CHAPTER-VIII
FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

FINDINGS

The policies and practices of HRM play a vital role. Recruitment and selection is the first vital function of HRM. If the management adopts the modern and scientific techniques, it can induct competent, capable human resources. One of the concerns of the study is to examine this aspect. Besides, the management has to adopt appropriate methods and strategies to develop the potential of human beings so inducted in organizations. The study seeks to examine the developmental strategies and approaches of human potential, in Indian Railways.

Objective of the Study

Objectives of the present study include assessing the human resources management practices in Indian Railways and towards this end to study the employment policies, assessing the HRD practices, examining the employee's compensation system, study the industrial relations climate, examining the employee welfare and social security and to study the extent of commitment and job satisfaction among the employees.
Hypothesis

Hypotheses have been formulated relating to recruitment and selection, employee welfare, job satisfaction and commitment, and to study the relationship between these variables and personnel and organisational variables. The objectives and the hypothesis provide the necessary framework for present enquiry.

The data for the study has been collected mainly from secondary sources. However, primary data is also collected and used in the study. The secondary data is mainly collected from the published information's of the Railway department and also from the official records. However, primary data is mainly collected by the discussion with the officials of the department.

The study is descriptive in that socio-economic profile of welfare measures, industrial relations and HRM practices obtaining in the various parts of railways department under study are described in detail. The method of comparative study is also used for bringing out the similarities and dissimilarities of HRM practices in the various departments of Indian Railways.
Human resource is an invaluable asset of an organization for enhancing productivity and providing quality service. Human resources have been considered as the best asset to give support for continuous growth and development of an organization with a view to achieving its strategic objectives. Therefore, development of human resources is the key to organization's success.

Indian Railway (IR), the prime movers of the nation, has the distinction of being one of the largest railway systems in the world under a single management. For last 150 years, IR have played a vital role in the overall development of the country and national integration by connecting remotest corner, link places to people and has been moving essential materials in the time of emergency.

With its modest beginning in the year 1853, with just 34 kms, IR today has grown to a national network of 63122 route kms, moving on an average 1.42 million tones of freight and 13.6 millions of passengers per. IR has also absorbed advances in Railways technology in tune with the requirement of moving large volumes of freight and passenger traffic. Over since reorganization of its zonal
Railways in 2003, IR now has 16 Zonal Railways including seven new zones and eight new divisions.

In the early stages of introduction and development of Railways in India, the then planners were apparently more concerned with the immediate provision of railway service should be organised. Inspite of their anxiety to introduce the service, since capital was lacking with the Government in was thought fit to attract private investment with the Government guarantee of a fixed rate of return, resulting in private companies managing different Railways. This form of management seems to have suited the commercial nature of the Railways. Control over these companies was exercised by one Government Department or another. In course of time the expiry of the periods of contract, change in the political system of the country, the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1948\(^1\) led to the total government take over of all the Railways, and thus they were brought under the departmental form of management.

The management of the railways by the Government under the departmental form, while satisfying the usual

\(^1\) The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1948 has emphasized that the ownership & management of Railway Transport be the exclusive monopoly of the Govt. of India.
departmental characteristics, presents its own unique features as well. Like another Minister, the Railway Minister is a Ministry of the Government of India with a Cabinet Minister at its apex. At the same time the Indian Railway is the single largest public enterprise extending to the nook and corner of the country. Unlike other Ministries, the Railway Ministry, through the Railway Board has a built-in arrangement for self-sufficiency in both functional and auxiliary services. While it prepares its Budget like any other Ministry the Railway Budget is separated from the General Budget and presented separately to Parliament by the Railway Minister himself. Though it has secretariat functions like other Ministries, there is no separate Secretariat attached to the Railway Ministry because it is the Railway Board which performs these functions. Though ostensibly the Railways like other Ministries have work under the departmental form, unlike them they are to bring under the common umbrella, the apparently conflicting commercial and social interest.

The departmental form undoubtedly helps in maintaining the integrity of the nation by providing the essential service as it does, but the chances of this system being put to political misuse cannot be ruled out. For
instance, it is possible to manipulate the railway service to suit the requirements of the ruling party by rushing or curtailing service to a region.

The departmental form suffers from certain inherent limitations. The political control exercised by the Minister in this form goes against the spirit of autonomy, characteristic of a commercial organisation. The danger of political control manifesting itself by influencing the policy decisions cannot be lost sight of. Besides, the protagonists of autonomy of public enterprise will find such an autonomy a Farce rather than a reality, in view of its proximity to the political decision-making level. Although nothing prevents the Minister from intervening in the affairs of the railways, virtually the control by the Minister is a remote possibility, because of the complexities and intricate technicalities involved in its operation.
ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

MINISTER OF RAILWAYS

MINISTER OF STATE FOR RAILWAYS-MSR(N)
MINISTER OF STATE FOR RAILWAYS-MSR(V)

RAILWAY BOARD

CHIEF MINISTER

MEMBER ELECTRICAL
MEMBER STAFF
MEMBER ENGINEERING
MEMBER MECHANICAL
MEMBER TRAFFIC
FINANCIAL COMMISSIONER

SECRETARY

ESTT. MATTERS
ADMIN. MATTERS

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DRY. HEALTH SERVICES
RAPF

ZONAL RAILWAYS

PRODUCTION UNITS

OTHER UNITS

PUBLIC SECTOR

UNDERTAKINGS/ CORPORATIONS, ETC.

GENERAL MANAGERS

GENERAL MANAGERS

GENERAL MANAGERS

GENERAL MANAGERS

CENTRAL
EASTERN
EAST CENTRAL
EAST COAST
NORTHERN
NORTH CENTRAL
NORTH EASTERN
NORtheast FRONTIER
NORTH WESTERN
SOUTHERN
SOUTH CENTRAL
SOUTH EASTERN
SOUTH EAST CENTRAL
SOUTH WESTERN
WESTERN
WEST CENTRAL

CHITTARANJAN
LOCOMOTIVE WORKS
DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE WORKS
INTEGRAL COACH FACTORY
RAIL COACH FACTORY
RAIL WHEEL FACTORY
CAO (P)
CENTRAL ORGANISATION FOR MODERNISATION OF WORKSHOPS
DIESEL Loco MODERNISATION WORKS

CENTRAL
RLY. ORGANISATION FOR RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION

CFIC

IRCON

IRCTC

IRFC

KRC

MRVC

RCIL

RITES

RLDA

RVNL

CONCOR

CRIS

DFCCIL

(As on February 1, 2008)

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In practice the Railway Board enjoys a great amount of operational freedom. Yet, the Ministers is not absolved of his accountability to Parliament for all acts of omissions and commission in the Railways Ministry.

Another serious limitation of a departmental form of public enterprise would be that it suffers from rigidity because of financial centralisation. But by and large, the Railway Ministry has overcome this limitation by separating its finance and accounts from the general finance and accounts.

Yet, another serious drawback of a departmental from of public enterprise is its being bound by normal Civil Service conditions and discipline. But in the case of the Railways, the Class I and II services are not interchangeable with other All India Services because of their functional specialisation. The Railway Board Services too are recruited exclusively for the Railways and are not interchangeable with those of other Ministries. In keeping with the industrial requirements, the non-gazetted staff of the Railway enjoys almost the same rights as their counterparts elsewhere.

Normally, a department or any other public enterprise is subject to close scrutiny by the Parliamentary Committees.
The Railway Board is relatively free from such legislative scrutiny as there is no special committee of Parliament to look into the performance of the Railways, the biggest public sector undertaking in the country. The Parliamentary Committee on Public Undertakings does not cover the Railways & the conventional examination by the Estimates Committee & the Public Accounts Committee is inadequate for Railway requirements.

Similarly, the welfare measures adopted by the Railways, such as Railway hospitals, welfare centres for their staff & families, show a distinction in content and magnitude from other departments of the Government of India.

**Personnel Function at Board Level**

The Member (Staff), Secretary of the Railway Board, Adviser (Industrial Relations), Director (Establishment), Director (Health), Director (Pay Commission), Director (Efficiency Bureau), Director (Official Languages), Department of Industrial Relations, Appointment Committee and Union Public Service Commission, advise, assist and counsel all other managers, members, Chairman and ministers in their personnel function besides managing the human resources in their own departments Personnel staff at
this level help the line managers in making decisions relating to staff matters and they conduct the meetings between management and federations under Permanent Negotiating Machinery and Joint Consultative Machinery to discuss and redress the grievances. They observe the negotiations and help the line managers, in resolving disputes. They help in implementing the decisions arrived at meetings. They also help line managers in formulating training policies and programmes.

The Railway Board is the rule Making authority for all services in the Railways. It need not depend upon either Department of Personnel Home Ministry or Finance Ministry of the Government of India for policy formulation. The Railway Board itself discharges most of the responsibilities relating to railway services either in its capacity as a Ministry or as an executive agency. The Railway Board lays down policies regarding the percentage of vacancies that are to be set apart for internal candidates.

**Organisational Structure at Zonal Level**

As stated earlier, the Indian Railways are divided into sixteen zones, for effective operation and sound management. Each zone is headed by a general manager who is responsible
to the Railway Board for the operation, maintenance, financial viability and proper management of human resources in his zone.

Functional heads of departments at the headquarters and the divisional railway managers at the divisional level assist the general managers. The heads of the departments of zonal railways communicate the matters to the directors concerned at the Railway Board.

The General Manager is assisted by a secretary in is multifarious responsibilities. The deputy general manager (general) and law officer also assist the general manager. The general manager is concerned with manpower planning, health and welfare of labour, maximum utilization of human force, harmonious industrial relations and overall supervision of human resources management in that particular zone.

**Personnel Department at Zonal Level**

The chief personnel officer at the zonal level manages his subordinates in order to assist the functional managers at different levels so as to enable them to concentrate on their functional activities by relieving them from their personnel management responsibilities. Personnel department at the
zonal level is completely in charge of matters such as establishment, wage and salary administration, employee services, labour relations, etc.

The personnel department at zonal level deals mainly with policy matters and significant staff problems. The chief personnel officer is the head of the personnel department who is responsible to the general manager for the efficient management of personnel department at various levels ad for implementation of the personnel policies and programmes. In discharging these responsibilities, deputy chief personnel officers for gazetted and non gazetted services assist the chief personnel officer. In turn, they are assisted by assistant personnel officers for establishment, wage and salary administration, employee services, industrial relations, efficiency bureau and official languages. They also assist the personnel staff at divisional and workshop levels. Besides the personnel department, railway service commissions and training institutions help the functional managers on staff matters particularly on employment and training.

**Organisational Structure at Divisional Level**

Every railway zone is divided into a number of divisions, each headed by a divisional railway manager. He is
assisted by divisional officers in charge of each department corresponding to the organisation at the zonal headquarters.

Each division consists of various departments, viz. mechanical engineering (works), transportation, electrical engineering, signal and telecommunications, security, commercial, accounts, medical and personnel. The divisional railway manager and heads of the departments manage the personnel of their respective departments in running their branches efficiently.

**Personnel Department at Divisional Level**

Personnel department deals with all the personnel matters to the extent to which the divisional railway managers are delegated with the powers regarding Human resources management. Generally it deals with maintenance of service registers, recruitment to Group D post, transfers, promotions, punishments, implementation of Board orders, etc. The divisional personnel officer helps the other functional officers and divisional railway manager in managing the human resources of their departments. Personnel officer also assists divisional railway manager in maintaining amicable industrial relations. He helps the authorities in conducting negotiations between branches of recognized labour unions
and management under Permanent Negotiating Machinery. He also maintains contacts with the staff, and maintains staff welfare. He guides the functional managers on correct procedure to be followed in disciplinary cases and on all personnel problems. The divisional personnel officer is assisted by assistant personnel officers for establishment, wage and salary administration, employee records, employee services, industrial relations and efficiency bureau and official languages.

Indian Railways have large establishments outside the divisional organisation. There are different workshops or units. The superintendent is in-charge of the workshop who is assisted by functional and personnel managers. The personnel officer at this level assists the functional managers and superintendents on all personnel matters while enjoying the assistance of assistant personnel officers.
SUGGESTIONS

The structure of the Railway Board and its practices have changed very little from the time of Acworth. The Railway Act framed over long- long ago and the Railway Board Act framed over many years ago have hardly been amended to suit changing conditions. In order to insulate the system from bureaucratic practices and to inject autonomy and initiative into its mode of operation, the following suggestions are made to bring about certain changes in the organisational structure and the consequent administrative processes of the Railway Board, so that a suitable and beneficial Human Resource Management system may be developed in the interest of both the employees and the Indian Railways.

Policy Formulation

Policy formulations is an important task which the Railway Board is expected to perform in its capacity as a Ministry. The Board as the top executive authority enjoying the Ministry status, is best suited to formulate policies reflecting the needs of the organisational plans and programmes. An added advantage is evident in view of the integration of expertise at its level through different Members [409]
and the Chairman. This unique combination of roles should enable saving of time in processing the policies and in better execution.

A policy is likely to be influenced by various pressure groups at all levels depending on its importance. But the Railway Board as a public administrative unit should provide least scope for such external pressurization.

While a policy may be formulated for various reasons under different circumstances, the strength and quality of the Board lies in its ability to weigh different contradicting considerations and come to the most suitable conclusions. The code provisions should contribute to such decisions and not leave loopholes which could be exploited by other interests to the detriment of the organisation. The Codes formulated when the Company Railways were managed by private businessmen, may not be valid in the present context.

**Recruitment Policy**

The recruitment method at present followed is adequate and fair enough at the initial level. However, for filling to posts at subsequent higher level, there appears to be a need for fresh thinking so that the railway organisation is strengthened by the injection of new blood. The element of
uncontested security prevalent in the Railway services at present needs to be reviewed in the light of its Public Sector Character. Such practice is not unique, for it is already in vogue in all the major industrial and academic organizations. Therefore, while the initial recruitment may continue on the existing system of competitive examination, there should be provision for direct recruitment at intermediate levels as well, thereby leading to a horizontal recruitment system.

**Promotion Policy**

The Board is concerned with promotions to Junior Administrative Grade and above. Large weightage is given to the Confidential Reports and length of service. This system is not satisfactory since the Confidential Reports are not properly designed to highlight the performance of the officer concerned and the comments are likely to be based on personal whims and liking of the reporting officers. The length of service may not indicate the enhance competence of personnel.

Promotion should be by a positive selection method by interview external experts should be asked to evaluate the suitability of candidates as is being done in all other Public Sector Undertakings. The Confidential Reports in their
present form should not be a criterion but a guide to selection.

**Confirmation of Temporary Officers**

The Department Promotion Committee is being misused in matters of confirmation of Temporary Officers, who are already recruited by Union Public Service Commission, a superior authority, and it appears it is usurping an area which is beyond its jurisdiction. Since, the Board has obviously failed in protecting the interests of one set of its employees by indulging in double standards, the Railway Minister and parliament have a responsibility to treat all employees by a common standard.

**Personnel Development Programme**

The zonal railways have not been able to appreciate the need for training at regular intervals to give an intellectual fillip to the officers. As part of the career development programme every officer must be exposed to refresher courses. When officers are sent for specialised refresher courses, instances are not lacking where they have sent those that are about to retire. Thus there is visible gap between the Zonal Heads of Departments appreciating the need for refresher training and the role of the training institutions in
the personnel development programme.

The training institutions are at present manned by officers drafted at random from the Zones without any attempt at finding out the suitability of such officers for teaching assignments. There should be a positive selection process of officers to be drafted to teaching assignments in different Railway Training Institutions.

**Selection of Members**

The method of selection of members to the Board is not a fool-proof one in view of lack of definite weightage to merit. Seniority may be a reasonable criteria but devoid of merit it may not serve a useful purpose. In the words of Herbert Morrison, the Board should be composed of "the brains we can secure." "We must insist upon all the members being persons of business ability and capacity." While Herbert Morrison might have expressed his views in a different context, the logic of the view is quite relevant to the composition of the Railway Board. Therefore, the efficacy of the appointment of career men on the Board needs to be analysed if the Board is to assert its functional autonomy. The Railway Board as a permanent body has the obligation of

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protecting the long-range organisational as well as national interest. Pure careermen while being efficient and capable of dealing with functional subjects may not have the necessary commercial outlook and experience. Therefore, a second thought needs to be given, as to how far it is wise to entrust the management of the nation's biggest public sector undertaking totally to pure careermen.

Association of outsiders with business experience would be beneficial to the organisation while at the same time it would facilitate a refreshing change in the complexion of the Board. Men could be brought in as Members, without regard to seniority, promotion or the normal civil service hierarchy. This kind of an entry system is aimed at making available the services of people in business, the professions, nationalised industry, local government and the universities whose experience would be most valuable to the service.

These outsiders appointed on the Board should also be on full time basis unlike on the Boards of Public Corporations where provision exists for part time appointments. The reason being that the Railway Board Members are also ex-officio Secretaries, which implies that where the supremacy of the political executive is recognized and established, the Civil
Servants should be available for consultation or advice at the command of the Minister and not at the convenience of the Civil Servants. Besides, in a Functional Board, where each member has a definite functional responsibility, his full time attention is a necessary prerequisite.

**Tenure of members in office**

In order to get the best of the Members, the period of their stay in office should be definite and fixed, for uncertainty of tenure kills initiative and drive among the Members. At present the tenure in office is linked up with superannuation. The Minister and the Chairman can hardly expect the right type of advice from a set of "about to retire" Members. Appointment to the Board should be delinked from the career hierarchy and the Members should be appointed on a fixed term. The fixed term principle while attracting a smooth follow of outsiders into the Board, also creates a sense of stability in office for all Members. Besides, an undisturbed fixed tenure would enable Board to assert its autonomy in internal matters. It has an added advantage of enabling the Members to make original contributions to the advantage of the organisation as well as experiment new methods of techniques and watch the results.

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In fact, a Chairman of outstanding competence would be in a position to establish the much needed changed outlook viz., from a departmental career outlook to a commercial dynamic one.

**Chairman's Role**

The Chairman's leadership role has to be highlighted as against that of his functional role. As a leader, there should be least scope for clash of interest in his role playing. Unless his leadership is ion a firm footing, the power to over-rule vested in him may not be used judiciously. As a leader, the Chairman should have open mind and a flexible attitude towards all subjects uniformly. The power to over-rule is significant in his role because of its inherent ability to bring about co-ordination between the Members as well as to secure unity and superiority of command at the Chairman's level' in view of his being the "primus-inter-pares." The power to overrule and functional responsibility are two incompatibles.

Therefore, in the reorganized composition of the Board, there is scope for two outsiders. First, the Chairman could be one, in view of his having to deal with subjects like Planning, Research, Designs and standards and over all supervision. All these would enable him to exhibit his leadership qualities.
The second outside member could be incharge of the revenue earning commercial Department and also Personnel Relations. All others may be selected from within the Railway Services.

**Scientific Liens for Personnel Management Needed**

At present, the Zonal Personnel Department are manned by officers who are drawn from other departments and not those who are personnel experts. This may be one of the reasons as to why most of the non-gazetted matters get polarized to the Board. These personnel officers do not feel obliged to solve personnel problems in their short stay as Personnel Officers. This aspect needs consideration by the Board. It should discourage the tendency of officers to pass on the personnel issues, which are rightly within their purview, to the Board under the pretext of their involving policy connotations.

The Boards business should be to lay down broad policies with regard to the non-gazetted staff matters. Even if references are made to the Board by this class of employees the Board should pass on the papers to the General managers who are fully competent to deal with them.

The problems of the non-gazetted staff have a tendency
to rise up to Board level because of the procedural rigmarole for the redressal of grievance. The three-tier structure of the permanent negotiating machinery brings the Railway Board more and more into non-gazetted matters. The implication of the procedure may help inlocalising the problem. The Board should deal with those problems where major policy questions are involved as has happened recently on the question of reducing the working hours of Locomen from 14 hrs. to 8 hrs. which involved an increase in the strength of running staff, their training and other related problems.

In the case of gazetted officers the rigour of staff relations is comparatively less because of their direct access to the Railway Board.

By strengthening the Personnel Department at the zonal level by qualified and specially trained officers to deal with personnel and labour welfare problems, the Board can easily divest of this work. By the establishment of the contemplated personnel cadre, personnel, management would be on scientific lines.

**Executive Directions**

The distinction made between a general and technical policy is nothing but an administrative arrangement between
the Minister and the Board. In the latter case, it is the Board which is more involved since the technical policies pertain to internal technical problems and are hence left to be decided by the Board.

It is while exercising the Executive Directing Role, in the Board’s capacity as a Ministry, that the advantage of merging the Secretariat and the Executive Units becomes evident.

But, there appears to be a conflict in the areas of operation between the Board and the zone. The Railway Board is quite competent to frame General Rules. At Present, the Board maintains functional chain of command down to the Zonal level through an informal arrangement which makes it appear as if the Board is at the head of the implementing agency. The reason for this kind of an informal functional hierarchy from the zone to the Board seems to be that, while integration of expertise is evident in the very constitution of the Board facilitating the much needed unified approach to various issues cropping up, a similar arrangement does not exist at the zonal level where a single executive the General Manager is to deal with all matters himself, policy execution is no doubt as important as policy formulation. However, actual implementation responsibility
is better fixed on one individual who would thrash out interdepartmental conflicts and rivalries through his impartial approach. The informal hierarchical arrangement existing at present is intended to act as a technical communication channel only. This leads one to think that there is need to co-ordinate the two hierarchical channel.

Directives issued by the Board should have a bearing on national requirements only specially dealing with say the strategic movement in times of emergency or moving food grains to famine areas and so on. The Board should not bring down its level of direction to matters belonging to the lower levels, i.e., the zones. The areas of operation of the Railway Board viz-as-viz, the Zones, if not clearly demarcated, will result in unnecessary interference, curbing the initiative of the zone and as operating agency.

On technical matters the Board is dependent on the Research, Designs and Standards Organisation, Lucknow for advice. Where such advice is lacking the Board should not hastily launch itself into issuing directives.

Ordering the Railways to introduce a new device for use in emergencies is one aspect of the executive for directing role of the Railway Board. But the question is how far is it
justified in getting itself involved in the introduction process itself. The purpose of the Board's directives should be aimed at mere compliance ion the part of the zones and not to land the Board in an operational situation.

**Statement of Objectives**

For any organisation to function effectively, statement of objectives is the first prerequisite. The objectives so prescribed should not be incompatibles for then it would lead to slipshod management. The next step should be the arrangement of the organisation both from point of view of fixing its functions and also endow it with sufficient powers to ensure freedom to design its activities.

The Railway Board has, therefore, to have its objectives clarified, its functions specified and its powers suitably modified. If the Railway Service is aimed to serve the customer, it is its duty to ensure efficiency and safety of operations. But, since it is a public organisation, economy in its operations has to be constantly kept in mind. An attempt to satisfy these three expectations would necessitate the Railway Board to charge for the service in relation to its working cost.

The passenger traffic has never been a source of profit
and the Indian Railways, as a public utility, continue to carry passengers as a measure of social services.³

The welfare activities of the Railways include health and medical service, educational assistance, and subsidized housing. Besides these, an handsome amount of is being paid as contribution to Stage Governments for Order Police, while the Railways maintain the Railway Protection Force at very high cost. In the case of other Central Government Departments, these services are provided by the Government, and not by the concerned departments. In the case of Railways also who bear heavy social burdens, it is expected that the Central Government will provide at least liberal grants in future to subsidize these activities. In many countries, the Railways are compensated for the loss sustained by them ion account of these social burdens by grant-in-aid from the Central or State Government of local bodies for these services.

For the Railway Board to discharge its functions properly, therefore, a clear statement of objectives is urgent. Such a statement would make the position of the Board clear

³ Indian Railways-Central Facts and Major problems February, 1973, p.16.
in the sense that it would know with what objective its policies should be shaped whether to render more and better services.

**Meaningful Supervision**

While supervision is recognized as one of the management functions, it should not necessitate the zones spending most of their time in sending varieties of reports to the Boards as is in vogue. Supervision by the Board should normally be continued only to those issues of areas where Board’s directives exist.

However, effective supervision by correspondence could be, it can never substitute personal contact. Tours, therefore, play a very important role enabling the management to visit the work spots to appreciate the problems better. However, touring by individual members may not serve the purpose, since each Member might tend to give importance to problems of his department only. On the other hand, if the full Board tours, it will be in a position to take an integrated view of each and every problem presented before it. While a single Member may not be in a position to take decisions in certain cases, especially those involving finances, a full Board is always competent to dispose of matters on the spot.
Therefore, touring by the full Board is absolutely necessary, and in fact the full Board meetings may be held in each Zonal Railway by rotation. This would bring them closer to the operating level so as to appreciate the administrative problems besides boosting up the morale of the zonal personnel of all categories.

**Incentive for knowledge of latest Technological Developments to the Officers Needed**

There is no incentive or compulsion for the officers to update their knowledge in keeping with the latest technological developments, since their promotion prospects are strictly tied up with seniority and there is no positive system of selection. As an officer moves up the ladder, even though he is to perform more and more of management functions, unless he is one step ahead of his subordinates in the technical knowledge, he will not be able to play his management role properly. He may not apply the knowledge in the operations of Railway but that knowledge's necessary to establish his superior position in guiding his subordinates.

**Conduct and Discipline of Employees**

In matters of conduct and discipline, the procedure...
prescribed is not conducive to good standards of morale in a public undertaking like Railways. Discipline can be maintained only when the disciplinary cases are dealt with promptly. The discipline and appeal procedure needs to be revised and simplified so that officers are freed from time consuming exercises while looking into an employee’s case and the employees is relieved from procedural tension.

Number of Levels

The three broad levels in the organisation of personnel function, viz., Railway Board, zonal and divisional levels as explained earlier, are further divided into several sub-levels, which result in too many levels in the organisation. Too many levels in the organisation hamper the sound employee-employer relation. It is felt by the employees, general secretaries of A.I.R.F. and N.F.I.R. and the functional managers at Railway Board that it is too difficult for an employee to approach and represent his issue to the functional managers at Railway Board and even at zonal railway, because of the too many levels in the present organisation structure. This is one of the causes for the absence of close personal relations between superiors and subordinates. Cordial industrial relations can be maintained
only when there are sound and close personal relations between employee and employer and among employees. The three board levels are inevitable in Indian Railways. But it may be possible to reduce the sub-levels.

**Separate Personnel Cadre**

Another major drawback of the organisation is lack of professional knowledge on the part of personnel officers and lack of a separate personnel cadre. The personnel manager, besides his experience and knowledge in functional areas, requires professional knowledge for effective and tactful management of manpower. In view of the lack of specialized cadre of personnel officers in railways, any general manager of any major specialisation rising from any of the functional departments is eligible to become member (staff). Under these circumstances, it can be felt that the member (staff) may not perform the personnel functions effectively as he does not posses any special knowledge and experience in handling personnel matters.

In addition, and deputy director from any department or from any specialisation is eligible to become the director of any directorate under the supervision of member (staff). Further any deputy officer at zonal level from any
department or any major specialisation is eligible to become chief personnel officer at zonal level. And, any assistant officer from any department can be promoted as divisional personnel officer. Thus the Railway Board did not fix any basic qualifications, background and area of specialisation to occupy the positions of personnel functions in Indian Railways. As a result of this, it has been criticized that the personnel department in Railways is ill-equipped and too inadequate to be able to carry out personnel function on sound lines. The personnel department on the Railways is hopelessly inefficient and ineffective. There is no full-fledged cadre of personnel management on Railways. Today there is a trend towards professionalisation and specialisation of personnel management evening medium and small scale industries and even for different areas of personnel management. It is abominable to say that yet the Railways did not develop a separate and professional cadre of personnel officers, even though they claim to be the oldest and biggest employer in the country. Hence it may be suggested that personnel department in Railways should be restructured so as to create and develop a separate and professional cadre of personnel managers.
Functioning of Personnel Department

There is also a criticism on the mode of functioning and nature of activities of personnel department in Railways. Personnel department at all levels performs the establishment work, which otherwise could as well be done by the functional departments themselves with additional clerical assistance.

The background in establishing a separate personnel department is to perform strategic and non-operative functions which functional managers may not perform. This limitation may be overcome by creating a special and professional cadre of personnel officers and entrusting only strategic and non-operative functions to them.

Autonomous Corporation for Railways

Another important limitation which stands in the way of effective working of personnel function is that the Railways are at present administered through departmental form and they do not have full autonomy in formulating and implementing personnel policy. It is therefore suggested that railways should be entrusted to as autonomous corporation.

The Indian Railway Enquiry (Wedgewood) Committee
1937, and the Indian Railway Enquiry Committee (1947) under the Chairmanship of H.N. Kunzru had also considered and recommended in favour of setting up an autonomous corporation for railway management.

The two recognised employees’ organisations - A.I.R.F. and N.F.I.R. and their affiliated unions have been demanding the Government for setting up an autonomous corporation. They argue that the workers are now deprived of many benefits and they will be benefited more, as their counterparts in other public sector undertakings, if the Railways are organised as an autonomous corporation. They also feel that if the Railways are independent from Government, it can have a separate manpower policy and can develop human resources with the changing conditions and requirements.

It is not desirable that the State should become the master of nationalised undertakings. They are to be set free from all rigid administrative and bureaucratic methods. Their management may be composed of the representative of the workers, consumers and general interest of the nation. Hence, setting up of an autonomous corporation to manage Indian Railways is a right step in this direction.

The leaders of A.I.R.F. and N.F.I.R. felt that Railway
workers will be placed in a comfortable position (both economically and socially) and Railways will be placed in a better cushion, only when they are administered as an autonomous corporation. It may be felt that Railways will also discharge the social responsibilities, even after the setting up of a separate corporation but it is at the cost of Government.

The organisation of personnel function would be more effective and meaningful when the Railways are managed by a separate corporation. The Railways would be able to develop independent personnel (including pay, allowances and other benefits) policies to suit their own requirements. It is felt that railway employees are likely to be benefited more in the form of increased pay and allowances, employee services and benefits, bonus under the Payment of Bonus Act, better working conditions and working results, employee development, etc.

**Permanent and Temporary Employees**

Indian Railways due to the temporary nature of certain volume of work, inevitably employ some workers on temporary basis. Generally the workers employed on temporary basis may be confirmed and made permanent
employees when the increased volume of permanent work warrants so. So, the total mix of human force in Indian Railways consists of two categories, viz., permanent employees and temporary employees.

Naturally, if the temporary employees are confirmed as permanent employees within two or three years, the employees within two or three years, the employees will have a sense of responsibility and belongingness towards the organisation. Hence, the management may confirm the employees within two or three years so as to improve the loyalty of employees. At the same time, it must be recognised that it is inevitable to keep some staff on temporary basis.

**Female Employees**

The traditional mix of workforce in an organisation is often shaked by the entrance of the female workers in large number. The intensifying role of women in the society, women's liberation movement, growing educational opportunities, more suitability of women to some jobs, attitude of women to the career orientation are some of the causes for broadening the role of women in industries. And they also proved that they are as competent as men, particularly in certain jobs in recent times. Besides all these,
constitutional provision of equality of opportunity for women is the vital factor for their appreciable role in all types of occupations.

It is observed that large number of female employees have been concentrating in certain categories of jobs like clerks, nurses, teachers and stenographers mainly because of their suitability to these occupations.

With the increase in the size of female employees, Indian Railways working conditions, workload, responsibility, etc. In addition, there has been a move towards equality of opportunity with men, equal consideration for employment on the basis of merit, equal changes for all categories of jobs, elimination of undue hardships occasioned by unfair distribution work, etc. In view of this, it may be suggested that the Railways have to provide opportunities for employment of women and various benefits to female employees including suitable working conditions and terms of employment. In addition they have to develop sophisticated motivational and managerial techniques for the effective utilisation of female workforce.

**Determination of Remuneration**

One of the most important factors to be taken care of in
human resources management is the amount of remuneration to be paid to an employee for a fair day's work. Despite the conclusions of morale studies, remuneration is significant to most of the employees as the former constitutes a major share of latter's income. "Pay, in one form or another, is certainly one of the main springs of motivation in our society. Since the wages or salaries of many people are considered inadequate. Remuneration provides more than a means of satisfying the physical needs—it provides recognition, a sense of accomplishment and determines social status. Hence formulation and administration of sound remuneration policy to attract and retain right personnel in right position is the prime responsibility of the management in any organisation.

As far as Indian Railways are concerned, Government play a vital role in determining the pay, dearness allowance and other allowance, as railmen are part and parcel of Central Government employees. Hence the influence of Government policy on salaries and allowances on them is a very important factor.

It is known that the remuneration policy of railways has been based on the remuneration policy of the Central Government employees. Though the Railway Board has
powers to make the policy decisions independently (on paper only), in practice, it has not been allowed to do so. The Study Group on Rail-Transport of the National commission on Labour recommended that, "wages of railwaymen should be decided separately and not necessarily connected with the wages of other civil servants, as conditions of service on railways and in other civil services are quite different. But so far this recommendation has no been are opted by the Government. And even after the recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission, the pay scales of railway employees are not equaled with that of other public sector employees.

**Employee Benefits and Services in Indian Railways**

In consonance with the ideals of a welfare state, the Railways have been pursuing a policy of progressively improving the working and living conditions of their employees. Indian Railways are perhaps the foremost among the other departments of the Government in providing employee benefits and services to their staff due to the simple reason that the nature of duties of majority of railway personnel is much more difficult than those of other departments. A comprehensive scheme of these benefits has been introduced in Indian Railways and many of these have
been provided very liberally to the railmen in order to improve their living and working conditions so as to ensure commitment to their jobs.

The different employee benefits and services introduced in Indian Railways can be categorised under six groups as shown below:

A. Housing Amenities : Housing Facilities including Co-operative Housing Societies.

B. Medical and health Services : Medical Aid including Homeopathic Dispensaries

C. Welfare Benefits : (i) Welfare Organisations
                        (ii) Staff Benefit Fund
                        (iii) Canteens
                        (iv) Consumer Cooperative Societies / Banks
                        (v) Co-operative Credit Societies / Banks
                        (vi) Passes and Privilege Ticket Orders.

D. Educational Facilities : (i) Railway Schools
                           (ii) Subsidised Hostels

E. Recreational Activities : (i) Railway Institutes and Clubs
                            (ii) Holiday Homes

F. Retirement and Old Age Provision : (i) Provident Fund
                                        (ii) Gratuity
                                        (iii) Pension
                                        (iv) Railway Employee’s Insurance Scheme
                                        (v) Railway Passes.
A. Housing Amenities

Of all the requirements of the workers, decent and cheap housing accommodation is of great significance. The problem of housing is one of the main causes for fatigue and worry among employees and this comes in the way of discharging their duties effectively. The railway employees have to live either at way side stations with poor amenities or at big stations where the pressure of population creates shortage of housing stations where the pressure of population creates shortage of housing accommodation except at abnormal rents. With the result, employees often do not get suitable accommodation unless provided by the administration.

It is felt that due to shortage of quarters and non-availability of housing facilities near railway stations, the employees have to stay far from the place of their duty, which causes late running of trains and in turn affect their efficiency. Further the employees are forced to seek private accommodation at exorbitant rents.

The railway administration also encouraged the formation of Co-operative Housing Societies for railwaymen wherever and whenever possible in order to solve the problem of housing accommodation. The railway
management sanctions loans at low rate of interest for acquiring sites and for construction of houses. These loans are recovered in small monthly instalments over a period of time.

In spite of the above measures, more than 60 per cent of the railway employees are yet to be provided with housing facility. In fact provision of housing facilities to all employees is a crucial problem to railways as their employees are spread over 70,000 kilometers throughout the length and breadth of the country. But, due to the special nature of railway employment, the administration has to provide housing facilities to their employees near to their place of duty. The Governments at the Centre and in the States may provide land, construction material and credit at low cost to accelerate the activities of co-operative housing societies. Railways should take initiative (and provide all necessary facilities) in helping the railmen to own houses through the development of co-operative housing societies which minimises railway's burden. This solves the problem of housing of rail workers not only during employment but also after their retirement.

B. **Medical and Health Services**

Today various medical services like hospital, clinic and
dispensary facilities (for all types of illness) are provided by organisations not only to employees but also to their family members. The preservation of health of staff and the prevention of epidemic disease in railway colonies have an important bearing on the effective working of railways. The question of adequacy of medical and sanitary arrangements in railways has drawn the attention of the Railway Board since 1924. Quite elaborate medical and health services are provided to railway staff and their family members, free of cost.

The medical facilities provided are inadequate compared to the growing requirements. It is criticised that there are health centres and dispensaries with emergency beds at less important places. It is also felt that the medical facilities provided by railways are not available to the needy as the former are concentrated in selected areas. But it is difficult too to railways to construct hospitals at every station. However alternative arrangements like providing medical facilities through a medical van or by local doctors may be sought. And the facility of reimbursement of medical expenses may also be provided.
C. Welfare Benefits

(i) Welfare Organisations

With a view to help the staff in personnel matters such as expediting payment of settled dues, settlement of grievances, complaints in connection with sanction of increments, leave, educate them to improve living and working conditions, welfare organisations have been developed under the charges of chief personnel officer by all railway systems. A welfare officer, holding rank of a senior personnel officer, looks after the day to day work of the organisation and has got a big team of welfare inspectors to assist him in the job. The welfare inspectors help the staff personally and collect the grievances, place them before the officers concerned and get the cases looked into.

The role played by the welfare organisation in the matter of removal of genuine grievances of staff has evidently been ineffective, proper training should be imparted to the welfare inspectors so that they accomplish what their functional designation implies. Welfare organisations should be manned by selected persons with special training. These persons should not be frequently changed so as to ensure that they become familiar with the problems of staff in particular
district or division the matters. But still the railways are changing these personnel to other departments. Effective functioning of the welfare organisations may not be possible until the railways stop frequent changes of the staff.

(ii) **Staff Benefit Fund**

Another significant welfare scheme developed in Indian Railways has been the Staff Benefit Fund. Each zonal railway has Staff Benefit Fund to which the railway contributes every year at the rate of per capita grant of Rs. 20.00. The Fund is to be mainly utilized for education of staff and their children, grant of scholarships for technical and higher education, recreation and amusement of the staff and their children, grants to railway institutes, clubs, sports and other tournaments, relief's of distress amusing the railway employees, assistance in times of floods, earthquake, funeral expenses, etc., and the scheme for sickness of the staff, assistance to staff suffering from T.B., for the purchase of spectacles, artificial legs, etc.

The railway employees' organisations and railway administrative have fully recognised the utility of Staff Benefit Fund. The railway management may increase their per capita contribution to Staff Benefit Fund for the benefit of
their employees and their family members. Individual employees may also contribute to the Fund.

(iii) Canteens

Perhaps no employee benefit has received as much attention in recent years as that of canteens. Some organisations have statutory obligations to provide such facilities, and others have provided such faculties voluntarily.

Apart from the staff canteens in the railway workshops, where they are a statutory necessity in terms of the Factories Act, canteens had also been set up at almost all places where there was concentration of staff.

In order to associate the staff increasingly and actively with the management of the canteens, they were being entrusted to committees of management consisting of staff representatives. The railway administration provides the necessary accommodation, sanitary-and electric installation furniture and cooking utensils free of cost and also meet service taxes and charges for electricity consumed. But it has been opined that low quality of material at higher prices are being supplied in these canteens, for which management of canteens is responsible. It has also been felt that the number of canteens are very limited compared to the number of
stations and thereby they are not available to all the staff. Hence it may be suggested that, where there are no canteens, alternative arrangements may be made in local railway station canteens.

(iv) **Consumer Co-operative Societies**

The Government of India accepted the recommendation of the Railway rain Shops Enquiry Committee to encourage the setting up of Consumer Co-operative Societies in 1949. Railway provide accommodation to these societies at reasonable charges and grant special casual leave to the office bearers whenever they are required for the management of these societies. Training scheme with emphasis on business management in retaining was undertaken in the zonal training school at Bhusaval.

The representatives of recognised federations and unions are satisfied with the functioning and the services of these societies. But the individual railwayman felt that the scarce commodities were not supplied by these societies. They also felt that, in some cases, the prices charged by these societies were higher than that of open market. Further they felt that the number of commodities supplied by these societies were too less compared to their requirement. Hence
it may be suggested that these societies may seek the help of State Governments for their effective functioning.

(v) **Cooperative Credit Societies**

The Co-operative Credit Societies in Railways have had their origin during 1920s. The objective of these societies is to encourage thrift and provide loan facilities at reasonable terms and conditions, primarily to railway employees. Every possible encouragement was given to these societies by providing certain facilities, viz., recovery of dues through pay bills of member employees free of charges, allotment of office accommodation at reasonable rent, encashment of cheques from the station earnings and disbursement of loans through pay officers and grant of special passes and special casual leave to the members of managing committees to attend the meetings.

(vi) **Passes and Privilege Ticket Orders**

The grant of free passes and privilege ticket orders is an important concession peculiar to railway employees on payment of the one third of the ordinary fare both on home and foreign lines.

But in contrasts the railway employees are not satisfied
with this benefit since the railway authorities have not been sanctioning required leave facility to utilize this benefit.

But the authorities felt that the passes and privilege ticket orders are misused in a number of times. However, both the employees and authorities should recognise the value of this benefit and use it for what it is actually meant for.

D. Education Faculties

(i) Railway Schools

Railway administration provides the facility of primary, middle and high schools and colleges in those railway colonies where such facilities of requisite standards are not available in or near them and the state Governments or educational organisations are not willing to provide them. Railways also give assistance in the form of grant-in-aid to several other institutions where there are sufficient number of children of railway employees on their rolls. Railways also grant scholarships to the children of railway employees for pursuing technical education. Further, where the children have to go to schools at places other than their parents’ headquarters, the administration provides assistance in the
form of part payment of school fees and boarding charges etc., of these institutions is satisfactory, they are not in sufficient number compared to the requirements. But management often felt that it is the responsibility of State Governments concerned to provide the educational faculties. However it may be suggested that railways may provide educational facilities on required scale and may secure grants from the State Governments or from authorities concerned.

(ii) **Subsidised Hostels**

The Railway administration set up subsidized hostels in major linguistic areas of the country where boarding and lodging were to be provided at subsidized rates for the children of railway employees pay up to mitigate the difficulties of staff who have sent their children away from their headquarters for the purpose of education through the medium of their own language.

It is observed that this facility is not utilized. It is also felt that the performance of these hostels is satisfactory. But due to increase in cost of living, it may be suggested that the pay limit of Rs. 4590 may be increased so that some more railwaymen may be benefited. At the same time, maximum utilization of these hostels may be ensured.
E. Recreational Activities

(i) Railway Institutes and Clubs

Railway institutes and clubs, besides promoting social relations among the railway employees, continued to provide recreational facilities of various kinds to promote esprit de carps among them and their family members. Almost every railway station, big or small, is provided with some form of recreational facility. They subscribe to newspapers and periodicals. They also provide for indoor and outdoor games. Some of the institutes have art sections attached to them which provide dramatic, musical and other forms of entertainment. Railways supply the equipment from Staff Benefit Fund. The number of railway institutes clubs increased from 795 in 1975-75 to 908 in 1979-80 or by 14.21 percent facilities are not properly maintained at a number of stations particularly of small stations. But it is also pointed out that due to lack of interest or otherwise on the part of employees, the available facilities are not properly utilized. However, these facilities may be maintained and utilized by realizing their immense value and through mutual help of management and employees at different stations.
(ii) **Holiday Homes**

As a measure of staff welfare and in pursuance of Government’s policy, holiday homes have been established by the Railways for Group C and D staff at a number of hill stations, health resorts, and other centres with low charges of accommodation, so as to encourage employees to use this facility for rest and recuperation in pleasant surroundings.

**F. Retirement and Old age provision**

(i) **Provident Fund**

No deductions are allowed from subscribers’ contribution and interest there on but Railway contribution can be withheld when an employee is dismissed on the charges of grave misconduct. Deduction can also be made from Employer’s contribution if the subscriber resigns within five year from the commencement of his service without an appropriate reason. The question regarding the type of cases in which the government contribution is to be withheld and the quantum of deduction is to be decided by the controlling authority on the merits of each case. Sometimes decision of such authority used to be based. This trend should be checked and right to deduction should be given to a
committee which may comprise of employees union representative also.

(ii) Gratuity

Gratuity can be divided into two types, viz., terminal gratuity and death gratuity. As regards terminal gratuity, it is granted at the time of retirement or discharge from service at different rates on the basis of length of service, provided the service rendered is continuous and it is subject to minimum qualifying service. If an employee dies while in service, his family may be granted death gratuity at different rates on the basis of length of service. Gratuity amount has been much delayed in a number of cases. This causes much inconvenience to the retired employees. Hence the authorities may minimize the procedural formalities to avoid the delay in payment.

(iii) Pension

It is felt by most of the retired employees (who are interviewed) the Railways are providing retirement benefits on limited scale except those which are to be provided by legislation. But the Railways cannot provide the benefits to the retired employees on par with their regular employees.
However Railways may extend the retirement and old age benefits to their employees so as to have them a feeling of security while they are in service. These facilities motivate the employees for higher productivity.

(iv) **Group Insurance Scheme**

As per Group Insurance Scheme applicable on Railway Employees, A Group D employee will subscribe for one unit, a Group C employee for two units, Group B employee for four units and a Group A employee for eight units which provides for insurance cover of Rs. 15000, Rs. 30000, Rs. 60000 and Rs. 120000 respectively. In the event of promotion of employee from one group to another, his subscription shall be raised from the next anniversary of the scheme to the level of appropriate to the group to which employee is promoted.

Sometimes, a regular promotion is not possible therefore it is made till further orders and the promotion may continue for a long term. If it is so, his subscription level is increased to the appropriate level. However as and when he is reverted to his past the subscription is not reduced. This type of anomaly should be removed.
Trade Unions

The awareness that the federations are ready to challenge management's actions particularly with respect to promotions, transfers, seniority, etc., stimulators railway management at various levels to exercise more care in shaping personnel policies and their implementation. Thus the growth and strengthening of trade unions in railways have been an impetus to the development of sound personnel policies. Certainly it forces management to consider carefully the impact of such policies on its human resources.

The railway federations are being consulted through the meetings of Permanent Negotiating Machinery and Joint Consultative Machinery before a final decision is taken by the management on staff matters. Regarding other matters (which directly or indirectly affect the railwaymen or whose implementation depends on the co-operation of railway personnel) management and labour representatives exchange ideas, opinions and information through the meetings of Corporate Enterprise Group (a scheme of workers participation in management) before a final decision is made. Thus the working of railway unions and federations has its impact on human resources management in Indian Railways.
It may be felt that, railway federations and unions constitute not only a part of railways' organisation but also in important wing of it. If they are mismanaged they affect management of personnel and smooth functioning of railways. Hence it may be felt that the proper management of federations and unions is vested not only with the leaders of those organisations but also with the management of railways. In this connection, the participation of representatives of railway administration in discussing and finalizing proposals of railway federations may be called for. This enables the two parties to exchange ideas and knowledge, to understand each other's viewpoints with an open mind and thereby to avoid all misunderstandings. Thus the management representatives may provide effective plans, organisation and directions for sound management and functioning of railway federations and unions for the common good of both the parties.

The recognised railway federations may invite the railway administration (particularly member staff and adviser, industrial relations) to their annual conventions which are the supreme covering bodies, with the agenda of the convention in advance. Railway federations may also
invite the managements' representatives to participate in working committee meetings, which normally take place once in every three months, for intensive participation. Recognised unions at zonal level may invite chief personnel manager and other representatives of management to participate in their annual and working committee meetings. The unions at divisional level may also invite the management's representatives which include divisional personnel manager to participate in annual and workings committee meetings, with the agenda of the meeting in advance. This enables the railway administration at various levels to participate in the meetings to know the employees' view point, and the way of analyzing the problems by union representatives. Representatives of railway administration may also convey the management's view point about these problems. This common platform makes these two parties to think and analyse the problem from other's view point and in right perspective and make them realise that they are under common roof and striving to achieve the common.

Participation of management's representatives in the meetings of federations and unions particularly at the time of industrial disputes help both the parties to exchange their
contradictory views and discussions about the same problem, and know each other's difficulties. This enables to minimize the jacuna between the view-points of both the parties and help to avert the various forms of industrial disputes. Further, it may also help to solve the disputes in early stages itself. Thus the participation of railway management at all levels in railway federations and unions helps. In strengthen the railway trade union movement and develops sound human relation besides congenial industrial relations in railways.

**Industrial Relations**

It can be observed that most of the important strike were organised the failure of negotiations and consolations. Secondly, the issuing these strikes were relating to wages, allowances, bonus and other economic causes. Thirdly most of the strikes failed in achieving the demand. But, the Government conceded the demands after the strikes. Thus instances the Government were 'stiff and unconciliatory before a strike soft and conciliatory after the strike. And it may be said that if the Government were to be soft and conciliatory before the strikes, the strikes would not have been organised and the health of the railways would have
been sounder that it was in the area of industrial relations. When though the Government have given the right to strike to public sector employees in the country, public sector employees” are obviously subject to a special set of rules with respect to work stoppages, throughout the world. More often it is argued that strike is an inappropriate tactic for public sector employees, though such employees may organise into unions and present demands. They may seriously try to settle them through negotiations and consultations. It is needless to mention that their strikes are economically wasteful and socially unjustifiable.

So it is suggested that public sector employees give up the weapon of strike. But the public sector employees who forgo the weapon of strike should have an alternative and effective measure to resolve their demands. They should also have the right to carry their unresolved demands to compulsory arbitration whose award should be implemented by the Government.

Similarly in Indian Railways also, the employees may give up strikes in order to avoid the inconvenience to the traveling public, industry agriculture, export sectors and to trade and commerce. But there should be a sound effective
and prompt settlement machinery and they should have the right to carry out all the unresolved disputes at P.N.M. and J.C.M. for compulsory arbitration, whose award should be implemented by the Government. And all the benefits offered to other public and private sector employees will have to be extended to railwaymen. Certainly this approach will be of great use not only to railway employees and Indian Railways but to the entire country, which averts the organisational conflicts in railways.

**Working of Permanent Negotiating Machinery (PNM)**

Railway Board in its evidence before the National Commission on Labour 1969 mentioned that, “the Permanent Negotiating Machinery gives a wide scope for dealing with general, individual and collective grievances. This machinery has contributed towards promoting industrial harmony of railways. Railway Board has often told general managers of zonal railways that P.N.M. should function in the spirit in which it was set up, for maintain contact with labour and resolving disputes which may arise between the labour and the administration.

But, the above analysis establishes that most of the grievances ventilated by unions and federations were not
settled favourably and many of the discontents were kept pending. A number of important disputes covering a large number of employees have remained unresolved and they are going on accumulating. Thus there was undue delay in disposing of the outstanding items.

Many union leaders at different levels criticised that "from the official side, meetings are conducted with least seriousness; no attempt is made to finalise the cases in time; there is always a tendency to brush off subjects without coming to conclusions. More than anything else, the bureaucratic and high handed behaviour of the officers especially at the divisional level has almost spoiled the purpose for which this machinery has been set up. Free and frank discussions, desire to convince and get convinced are totally absent. Every matter is made a matter of prestige and the tradition of prestige is zealously guarded by all higher officers.

According to the federations, the main causes for the limited success of the P.N.M. have been:

(i) irregularities in conducting meetings and delay in implementing (in some cases non-implementing) decisions on the part of administration;
(ii) garbled version of federations' case by the rank and file management to the Board when it is not settled amicably at their level;

(iii) decisions are taken at P.N.M. meetings base don more by prestige of the management than the merits of a case;

(iv) the Board is not bound to accept the recommendations of the ad hoc Tribunal.

(v) absence of 'humane approach on the part of Railway administration from top to bottom in dealing with labour problems.

Thus the federation views can be that though the P.N.M. has been a suitable common platform to settle the grievances and to maintain cordial industrial relations, it did not achieve the laudable objectives, because of the non-cooperative attitude of the management.

The administration also criticises that federations are responsible for the limited success of the P.N.M. on the grounds that;

(i) there is a tendency on the part of the federations to offer too many items, most of them are not having proper ground of cause for inclusion on the agenda; and
(ii) there is no co-ordination and co-operation between the two federation.

Insignificant and routine grievances may be redressed in discussions between the Secretaries of the Federations and the Personnel Officer concerned or otherwise, so that, too many items need not be included on the agenda. In this connection, the General Secretary of A.I.R.F. commented that, "the unions may not be compelled to put up a heavy agenda for discussion, for these meetings, if the problems are otherwise solved.

Meetings may be conducted regularly as per the schedules and sufficient time may be allotted for every meeting to clear the items on the agenda. Administration may work with co-operative mood and redress the grievances sympathetically to ensure cordial relations. Management will have to ensure proper and timely implementation of decisions arrived at P.N.M. meetings. The labour representatives argue the All disputes must be settled by collective bargaining. In default of settlement, the dispute should be referred to compulsory arbitration or adjudication for final settlement and decision be finding on all parties.
Working of Joint Consultative Machinery (JMC)

The J.C.M. has been regarded as an important step in the right direction towards stable and sound industrial relations in the Government services and undertaking. The Chairman of the National Council of J.C.M. described the introduction of the scheme as "the beginning of a new chapter and an era of fruitful co-operation between he Government and their employees.

But, it has been criticized that so far as the railways are concerned, J.C.M. does amount to duplication of the P.N.M. The only distinct feature is that, there is an arrangement of compulsory arbitration in J.C.M. while there is voluntary arbitration arrangement in P.N.M. scheme. It is pointed out that the common items were discussed both in P.N.M. and J.C.M., which led to duplication in functioning of these two machineries and too many levels in grievance procedure.

Another criticism of the J.C.M. scheme is that the coverage of industrial disputes for the purpose of compulsory arbitration is limited. But, the matter which is not covered for the purpose of arbitration under J.C.M. is not capable of assuming industrial importance. However, it may be suggested that all items should be made eligible for
compulsory arbitrations as to minimise industrial conflicts.

The above analysis shows that various employee benefits and services provided in railways, although of gigantic dimensions, do not prove adequate for a vast and enlightened workforce in modern times. It is alleged that there is a peculiar apathy towards improving welfare measures for railway staff and their families. It is pointed out that other public and private sector organisations provided more fringe benefits than the Indian Railways.

Inadequacy of financial resources is one important reason pointed out by the Railway administration in opposing the demand for extension of employee benefits and services. But the employee's camps strongly criticized that the Indian Railways have been doing more favour to the public and other industries than to their own staff by accepting the social burden. It is pointed out that railways have been discharging the social burden at the cost of their own employees. Hence it may be suggested that, the Railways may minimize the cost of social burden and ask the Government to subsidize the social cost as the Governments in other countries are doing. With additional resources thus available, the Railways may enhance the benefits to their employees.
Railways, being the biggest employer in India, have an obligation to become an ideal employer in the country in all respects including the welfare of their employees. This will help to maximise employee contribution to organisational goals.