

EMPLOYEES' MORALE- A STUDY OF DIRECTORATE OF HORTICULTURE NAVBAHAR, SHIMLA (H.P)

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ABSTRACT

Employees' morale determines the success and growth of an organisation. The study conducted on a random sample of 70 employees working in Directorate of Horticulture, Navbahar (Shimla) revealed that though majority of them perceived working environment as good to very good, and satisfied with their job, yet their opinion on freedom of expression, appreciation of work/ideas and involvement in decision making were not found to be encouraging. Hence, it was suggested by the study that there should be proper mechanism of grievance handling, proper process for compensatory benefits, and provision for incentives to the dedicated and hardworking employees besides enhancing their participation in decision making process to boost up the morale of the employees in the organisation.

KEYWORDS: *Morale, Working Environment, Incentives, Grievance, Compensatory Benefits*

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INTRODUCTION

Morale is an individual's mental condition and attitude which determines his/her willingness to cooperate with others in the accomplishment of organisation's objectives. The human resource experts as well as the line managers are now paying much attention to the problems of motivation and morale in their organisations.

The State Department of Horticulture Navbahar, Shimla which came into existence in the year 1970 aimed at building the prosperous Himachal through scientific development of Horticulture by harnessing natural resources of the State. Though the Directorate of Horticulture has been serving the farming community for the last five decades or so; and has contributed significantly to the development of Horticulture in the State yet no systematic study has been conducted to know the level of "morale" among the employees working at the Directorate of Horticulture. Keeping this view, the present study was undertaken with the following specific objectives:

- To find out employees' morale in the organization under study.
- To determine the level of job satisfaction among the employees
- To provide suggestive measures for boosting /enhancing the employees' morale

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the Directorate of Horticulture Navbahar Shimla (H.P).A list of all the employees working in the Directorate was prepared .Out of this list, a random sample of 70 employees' was taken for the purpose of the present study. The respondents comprised of Horticulture Extension Officers (HEOs), Demonstrators, Lab Technicians, Clerks, Laboratory Assistants, Superintendents, Quality Inspectors and Gardeners. Employees' morale was measured on the basis of the determinants of morale given by Roach (1958) with necessary modifications.

Employees' morale was operationalized as the willingness of an employee (working in the Directorate of Horticulture Shimla), to co-operate with others in the accomplishment of its organizational objectives. In other words, it referred the extent to which employees were enthusiastic and optimistic about the group activities, satisfied with their job and friendly to each other. If the employees felt dissatisfied, pessimistic and irritated, their morale was considered to be low/poor in the organization. The data were collected with the help of well -structured and pre -tested interview schedule by personally interviewing the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main findings of the study are discussed in the following sub-heads:

Socio-Personal Profile of the Respondents

The demographic profiles of the respondents have been presented in the Table-1.

Table 1: Respondents Profile (n=70)

Sr. No.	Socio-Personal Traits	Frequency	Respondents (%)
1.	Age (years)		
i.	20-30	9	12.86
ii.	30-40	12	17.14
iii.	40-50	33	47.14
iv.	50-60	16	22.86
2.	Gender		
i.	Male	45	64.28
ii.	Female	25	35.71
3.	Educational Status		
i.	Post-Graduation	4	5.71
ii.	Graduation	21	30.00
iii.	Higher Secondary	12	17.14
iv.	Matriculate	28	40.00
v.	Up to middle	5	7.14
4.	Designation		
i.	Demonstrator	21	30.00
ii.	Technician	06	8.57
iii.	Laboratory assistant	5	7.14
iv.	Superintendent	3	4.28
v.	Gardener	11	15.71
vi.	Clerk	15	21.42
vii.	Horticulture extension officer	7	10.00
viii.	Quality inspector	2	2.85
5.	Service Experience (years)		
i.	Less than 10	21	30.00
ii.	20-30	16	22.85
iii.	30-40	26	37.14
iv.	40-50	7	10.00

Table 1: Contd.,

6.	Distance of working place from hometown(km)		
i.	Up to 5	27	38.57
ii.	5-10	31	44.28
iii.	10-15	12	17.14
7.	Monthly Salary(Rs)		
i.	Up to 10,000/-	7	10.00
ii.	10,000-20,000/-	30	42.85
iii.	20,000-30,000/-	23	32.85
iv.	More than 30,000/-	10	14.28

It has been concluded from the data that a majority of the respondents were male employees (64%), demonstrators/ Horticultural extension officers (51%) with service experience of more than 30 years and were earning a monthly salary of more than 10,000 Rs. They were more than 40 years of age (70%) and were posted at a distance of 5-10 km from their hometown (61%).

Respondents Level of Job Satisfaction

The perception of respondents on their level of Job Satisfaction, has been presented in the Table-2.

Table 2: Respondents' Level of Job Satisfaction

Sr. No.	Level of Job Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
i.	Highly Satisfied	21	30.00
ii.	Moderately Satisfied	14	20.00
iii.	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	30	42.85
iv.	Moderately Dissatisfied	5	7.14

It is clear from the data in Table-2 that about 43percent of the employees were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, i.e. neutral with their jobs. Those who were highly satisfied were found to be 30 percent indicating, thereby that 50 percent of the employees were satisfied with their job in the organization under study.

These findings were in conformity with those of Sharma et al (2002_a) who reported that a majority of the working women (62%) were satisfied with their job.

Reasons of the Job Dissatisfaction in the Organization

The main reasons of job dissatisfaction as reported by the respondents are given in Table-3.

Table 3: Reasons For Job Dissatisfaction

Sr. No.	Reasons for Dissatisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
i.	Inadequate Salary	4	5.71
ii.	Prejudicial behaviour /attitude of the superiors	38	54.28
iii.	lack of cooperation from the superiors	13	18.57
iv.	Unhygienic Working Conditions	13	18.57
v.	Any other (more workload, paperwork etc.)	2	2.85

From the data it is evident that prejudicial behaviour /attitude of the superiors (54.28%) followed by lack of cooperation from the superior (18.51%) and unhygienic working conditions (18.57%) were the main reasons for job dissatisfaction. However, inadequate salary as reason for job dissatisfaction was reported by about 6 percent of the employees which implies that majority of the employees was satisfied with their salary.

Sharma et al (2002_b) also found that lack of good working conditions inadequate salary, job insecurity, lack of encouragement and cooperation from the seniors etc. were some of the main constraints faced by the working women in their job performance.

Respondents' Perception on the Working Environment of the Organization

The perception of respondents regarding the working environment in the organization has been categorized into four categories-excellent, very good, good and fair. The perceptual response is given in Table-4.

Table 4: Perceived Working Environment in the Organization

Sr. No.	Working Environment in the Organization	Frequency	Percentage
i.	Excellent	2	2.85
ii.	Very Good	30	42.85
iii.	Good	27	38.57
iv.	Fair	11	15.71

A perusal of the data in Table-4 indicates that 81 percent of the respondents perceived the working environment in the organization as Good to Very Good. Those who perceived the working environment as fair were 15.71 percent and those who reported excellent working environment were only three percent.

Response on Interpersonal Relationships

The respondents' response was taken on interpersonal relationship existed among the employees'. The data has been shown in the Table-5.

Table 5: Response on Interpersonal Relationships

Sr. No.	Employees Category	Degree of relationship							
		Very Good		Good		Fair		Poor	
i.	Boss/Superior	5	(7.14)	42	(60.00)	22	(31.42)	1	(1.42)
ii.	Colleagues	6	(8.57)	17	(24.28)	41	(58.57)	6	(8.570)
iii.	Subordinates	6	(8.57)	26	(37.14)	35	(50.00)	3	(94.28)

*The figures in the parenthesis are percentages

A substantial percentage of the respondents had fair relationship with their colleagues (59%) and subordinates (50%). Those who reported that they had good and very good relations with their superiors were 67 percent.

Response on Appreciation of Work in the Organization

On probing whether their good work is appreciated in the organisation, the response has been given in the Table-6.

Table 6: Response on Appreciation of Work in the Organization

Sr. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
i.	Always	9	12.85
ii.	Sometimes	2	2.85
iii.	Never	59	84.28

It is evident from the given data that 84.28 percent of the employees perceived that their work was never appreciated in the organization only 12.85 percent respondents' reported that their work was "always" appreciated in the organization. Hence, the study implies that sincere efforts should be made to appreciate the work of hardworking and dedicated employees and some type of incentives should also be given to them.

Freedom of Expression in the Organization

The respondents' were asked whether they are given on the freedom to express their opinion, the response of ideas has been depicted in the Table-7.

Table 7: Freedom of Expression in the Organization

Sr. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
i.	Always	9	12.85
ii.	Sometimes	59	84.28
iii.	Never	2	2.85

As evident from the data that in Table-7, the percentage of the respondents who felt that they had 'Sometimes' freedom of expression of ideas were 84 percent. Those who reported that they 'Always' had freedom of expression were only 13percent.This seems to be quite disappointing, and the Directorate should pay due attention to it, otherwise, the employees will not be able to freely share their innovative valuable ideas with their superiors.

Response Pertaining to the Appreciation of the Ideas

The response of employees' pertaining to the appreciation of ideas in the organization was taken, and has been presented in the Table-8.

Table 8: Response Pertaining to the Appreciation of Ideas in the Organization

Sr. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
i.	Always	12	17.14
ii.	Sometimes	57	81.42
iii.	Never	1	1.42

A perusal of the data in the Table-8 has revealed that 81percent of the employees reported that any new idea given by the employee is 'Sometimes appreciated' in the organization .Those who stated that their ideas are "always" appreciated in the organization were 17 percent .However, a negligible percentage of them reported that the ideas are never appreciated in the organization. Hence, the study implies that innovative and productive ideas must be appreciated in the interest of the organisation.

Involvement in the Decision Making Process

On being asked whether or not they are involved in the decision making process the response of the respondents has been given in the Table-9.

Table 9: Involvement in Decision Making

Sr. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
i.	Always	15	21.42
ii.	Sometimes	3	4.28
iii.	Never	52	74.28

About three fourth of the employees (74%) perceived that they were 'Never' involved in the decision making process whereas 21percent stated that they were 'always' involved in the decision making process in the organization. This seems to be undesirable situation which might adversely affect the transparency of the system and ultimately the efficiency and productivity of the organization under study.

Feeling of Self- Respect in the Organization

So far as the feeling of self-respect among the employees is concerned, their response has been presented in Table-10.

Table 10: Feeling of Self Respect in the Organization

Sr. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
i.	Always	48	68.57
ii.	Sometimes	22	31.42

It is evident from the data that 68.57 percent employee's "always" had the feeling of self-respect in the organization whereas 31.42 percent of the employee's reported they had felt the feeling of self-respect only 'sometimes' in the organisation.

Opportunity for the Professional Development in the Organization

Whether or not, they have the opportunity for professional development in the organization, the data have been depicted in the Table-11.

Table 11: Opportunity for Professional Development in the Organization

Sr. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
i.	Yes	64	91.42
ii.	No	6	8.57

According to the given data, it can be inferred that 91.42 percent of the employees perceived that they had the opportunity for professional development in the organization whereas the remaining 8.57 percent felt that they didn't have any opportunity for professional development.

Assignment of Work as per the Ability /Expertise

The respondents were asked whether they are assigned work according to their ability /expertise, the data has been shown in the Table-12.

Table 12: Assignment of Work as per the Ability /Expertise

Sr. No.	Response	Frequency	Percentage
i.	Always	19	27.14
ii.	Sometimes	47	67.14
iii.	Never	4	5.71

More than two third employees are "sometimes" assigned work as per their ability. Those who were "always" assigned the work as per their ability (27.14%) whereas the remaining 5.71percentreportedthat they had never been allotted work according to their ability and expertise. Hence, the study implies that work should be allotted as per the expertise/ experience of the employee to get better output for the organisation.

Suggestions for Boosting/Enhancing Employees' Morale

Some of the suggestions elicited from the respondents for boosting /enhancing the employees' morale in the organizations have been listed in Table-13.

Table 13: Suggestions for Boosting /Enhancing Employees' Morale in the Organization

Sr. No.	Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage
	Proper mechanism of grievance handling among the employees	22	31.42
	There should be proper process for compensatory benefits to the employees.	20	28.57
i.	Proper Compensation System particularly for daily wagers.	1	1.42
ii.	Provision for incentives to the dedicated and hard-working employees.	15	21.42
iii.	Delegation of Authority with proper responsibility	8	11.42
iv.	Enhancing participation of employees in decision making	4	5.71

It is clear from the data that about one-third of the respondents (31.42) suggested proper mechanism for handling of grievances among the employees. Those who suggested that there should be proper process for compensatory benefits to the employees, provision for incentives to the dedicated and hard-working employees and delegation of authority with proper responsibility were 29, 21 and 11 percent respectively.

However a marginal percentage of them also suggested that the participation of the employees in the decision making should be enhanced and there should be a proper compensatory system particularly for the daily wagers.

These findings are in agreement with those of Sharma et al. (2014) who suggested that job security compiled with reward/ incentives must be provided for dedicated and hardworking employees besides promoting cooperation and interaction among the employees, in order to boost their morale.

CONCLUSIONS

Though the employees were positive in their response on job satisfaction, working environment and professional development in the organisation yet their perception on other aspects particularly freedom of expression, work appreciation and involvement in decision making was not found encouraging. Hence, the study implies that there should be proper mechanism of grievance handling, compensatory benefits to the employees and provision for incentives to the dedicated employees besides enhancing their participation in decision making process.

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