their training at various institutions /units or centres.

The policy and methods adopted by the railways for the recruitment of these officers are based on the methods suggested by different Commissions. The detailed techniques of the examination and interviews are also not free from criticism - though the system is popular even to-day.

However, until a well designed process of recruitment is discovered - the officers position may be filled up by promotion from the middle level of suitable candidates with adequate qualification, experience and integrity.

In the lower classes - i.e. Group 'C' & 'D' services in the N.F.Railway, the policy and system of recruitment are not bad. But the implementation of the same is flouted by the corrupt officials charged with the recruitment job and consequently many of the selected employees are not of the desired calibre.

A proper vigilance as well as strict observance of prescribed rules and holding tests honestly may result good in rectifying the loopholes.

The overall recruitment position in the N.F.Railway -
particularly in the lower groups is not satisfactory. However, it is expected that the N.F. Railway as a major unit of employment of this region will take positive interest to improve the position.

Training must aim at the improvement of the skill, power and intelligence of an employee. But the N.F. Railway suffers from a great deficiency in the field of training.

Facilities for the Training of Group 'A' Services in the railways are not adequate. Because, there is no scope for advanced studies in technology and management. The National Academy and different staff College provide only preparatory and reorientation training and hardly anything beyond the requirements of the curriculum. As such arrangement should be made in each Zonal Railway for a comprehensive training of officers adjustable to the nature of prevailing service condition of each railway.

Training of 'C' and 'D' Class employees is given at the Zonal level. It is a fact that the present training capacities are not utilised fully in these training schools or units. Nor the standard of training is adequate. The training is imparted in the formal course of routine nature which can give the idea of the particular portion of the work an employee is looking
after. This type of training may suffice to cope with the day-to-day work, but is not adequate enough to prepare an employee to shoulder higher & wider responsibility with improved efficiency.

Moreover, the teachers/Instructors of those training schools/Units/centres are mostly drafted from 'C' Class (Class III) supervisory category - who have limited knowledge and capacity of grasping. They do not have comprehensive training in the subjects and allied matters on which they are required to teach.

In order to overcome the situation and improve the condition and standards of training, the Administration should conceive and pursue certain remedial measure with definite and proper adjustments.

However, the following measure may be considered to tone up the deficiency in training system of the lower classes -

Some of the posts of Instructors of the training schools should be re-classified and upgraded to the gazetted rank. The posts of Chief Instructors (Commercial and Traffic) may be upgraded to the gazetted rank in the Zonal Training School at Alipurduar Junction. Similarly, in the Technical School at Bara Bonaigaon, the posts of
Senior Instructors, Senior Lecturers (Loco, Carriage and wagon) may also be re-classified as that of Assistant Officers at least. These posts should be filled by seasoned administrators, well qualified and equipped with modern advanced system and technique to enable to educate and enlighten the employees about day-to-day problems they may confront in the need of Railway Administration in the changed context.

It is essential that the pay and other conditions of service should be adequate to ensure the recruitment of fully qualified employee for smooth and efficient maintenance of an administration. Moreover, it should be based on the principle that the rates of pay etc. in the public service should be compared well with the services of other governmental undertakings/organisations.

But the scale of pay and other allowances of the railway employees are not at par with their counterpart in the nationalised banks and L.I.C. The democratic principle of equal pay for equal workload is not also properly followed in determining the pay scale for an individual position.
Further, grant of annual increment at a meagre rate as well as increment on crossing the E.B. of an employee is also a point of deliberation.

There are altogether 80 pay scales in the N.F. Railway pay roll (though all of them are not implemented). Out of which first 6(six) are scheduled for Class 'O' categories, next 36 (thirty six) for Class 'C' categories and rest for Class 'B' and 'A' categories. All of them are halted at the last point of the pay range unless an employee is promoted to the next higher grade or scale. Moreover, the meagre rate of increment (particularly to the lower classes) admissible annually could not console the employees from a great discontentment. Efficiency Bar (E.B.) which is related to annual increment only, is also limited to certain categories of lower classes only. The pay scale that starts from Rs.550/- and above do not have any E.B. at all.

Unless an amalgamation is possible, the number of pay scale should be reduced to a limited extent. The range of pay scale should be increased from the halted point up to certain level considering the length of service of an employee. The E.B. system should be eliminated since it has nothing to do with the efficiency of a person for a meagre rate of annual increment.
All these points need to be studied at the Zonal organisational level for proper appreciation.

Promotion advances rank and status, carrying an increased salary and higher responsibility. As such, the principles of promotion should not leave any chance of injustice and unfairness in the process of promotion - as the same is the main object or criterion in the promotional channel of an employee. But in the N.F. Railway, these principles are not always followed rigidly for obvious reasons.

The role of Confidential Report (C.R.) is most vital for the promotion of an employee. The C.R. is an annual report of appraisal given by the superior about the subordinate in the shape of a form which carries entries to determine the adequacy and quality of performance with the general personality and integrity of an employee (irrespective of Class III to Class I). The fitness of an employee for promotion is also commented upon in the C.R. It is written by the reporting Officer in a narrative form evaluated by the reviewing Officer and finally endorsed or countersigned by the next higher Officer.

Although the rating remarks of the reporting authority is vital in overall performance of an employee - cases of disagreement are not uncommon in the N.F. Railway (1). Staff from the position of Senior Clerk and above (including Senior Typists, Stenos etc.) comes under the purview of C.R.

(1) Staff from the position of Senior Clerk and above (including Senior Typists, Stenos etc.) comes under the purview of C.R.
system. Apart from different notions of the aforesaid Officers, there is lack of uniformity or consistency in the method of appraisal. Consequently, the lacuna remains in the rating of C.R. and concerning employee becomes the prey of an unwanted situation.

The Administrative Reforms Commission examined this matter and recommended various measures to mend the condition which was accepted (in 1977) by the Govt. But till now the flaws of the C.R. system could not be modified and rectified altogether. Insignificant symptoms of improvement may appear in some field but not in all general cases.

Further, in times of promotion quota preference is extended to the SC & ST employees regardless to their efficiency and service experience. This causes resentment in the eligible general class employees and the efficiency of administration is likely to suffer by the promotion of such people who generally do not score as good as their general counterpart. Nobody would mind for giving special concession to the backward classes in the matter of appointment. But it matters when they deprive the eligible and considerably senior employee by quota preference.

In the N.F. Railway, a large number of employees (numbering about 52,000) are in the Class 'D' (Class IV) service to whom no educational qualification prescribed —
though some of them are sufficiently literate. They are eligible for promotion to the next higher post and they may be promoted to the regular Class 'C' (Class III) service even. But chance & scope is limited before them.

All higher grade posts are to be filled by promotion either on the basis of seniority subject to rejection of the unfit or in accordance with merit judged through written tests and interviews by the selection Board/Committee. The lists of the higher grades to which promotions are to be made under the aforesaid methods are generally drawn up departments-wise and with possible consultation with recognised unions as the case may be. Yet, some of the posts remain unfilled for a considerable period and some time for years together. For instance - the posts of Traffic Inspector (T.I.) in the Operating Department of R.F. Railway (to be filled by promotion from below) are lying vacant. This resulted delay in promotion of multiple of eligible lower-grade employees in the line of promotion. The employees reaction in this respect is mild enough, though definite instructions were issued by the Railway Board in this respect, which has not been followed.

However, the general expectation is that the R.F. Railway Administration (as an ideal employer) should be conscious of the aspirations of its employees in respect of career development and future prospect. As such,
to encourage the employees towards the improved productivity of the organisation - the benefit of promotion should be extended forthwith - whatever scope remains open in the channel of promotion.

Transfer of staff takes place occasionally in the N.F. Railway as nothing contained in the rules of the Railways prevent the transfer except in certain unavoidable circumstances. Persons employed in the Railway establishment cannot claim transfer (as a right) to other department or Railways. It is, however, open to the administration to transfer an employee in exigencies of service exercised by proper authority as per rule. Further, it is up to the administration to transfer its employees in adequate position or suitable place. In this respect the prevailing condition in the N.F. Railway has not become a paradox. Other than certain categories of employees facing routine changes - most of the employees are not disturbed by facing transfer. However, on the analysis given in the last part of the relevant chapter, it is expected that the N.F. Railway administration will give its due concern to rectify the lapses and points of chances for its own interest.

There are different kinds of leave admissible to the Railway employees and certain procedures are there for availing of such leave. All employees (gazetted as well as non-gazetted) of N.F. Railway enjoying some
concessions in their leave i.e. some extra benefit as per normal rules.

Though the N.F.Railway mostly follow the prescribed leave rules, yet a point of chance need be mentioned about the maximum period of earned LAP of an employee. Leave earned by virtue of actual service rendered to the administration - the maximum period of accumulation is 180 days. Beyond that, leave cannot be accumulated rather lapsed automatically. But when leave is earned by actual service rendered to the administration, why it cannot be accumulated more than the fixed period? It is also a point that leave applied but refused subsequently for administrative interest in some cases - are not recorded in the leave account of an employee.

In this respect whatever may be the suggestion of Pay Commission and implemented upon, a portion of employees always feel discontent when their leave is refused, particularly on administrative interest. After a certain limit the earned leave refused on administrative interest could easily be recorded on leave account of the concerning employee and paid in cash after superannuation since provision is there.

Efficient Railway Administration requires a high degree of discipline and sense of responsibility
on the part of the employees. As such, much emphasis is laid on this vital problem in the administrative and organisational sphere. To cope with the situation arising out of discontentment or other reason whatsoever to that respect, the relevant cases of DAR are generally dealt with utmost rigidity.

The process of taking up any employee under DAR can never be a pleasant task on the part of an administrative authority who is empowered to punish an employee on a particular offence. This may happen for ignorance of procedure of D&AR or lack of proper appreciation of practicability or otherwise in observing certain rules under prevailing conditions. It is this reason that gives rise to many vexatious questions and doubts about the DAR procedure — for which probably there is no ready answer. Rule does not hurt itself. But it matters when it is misinterpreted and implemented at unwarranted situation.

Instead of attaching much importance to the rigid rules of DAR and stringent policies, the solution could be excelled in proper and justified implementation of the rules provided in appropriate cases to make the deficiency wherever exists, with due regard to the constitutional provision of natural justice.

Retirement has been described as the integral
part of Personnel Administration which is evident from the objects it serves. Whatever may be the impact, the social point of view attached to this vital issue is rather emphasized much more than other factors as apparent in the policy of the retirement of Railway employees. It is nevertheless important from the administrative as well as from the employees side, considering the prevailing condition in the employment sphere. Though it may hear sentimental - the question of retirement is a 'Must' in the personnel administration - as a river flows towards the end at its later part.

Excepting some points on the issue of elimination of active & efficient employees (that subsequently causes loss of efficiency to the administration) there is little scope of criticism on the prevailing system and policy of retirement in the N.F. Railway.

Meanwhile some important feature that related to the retirement benefit of an employee need be mentioned. These are -

The Productivity Linked Bonus (PLB) has been introduced and implemented in the Indian Railways in the year 1960. It is intended to provide substantial motivation towards achieving higher productivity by way of increased output by the employees through improved quality of service. The scheme covers all regular employees...
as well as Casual Labour/Substitutes with not less than 4 (four) months continuous service. The number of days for which the bonus is to be paid for a year is announced by the Ministry of Railways. The bonus is calculated according to the monthly wages of an employee. Although the scheme covers employees on wages upto ₹160/- per month - the amount of bonus for any employee does not generally exceed to ₹1,750/- (to the maximum) at a time.

Whether payment of bonus to railwaymen is necessary and just or not is a point of deliberation. To our knowledge many do not support the scheme morally. But, it is a point to believe that with a view to encouraging the employees to use their skill and effort to the advantage of themselves as well as the railway administration, the said scheme was introduced. No doubt it is beneficial to the railwayman, but the administration could gather nothing by introducing the scheme to fulfil its contemplation of increased productivity as conceived.

The Railway Employees Insurance Scheme (REIS) (later on re-named as Employees Group Insurance Scheme) was introduced with effect from 1-1-82. This scheme is applicable to all railway employees with a view to provide insurance benefit at a lower cost and on wholly contributory and self financing basis. The twin benefits of the scheme are (i) an insurance cover to help the families of the
employees (including Railways) in the event of their death while in service and (ii) a Lumpsum payment to employers or to their families on cessation of their employment on account of resignation/death/retirement etc.

The rate of subscription under the scheme are Rs.10/-, Rs.20/-, Rs.40/-, and Rs.80/- per month for group 'O', 'C1', 'C2' and 'A' employees respectively, to be realised from their monthly salary bill. The subscription is partly credited to an Insurance Fund and partly to a Savings Fund (to be held in Public Account of the Central Govt.). From the Insurance Fund payment will be made for an Insurance cover of Rs.10,000/-, Rs.20,000/-, Rs.40,000/-, Rs.60,000/- respectively to the families of the aforesaid group of employees.

Another point need to be mentioned which is nevertheless important since it relates to the retirement of the employees. Before receiving the final settlement dues from the Administration, the concerned employee has to observe many formalities including signing on various papers and forms. These forms or papers are mostly loose leafs subjected to loss or misplace for many a reason. Moreover, the contents and objects of these leafy form and papers are not intelligible - particularly to the lower class employees (Class IV or 'D' group) for inadequate qualification or literacy. Further, some forms are to be filled in and signed now and some at a later stage, causing a great inconvenience to the employees in general. Though Labour Welfare Inspectors (LWI) are there to help the employees - but their timely help and co-operation to this
respect cannot be guaranteed.

As such, a complete 'Booklet' comprising all the forms and papers – signed at a time after briefing the contents and objects to the concerning employees would minimise the inconvenience experienced by them. This will be no extra work, albeit an objective of the Personnel Administration will be ensured in the fulfilment of this legitimate social aspect.