Conclusions
CHAPTER-VII

CONCLUSIONS

Management Information Systems (MIS) can add value to the organization in multifarious ways. It helps the management to improve the products and services produced by the organization. Information system can also facilitate the management to take effective decisions. Further, it helps to create the products and services in order to consolidate the position of the organization leading to competitive advantage.

The job of management is multi-faceted. They have challenging endeavors all through, which must constantly be balanced regarding a variety of ideas, requirements and probable constraints. They have their own set of visionary targets affecting the future of the organization. But the pulling factors are too many, which affect the fulfillment of the targets. The executives have to strike a balance among the factors affecting the achievement of the organizational interests. In trying to bring about a balance among the involved forces, they may face setbacks and combat number of constraints.
Managers do generally appreciate information systems that help them in providing quicker communication facility with effective and purpose oriented material information. They also value the information system that helps in monitoring the various activities of the organization. The MIS that helps the decision-making process will be considered highly valuable. The problem solving processes involve their own set of administrative activities. Decision-making forms a subset of problem solving. Thus, the management information system adds value to the management, in taking decisions on various aspects of the organization.

The APSRTC is one of the state owned enterprises that have been adopting the MIS in their organizational system. The APSRTC is the oldest and the largest public transport corporation in the country providing commuting facilities covering a large number of people, with unstinted service motto. At present, it is functioning with 19337 vehicles and 116131 employees in all.

The performance of APSRTC is satisfactory as compared with that of other state transport corporations in India. The MIS policies and procedures of the APSRTC are the matter of highlights in this regard. The Corporation has been striving hard towards progressive implementation of information technology and its related approaches to generate accurate information. The advent of computerization in the organization has speeded up the process of work. The Corporation has prepared its plans towards the development of Information Technology and total computerization. In a nutshell, the APSRTC is one of the major public sector undertakings, which has been utilizing the Information Technology applications in several of its activities. A sound and effective information system emanates from a well-planned and healthy organizational system. A systematically planned and a flexible organization support the information and vice-versa.
At present the Corporation generates 67 reports covering certain crucial decision making areas. The reports provide useful information to the management at different levels of the organization. All these reports have been analyzed and wherever it is necessary they are redesigned to suit to the needs of the users. In the analysis of the information system in the APSRTC, the organizational structure, information reporting system, layout of reports, filling and accession of data, data consciousness and information effectiveness, user's attitude towards reporting, extent of analysis in reporting, confidence on information, and internal flow of information are studied. In this context, the opinions of number of users (managers) have been drawn.

As the organizational structure and job description are not given due attention by the policy makers it has resulted in lack of data consciousness. The inadequate organizational arrangements are responsible for the frequent abnormal delays in furnishing the required information. Similarly, lack of clear perception and proactive approach to the organization principles has lead to behavioral problems such as negative attitude towards reporting.

The specific conclusions which the researcher could draw from the study are presented in the following lines.

1. The reporting responsibilities of managers at different levels and demarcation of levels of authority appear to have been clearly specified in APSRTC, as it is obvious from its organization structure. However, there is still an element of ambiguity with regard to the duties and responsibilities of Divisional Managers and Zonal Managers to whom Depot Managers are directly accountable.
2. The perception of some of the senior managers of APSRTC regarding organization principles appears to be poor and highlights the need for improving their understanding about this.

3. Though the organization structure of APSRTC indicates existence of four decision making levels viz., Depot, Division, Region and Corporation, for the purpose of Management Information Systems, only two levels viz., Corporation and Region are identified. Depot being the centre of activity should constitute the starting point for initiating any control measure. It appears that adequate attention is not paid to this aspect as is obvious from the absence of any information generation, processing or reporting activity at the depot level.

   There is no MIS wing even at the divisional level though the Divisional Managers are considered as line managers, overseeing the performance of all depots under their control. The little bit of reporting work, if any, at divisional office is carried out by clerical staff or conductors, that too in a haphazard manner.

4. The MIS operations in APSRTC are at present concentrating only on providing information for management control e.g., performance statistics. Their attention towards strategic planning and operational control e.g., information for analysis of new bus routes for nationalization, profitability of operating routes appears to be very less.

5. They divided the administrative manuals as office management, depot management and personnel management and even they prepared a draft manual for MIS. But, due to lack of top management's support and inadequate attention on the part of managers in accounting line, it could not be brought out so far and it has yet to see the light of the day.
6. Identification of responsibility centers appropriate to the level of authority and organizational hierarchy are the integral parts of any control system. In APSRTC, regions are the centers responsible for transmitting or feeding information for decisions-making at the corporate level. But, in practice there is lack of uniformity in this regard because information for decision-making is collected at times, direct from depots and / or divisions without its proper routing.

Thus, information received from centers with different status in the organizational hierarchy, is interchangeably used in the decision making process. This is against the principle of ensuring flow of information through appropriate channel in organization from the point of view of involving right cadre of executive for right decisions.

7. Only Divisional Managers are expected to exercise direct control over the operations of depots. Contrary to the principle of organizational hierarchy, regional managers are also exercising direct control over the depot operations, resulting in absence of unity of command, and operational problems at the level of activity center.

8. The accounting system of APSRTC suffers from serious irregularities such as provision of inadequate depreciation, lack of proper internal check etc. Adequate number of accounting records is not maintained even at the corporate level e.g., records to account for wastage and scrap. The costing systems are still in introductory stage.

9. The monthly performance report submitted to top management is so voluminous that no decision-maker can pay the required time and attention for analyzing such a cumbersome report. The principle of brevity is far from practice. The principle of highlighting exemptions in reporting appears to have been totally neglected in furnishing information for decision-making.
10. There is hardly any interaction between the MIS-Wing and functional departments of APSRTC. A senior manager from finance department expressed the view that MIS Cell in APSRTC is functioning as a personal data bank of the Vice-chairman & Managing Director.

11. The staff working in MIS Cell is inexperienced and less exposed to latest data analysis and interpretation techniques. There is need for deployment of sufficient trained staff in the MIS Cell for improving its utility.

12. Use of different abbreviations to denote the same meaning in the same report is creating confusion to the users of information. For example, in the case of performance reporting, cumulative data in one statement is denoted as “C” while in another statement of the same report, it is denoted as “Z”.

13. The MIS of APSRTC is so disorganized that it is very difficult to trace out information of even the recent past for reference at any time.

14. As the performances of depot managers are evaluated based on the returns compiled by them, there is scope for manipulating or distorting a given fact to his advantage. There is neither verification nor a crosscheck of the data transmitted by depot managers at any stage in the Corporation.

15. There is duplication of work in maintaining some records at various levels. For example, depot managers, divisional managers, regional managers as well as chief traffic manager maintain the route-wise earnings registers at the head office. This indicates insufficient organizational planning and clear specification of work for MIS at various levels. It is possible to achieve sufficient economy in clerical work, cost and stationery through a clear identification of MIS work at various stages in the organizations.
Thus, the reporting system can be improved with appropriate reporting formats, data fields, and optimal use of computer facilities. In some cases the designed reports are complex and cumbersome which further contributed to the negative attitude of the employees towards reporting. The performance of information reporting system appears to be weak on account of the deficiencies in the policy formulation. The policy and performance should be interwoven, interrelated and inter dependent. The situation in APSRTC warrants a thorough revision in the MIS policies for improving its performance effectiveness.

The researcher has designed a new organization system, a clear division of information reports at each level, and formats layout and periodicity of reports based on the need of certain information to the users. So, an effective and systematic set-up of organizational system and reporting system can surely bring laurels to the information system functions in the organization.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

2) S.P. Jain & K.L. Narang; "Advanced Accountancy", Kalyani Publisher, New Delhi, P-II.
6) Valdimor Zwas, "Management Information Systems", Farleigh Dickson University, WCB Group, 1992).
10) Dess (p); "The Role of Information Socio-Economic Growth and Development", In MON. Nataraj etc, 1996.
20) George P. Hason; "Managerial Decision-Making", Glena View, Ill; Scott, Foresman, 1980.
39) Leonare A. Schiestinger and Jane A. Klein, "The First-Line Supervisor: Past, Present and Future".