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OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF RECRUITING LESS THAN THE REQUIRED – A CASE OF GSRTC

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ABSTRACT

Procurement of right people is crucial for ensuring organizational wellbeing, as they are the real backbones of any organization. The supply of qualified manpower limits the success of an organization even more sharply than does the supply of money, material or market. Consequently, out of the four major thrust areas of Human Resource Management viz. Acquisition, Utilization, Development and Maintenance of People; attracting and recruiting talented people is posing a serious challenge for most of the organizations. This becomes even more crucial for the Passenger Road Transport Industry wherein the operative level occupies more than 85% of the total manpower strength. Despite this, the Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation (GSRTC) recently adopted a surprising move of recruiting less than the required, perhaps to counterattack the open, loud and frequent criticisms of its inefficiency. Resulting in dearth of staff in various categories, this hiring move has adversely affected the operational performance of GSRTC. By thoroughly analyzing the effects of this hiring practice on various operational performance parameters of GSRTC, this paper discusses the operational implications of this hiring practice. It also throws realistic light on the fact that people should never be the first target for cost cutting, as they are the 'real revenue generators'; and the paper aptly concludes that such so-called smart strategic hiring move has neither paid off to GSRTC nor it would pay off to any other organization.

JEL CODE

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KEYWORDS

Employee Hiring, GSRTC, Passenger Road Transport Industry, Procurement of People, State Transport Undertaking (STU).

1.0 INTRODUCTION

From the perspective of Behavioural Science, every organization is dependent on its four key elements for effective functioning. These four key elements are People, Structure, Technology and Environment; and out of these four, people are the most important element, as no organization can exist without people.

From the perspective of Economics, there are four factors of production namely Land, Labour, Capital and Entrepreneur. Here, Labour; being living, thinking and feeling human being; needs to be treated differently.

Similarly, in Management domain, it is said that every organization has four 'M's namely Man, Material, Money and Machine. Out of these four Ms also, it is always suggested that if you can manage your Man well, they will effectively manage the other three Ms.

Thus, the importance of People as Employees or Human Resources in an organization stands unquestionable. It is well known that to ensure an organization's continued survival, growth and prosperity, every organization needs to have competent, committed and motivated people at all levels; as this people dimension can only be a long term competitive advantage for any organization. With increased realization of the importance of people as the nucleus of any sort of organization, the organizations across the globe have realized that all corporate strengths are centered around human resource (Pande, 2003). The same was signaled by Caudron (1994) also when he pointed out that the only thing that will maintain today's source of competitive advantage is high quality personnel instead of merely capital, technology or long-lived products. On the same line, acknowledging the ever increasing importance of the people dimension in today's organizations; Abdeen (2002) went a step further. According to him, the employees, in reality are the soft assets and the hidden value of a company. Thus, the employees, being the basic pillars of any organization, must be treated as assets, and not as liabilities; must be seen as investment, and not as expenditure; must be acknowledged as the revenue/profit centre, and not as the cost/loss centre.

This becomes even more relevant when we talk about the Transport Industry in general, and the Passenger Road Transport Industry in particular; wherein the operative level occupies more than 85% of the total manpower strength of a typical transport unit. Yes, in a typical Public Road Transportation Unit, the Operative Level Staff – the real revenue generators – the frontline staff – represent the single largest cohort. In India, as we have adopted the practice of treating Public Road Transport Service (PRTS) as a part of Social Welfare; we have "State Monopoly" in operating Public Road Transport through Bus services. With the provision of forming State Road Transport Undertakings (SRTUs) under the Road Transport Corporation Act, 1950, and the amended form of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1950; the Passenger Road Transportation System in India has been organized under the broad category of State Transport Undertaking (STU). These STUs are typically the Government owned and operated or Public Sector organizations. Their prime objective is to provide efficient, economic and safe road transport services through buses to the general public; wherein the involvement of staff is a decisive factor for the quality of service being provided to the general public. So, the Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation (GSRTC), being a State Transport Undertaking, needs to have enough number of competent, committed and motivated people at all levels to fulfill its social objectives. But, at present, GSRTC is experiencing acute shortage of manpower in various categories and it is adversely affecting its operational efficiency. So, the present paper strives to analyze the operational implications of this seemingly unpalatable 'understaffed' situation of a typical Government Owned and Operated STU – the GSRTC.

2.0 BACKGROUND OF GSRTC

Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation (GSRTC) is a State Transport Undertaking (STU) operating since 1st May, 1960 with a purpose of providing an efficient road transport facility to the people of Gujarat state. From a modest beginning of 7 divisions, 76 depots and a fleet of 1,767 buses; as on date, it has gone to 15 Divisions, 125 Depots, 226 Bus Stations, 1554 Pick-up Stands and a fleet of over 8,000 buses. As of June, 2012, GSRTC employs 40,670 employees in various categories/cadres, covers over 2.8 million kilometers per day, and transports around 2.7 million passengers daily through 6850 sanctioned schedules every day operated on 15,000+ routes through 8000+ buses on road.

GSRTC is functionally divided into 15 Divisions each headed by a Divisional Controller, followed by 125 Depots headed by respective Depot Managers. The Operational Structure of GSRTC is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE OF GSRTC

Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation (GSRTC)					
CENTRAL OFFICE at Ahmedabad (Gujarat)					
15 Divisions: 11 Large + 4 Small					
125 Depots					
6850 Sanctioned Schedules (Trips) and 6607 Operating Schedules (Trips)					
Fleet of 8000+ Ultra Modern Buses					
39598 Employees in 15 Divisions					
Drivers: 14488	Conductors: 15594	Driver-cum-Conductors: 153	Mechanic Staff: 4958	Other Traffic Staff: 2784	Admin. Staff: 1621
1072 Employees in Central Units, viz., Central Office, Printing Press, Central Workshop and Tyre Retreading Plants					
40,670 Total Employees in GSRTC					

Source: Cumulative Costing and Operational Results of GSRTC - 2011-12

3.0 EMPLOYEE HIRING PRACTICE IN GSRTC

Logically the first step in the development of an organization is to acquire the people to operate the organization. It is one of the most critical steps in the establishment and growth of an organization. The supply of qualified manpower limits the success of a business just as sharply as does the supply of money, material or market. Consequently, nearly 80% of HR Managers across the world; are reported to be busy in "attracting and retaining talent" treating it as their top priority item (Prasad, 2007).

Even in a thickly populated country like India, where there is a large pool of technically qualified unemployed persons, yet it is very difficult to find right people for the job. Personnel manager and other senior executives have always experienced difficulty in finding satisfactory candidates (Bansal, 1991). So, in such a situation, employee hiring practice of an organization occupies prime important position in the overall strategic planning.

Employee Hiring Practice predominantly consists of Manpower Planning, Recruitment and Selection processes of an organization. Alternatively, we can say that employee hiring process is the one through which an organization procures/acquires right type of people, optimally matching with its requirements. GSRTC, possibly being the single largest employer in the Government sector in the State (http://www.gsrtc.in/site/chairman_gsrtc.html); should have a well planned and systematic employee hiring process in place. So, let's have a look at its Manpower Planning, Recruitment and Selection process.

3.1 MANPOWER PLANNING IN GSRTC

Manpower Planning or the more polished term "Human Resource Planning", popularly abbreviated as HRP, is believed to have first been introduced in 1676, when Samuel Pepys first became concerned with the provision of careers for officers in the Royal Navy (Sarma, 2009).

Manpower planning basically represents the 'proactive' face of people function in an organization. It is a function aimed at coordinating the requirements for and availability of different types of employees. It is a forward looking function associated with the procurement of right kinds of people by keeping an eye on the strategic goals of the organization. It's an integral part of total strategic planning. Estimating the number and type of people that an organization will require in the nearby future considering its short-term and long-term planning is of paramount importance. This can't be left to mere guesswork; as overestimation of future manpower need leads to avoidable costs to organization and underestimation of future manpower need leads to failure in meeting the customer expectations and thereby losing an opportunity to improve the profit picture. In nutshell, HRP is an indispensable function for any sort of organization, if it wants to achieve its goals effectively and efficiently.

Here, GSRTC is a State Government owned and run State Transport Undertaking (STU); and just like any other STU in the country, GSRTC also functions like a typical Government owned and operated or Public Sector Undertakings.

Further, when we refer to 'People Management' practices in GSRTC, we need to acknowledge the fact that the GSRTC is 52+ years old public sector undertaking working for providing safe, reliable, economical and ultra modern road transport services to the general public of Gujarat. Within a span of more than 52 years, if GSRTC could reach to a stage of 15 Divisions, 125 Depots and a fleet of over 8,000 buses from a modest beginning of 7 divisions, 76 depots and a fleet of 1,767 buses; it is only due to unflinching effort of more than 40,000 workforce of GSRTC. As per the opinion of the present honorable Chairman of GSRTC - Shri B. H. Ghodasara Sir, GSRTC is possibly the single largest employer in the Government sector in the Gujarat State (http://www.gsrtc.in/site/chairman_gsrtc.html accessed on 17th September, 2012).

This mass of committed employees, by working day in and day out – 24*7*365 pattern; covers over 2.8 million kilometers per day, and transports around 2.7 million passengers daily through 6850 sanctioned schedules operated on 15,000+ routes through 8000+ buses on road. Such herculean task requires continuous motivation, commitment, sense of belongingness, service orientation, quality work environment, so on and so forth. Hence, one would certainly expect that GSRTC should have well established sound HR department with various people policies well in place, to take care of their employee related functions.

But, still continuing with the age old traditional outlook, GSRTC has preferred to go with Personnel & Administration Department nomenclature instead of the much needed impressive, progressive, philosophical and people oriented nomenclature of HR or HRD Department. And believe me, it's not only the name of the department that matters in case of GSRTC; if we closely look at the existing policies related to employees; ironically, we need to accept that GSRTC is far away from the complete HRD functions. Similar opinion was given by Dave (1992), while studying the Human Resource Management scenario in GSRTC. Even, Kulkarni (1989), who studied organizational and administrative aspects in passenger road transport in India, has also suggested that major improvements need to be undertaken in the areas of recruitment, selection and training of employees in this sector. However, Padam (1994) highlighted the changing imperatives of Human Resources Development in Passenger Road Transport Industry; and noted that scenario is changing.

But, ironically, not much has changed in GSRTC in terms of its traditional outlook with reference to HR practices. So, despite its far reaching importance, the scenario of HRP practices is not very encouraging in GSRTC. But, as one understands, in our country, everyone is ever ready, or all the time dreams, to have the government job; and GSRTC being a Government organization, is able to attract enough numbers of candidates through recruitment drive. So, procurement of people does not pose a serious problem for GSRTC. Perhaps this is the reason why, GSRTC - even though possibly the single largest employer in the Government sector in the Gujarat State, does not have a Formal Manpower Planning or Human Resource Planning process in place. This is ironical, as HRP, being a sub-system of total organizational planning, is significant, which helps to determine future personnel needs. HRP is a process of forecasting an organization's future demand for, and supply of, the right type of people in the right number. Through systematic HRP, organization strives to ensure that it has the right type and right number of people at the right places at the right time to do the right things (jobs). Surplus or deficiency in staff strength is a sure shot outcome of complete absence of or defective HRP. In our country, almost all public sector undertakings are found to be overstaffed as they never had systematic HRP to forecast and plan their employee requirements. Most of them kept on hiring in the initial phase, off late started realizing the disastrous consequences of increasing salary burden and thereby lowering the operational efficiency of the organization (Aswathappa, 2007). So, off late, these organizations came out with strange looking initiatives like VRS, Hiring Freeze / Hiring-Employment Ban, Long Leave without Pay etc; but that were not enough. But, unlike many of these PSUs being overstaffed, GSRTC, even though a State Government Undertaking, is an understaffed organization. This dearth of staff in various categories is adversely affecting the operational efficiency of GSRTC in variety of ways, which is elaborated with exact facts and figures in the later sections.

3.2 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION IN GSRTC

In absence of systematic HRP, let's talk about the recruitment and selection process of GSRTC. Recruitment and Selection, mostly referred together, is one of the main functions of the personnel and administration department of GSRTC.

GSRTC follows the recruitment policy of "Preference for Recruiting from Within the Organization", popularly known as Internal Recruitment, especially for higher level posts. This policy serves as a source of motivation to existing employee's familiarity with people, procedure, policies and encourages the employees for better work performance. People work harder if they know that there is an opportunity for upward movement in the same organization. However, if suitable candidate is not available then there is no alternative way, to fill the vacancy from outside. About 75% vacancies are filled in by departmental promotion and

25% vacancies are filled in by direct sector. For the lower categories like Clerk, Helper, Driver, Conductor, Mechanic, Peon and Watchman, 100% recruitment is done from direct source.

In regard to recruitment process and using a particular source of recruitment, depending upon the overall policy, governmental restrictions, union-management relation and agreements, a variety of sources are used. GSRTC uses both internal and external sources of recruitment. Whenever any vacancy appears, GSRTC gives first preference to its existing employees and if they are not suitable it goes for external sources. Here, employees are recruited through open market and employment exchange. For this, GSRTC continued the policy of issuing the advertisement in newspapers and inviting application for filling the vacant positions to be filled in by direct sector, including the officers in class I & II cadres. However, the names from concerned district employment exchanges are also referred. Recently, though off late; keeping pace with the modern era and to bring transparency in all the processes, GSRTC has already implemented "Online Recruitment for staff" for all the categories of employees.

In case of recruitment from within the organization by way of departmental promotion, especially in Class-I and Class-II categories, in addition to experience, employees are recruited on the basis of written examination, which holds 50% weightage. For this, a person must have completed at least 1 year continuous service in GSRTC. Officers who arrange this examination and who are involved in paper setting must have completed at least 3 to 4 years continuous service in GSRTC (Tiwari, 2009).

Adhering in totality with the State Government directive of Reservation System in Jobs, GSRTC has prescribed the percentage of posts reserved for members of Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Socially and Economically Backward Classes (SEBC) for employment in the services; in which the candidates of reserved categories are given benefits as per the roster system on the government lines. At the time of recruitment in few categories of staff, the relaxation in height, experience, age, and education is given to SC/ST candidates as per the government norms. Normally applications of such candidates are not rejected due to small errors and one way free traveling pass is issued to them.

In selection process, personal interview method is used, wherein the focus is on educational qualification, age, experience, and job knowledge parameters. By considering the report of the interview committee, the final list is prepared by the Personnel & Administration Department. This report is forwarded to the higher authority; along with merit list and covering letter stating interview panel composition and any special note issued. On approval of this report, the final authority, generally the Chairman and Managing Director of GSRTC signs it and selected candidates are intimated to join accordingly (Tiwari, 2009).

3.3 STRATEGIC MOVE OF GSRTC IN RECRUITMENT

In the recent times, due to open, loud and frequent criticisms of inefficiency of government sector organizations in general, and various STUs in particular, these government organizations are also under pressure to control their operational costs and improve productivity (Williamson & Alexander, 1986); and thereby justify their existence itself. Considering this, GSRTC recently adopted a surprising move of recruiting less than the required, perhaps to counterattack the criticisms of its inefficiency. Branded as the strategic move of GSRTC in recruitment, this step proved to be a 'self defeating exercise' for GSRTC.

New recruitment and selection is not taking place at the same rate as was previously done by the Corporation. To meet the requirement of staff, it has adopted a strategy of using the existing staff on the basis of over time rate rather than recruiting new staff. Recruitment of new people involves a lot of cost, starting from training up to giving them future benefits in terms of PF/Gratuity etc.

With this so-called strategic move, what has happened is that GSRTC is facing a crunch of staff members in various categories. Yes, an unpalatable and surprising, but true, fact of GSRTC is that contrary to popular misconception that GSRTC being a Government Owned organization, it must be overstaffed; in reality, GSRTC has turned out to be an understaffed organization. Continuing with its so-called smart strategic move, GSRTC has not been recruiting in the same quantum as it did in the past. So, as on date, several posts are vacant in various categories, contrary to popularly held wrong notion that being a typical government organization, GSRTC would have more number of people than required.

4.0 OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF RECRUITING LESS THAN THE REQUIRED

In order to streamline its operations to increase the efficiency, during the year 2005-06, GSRTC closed down 6 depots and thereby brought the number of depots to 132. With encouraging initial operational results of this initiative, even though resisted and criticized by the employees in number of ways, GSRTC has continued with this strategy and at present, the total numbers of Depots are 125. Clubbing of the functioning of the minor depots with the major depot of the same region was and is certainly a welcome sign - a much needed step to reduce cost. Just very recently, in June 2012, GSRTC even targeted Division, when it historically decided to club the operations of one Small Division into another Large Division. This happened when recently, owing to administrative convenience, GSRTC has merged one of the Small Divisions - Jamnagar into the nearby located Large Division - Rajkot. So, now, they both are represented by one single division - Rajkot. So, as per the latest arrangements, there are total 15 divisions of GSRTC throughout the State - 11 Large & 4 Small, instead of 16.

But, when GSRTC started adopting the policy of "Recruiting Less Than The Required", it adversely affected the operational performance of GSRTC.

Table 2 reveals the clear picture of the operational implications of this so-called smart strategic move of GSRTC. It also shows a continuous downward trend in the total number of staff in GSRTC. As we can see from the Table 2, over a period of time, the overall staff position has declined. Corporation has also reduced few officer level positions. Keeping the pace with reduction in the average number of vehicles on road, the number of staff has also been reduced.

Table 2 represents the operational performance of all the 16 (now 15) divisions of GSRTC on various parameters for the last 12 years from 1999-00 to 2010-11. These various parameters are as follows:

1. No. of Divisions
2. No. of Depots
3. Total Staff
4. Average No. of Vehicles On Road
5. Effective Kms in Lacs
6. No. of Passengers in Lacs
7. Total EPKM in Ps.
8. Total CPKM in Ps.
9. Margin/Deficit in Lacs Rs.
10. Total O. T. in Lacs Rs.
11. Load Factor in %
12. Vehicle Utilization in Kms. Per Day
13. Fleet Utilization in %
14. Crew Utilization in Kms.
15. Diesel KMPL
16. Oil KMPL top up
17. CNG KMPLkg.
18. Total No. of Break Downs
19. No. of Accidents Per Lac Kms.

TABLE 2: OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF STRATEGIC MOVE OF GSRTC

Performance Measure	1960-61	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
No. of Divisions	7	16* (*As on date, 15 Divisions)											
No. of Depots	76	Data Not Available											
Total Staff	11512	Data Not Available			58324	54523	52043	129	132	126	126	126	125
No. of Vehicles On-Road	1174	8320	8573	8300	7793	7729	7113	6767	6854	6932	6697	6514	6327
Effective Kms in Lacs	728.42	10990.42	11517.21	10935.05	10199.21	10126.16	9250.78	8899.04	9355.97	9970.21	10106.81	9785.95	9485.07
No. of Passengers in Lacs	1463.90	Data Not Available			13415.73	12733.63	9966.91	8341.54	7897.56	8216.10	8501.64	8749.01	8482.56
Total EPKM in Ps.	97.75	912.92	937.56	1098.13	1120.82	1229.01	1301.95	1285.25	1459.10	1445.40	1506.73	1588.68	1742.26
Total CPKM in Ps.	99.28	1172.01	1293.10	1458.16	1545.76	1493.87	1577.79	1762.62	1752.97	1681.26	1799.15	2039.87	2244.10
Margin/Deficit in Lacs Rs.	-10.11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		28472.53	40950.75	39369.18	43340.85	26818.02	25521.52	42480.71	27494.18	23514.84	29557.36	44150.56	47599.38
Total O.T. in Lacs Rs.	NA	2003.55	1834.23	1563.88	1313.07	1425.17	1137.24	971.17	1335.23	2589.66	3128.29	3746.16	3754.72
Load Factor in %	72.90	63.83	65.61	66.36	67.47	56.75	57.60	58.36	61.19	63.18	65.74	67.34	68.98
Vehicle Utilization in Kms. Per Day	171.40	364.05	370.70	363.71	361.44	360.75	359.03	363.04	376.55	396.16	417.24	416.27	415.56
Fleet Utilization in %	68.90	87.49	88.22	88.00	85.67	86.24	83.93	83.71	85.79	85.91	87.79	85.23	82.26
Crew Utilization in Kms.	116.00	196.10	197.42	194.20	192.00	195.75	193.60	196.05	209.02	229.53	246.61	251.72	254.42
Diesel KMPL	4.19	5.11	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.24	5.19	5.20	5.25	5.37	5.53	5.55	5.53
Engine Oil KMPL Top Up	NA	1714	2977	3223	2391	1420	1047	1100	1558	2264	3244	2862	2999
CNG KMPKq.	Not Applicable as CNG Buses were not operated/run by GSRTC during this period of time.								5.01	4.94	5.00	4.87	4.85
Total No. of Break Downs	9138	82790	52370	78235	106273	119992	124417	116702	82232	50164	36707	31268	31980
No. of Accidents Per Lac Kms.	723	2335	2002	1800	1601	1618	1387	1352	1264	1161	1079	985	1010

Source: Cumulative Costing and Operational Results of GSRTC from 1999-00 to 2010-11

Table 2 indicates the operational performance of GSRTC as a whole on these parameters with an additional comparison with the inception year 1960-61.

As these table shows, GSRTC has been incurring heavy losses year-by-year. It is caught in the whirlpool of problems with most of the performance measures showing downward trend and GSRTC seems to be not in a position to find out the solution to turn the situation in its favor. If we closely look at the figures in the Tables; the following performance measures of GSRTC have been showing a negative trend:

Effective Kms in Lacs have reduced significantly, as in 1999-2000, GSRTC plied buses for a total of 10990.42 Lacs Kms; while in 2010-11 financial year, this figure has come down to 9485.07 Lacs Kms. So, the effective Kms covered came down by 1505.35 Lacs Kms; and it is very much obvious that its negative impact would be seen on the revenue generation also.

Total No. of Passengers in Lacs have also decreased considerably, as from a healthy figure of 13415.73 Lacs Passengers in the year 2001-02; it has decreased to 8052.57 Lacs in 2010-11. So, a sharp decrease of 5363.16 Lacs Passengers over a period of last 10 years is certainly affecting the bottom line picture negatively.

With sharp reduction in both the primary performance measures of Effective Kms. in Lacs and the Total No. of Passengers in Lacs, the main parameter of **"Earning Per Kilo Meter"** represented by **EPKM in Paisa** was expected to suffer much. But, to utter surprise, EPKM in Paisa has surprisingly increased. On the face of it, it is showing a positive trend with a figure of 912.92 Paisa EPKM in the year 1999-00 moving to 1742.26 Paisa EPKM in 2010-11. A rise of 90.84%! Wow! This may be due to the fact that during this period of time, even though it happens on very rare occasions; GSRTC revised (increased) the fares on few occasions. So, the almost double EPKM in Paisa over a span of 12 years can be understood by this way. Even by initiating several passenger friendly schemes, GSRTC could manage to maintain a steady growth in EPKM in Paisa over the years. So, the almost double EPKM in Paisa over a span of 12 years can be understood by this way.

But, this positive feeling quickly vanishes as soon as we look at another deciding parameter of **"Cost Per Kilo Meter"** represented by **CPKM in Paisa**. Compared to rise in CPKM in paisa, the rise in EPKM in Paisa seems to be unsatisfactory. In 1999-00, the CPKM in Paisa was 1172.01 Paisa and in 2010-11, this figure has moved to 2244.10 CPKM in Paisa, recording a hike of 91.47%. So, over this entire period of 12 years, CPKM in Paisa (91.47%) has increased more in comparison to EPKM in Paisa (90.84%). So, CPKM in Paisa has increased more in comparison to EPKM in Paisa. Thus, it is obvious that with increasing cost of service, GSRTC has not been able to increase its earning (revenue) proportionately; and the margin/deficit is also going to be affected negatively. This rise in CPKM in Paisa may be due to two main reasons such as revised (increased) fuel prices on numerous occasions without corresponding increase in fares, and increasing staff salaries. But, what is equally surprising to note is that during this period of 12 years, almost all the cost contributing parameters have shown positive moves. These parameters are

- ✓ **Load Factor in % terms** – 63.83% in 1999-00 to 68.98% in 2010-11
- ✓ **Vehicle Utilization in Kms. Per Day** – 364.05 Kms. in 1999-00 to 415.56 Kms. in 2010-11
- ✓ **Crew Utilization in Kms.** – 196.10 Kms. in 1999-00 to 254.42 Kms. in 2010-11
- ✓ **Diesel KMPL (Kilo Meter Per Liter)** – 5.11 Kms. in 1999-00 to 5.53 Kms. in 2010-11
- ✓ **Engine Oil KMPL (Kilo Meter Per Liter) Top Up** – 1714 Kms. in 1999-00 to 2999 Kms. in 2010-11

Even 2 other negative parameters, adversely affecting the financial health of GSRTC, have shown a significant downward trend. With sharp decrease of nearly 100% in these 2 parameters of Total No. of Breakdowns in a Year and the Total No. of Accidents Per Lacs Kms., the CPKM in Paisa should have come down. The exact decrease in both these parameters is as follows:

- ✓ **Total No. of Breakdowns** – 82790 in 1999-00 to 31980 Kms. in 2010-11
- ✓ **No. of Accidents Per Lac Kms.** – 2335 in 1999-00 to 1010 in 2010-11

In addition to this, it should also be noted that from 2005 onwards, GSRTC has started using CNG operated buses and gradually it is increasing such buses. This should have also lowered the CPKM in Paisa.

During this period of 12 years, only one performance measure has shown negative trend, and that is, the parameter of **Fleet Utilization in %**. From a figure of 87.49% in 1999-00, Fleet Utilization has gone down to 82.26% in 2010-11.

But, despite positive effects of all the above mentioned parameters, the CPKM in Paisa has shown a pinching increase by getting almost double in 2010-11 in comparison to 1999-00.

Obviously, with CPKM in Paisa increasing more than EPKM in Paisa over the last 12 years, there does not remain a question of Margin (Profit). Deficit (Loss) is bound to occur. But, one must note that right from the year 1999-00; GSRTC has been incurring heavy losses, which has increased manifold by the year 2010-11. In 1999-00, GSRTC recorded a deficit (loss) of 28472.53 Lacs Rs., which has gone up to 47599.38 Lacs Rs. in 2010-11. So, GSRTC is incurring heavy losses and unable to take corrective measures by initiating remedial policy measures. And, that's why; it is increasingly emerging as a "White Elephant" in terms of eating public money, even though it is incurring such huge losses primarily because focusing on societal and service orientation instead of pure business orientation.

If we look at the operational implications of this strategic move of GSRTC, as indicated in Table 2, the rate of over time has been showing increasing trend. This may be due to reduction in the number of staff. As the number of staff reduces, corporation is trying to utilize the existing employees for getting the work done. By utilizing the existing staff, it can reduce the cost of giving P.F., Pension and Gratuity etc. in future. The policy of recruiting new staff has been stopped or reduced, on account of reduction in number of vehicles and depots also. One can call it a smart strategic move of the corporation for bringing down the total cost of staff. But, in reality, it is proving detrimental to the operational efficiency and progress of GSRTC. This is because of we look at the figures of total Over Time paid to existing employees in a year in Lacs Rs.; this figure was 2003.55 Lacs only in 1999-2000. But, by 2010-2011, this Over Time amount reached to a figure of 3754.72 Lacs – a whopping rise of 87.40%. What is more pinching is that with such a hike in Over Time rate per annum; the other operational indices are not showing positive progress. The Effective Kms in Lacs have reduced significantly, as in 1999-2000, GSRTC plied buses for a total of 10990.42 Lacs Kms; while in 2010-11 financial year, this figure has come down to 9485.07 Lacs Kms. So, the effective Kms covered came down by 1505.35 Lacs Kms; and it is very much obvious that its negative impact would be seen on the revenue generation also; certainly affecting the bottom line picture negatively.

The following Table 3 showing the On Road and Off-Road vehicle (Bus) position of GSRTC also points out to rising CPKM over the years.

TABLE 3: ON ROAD/OFF-ROAD VEHICLES OF GSRTC

Year	Total No. of Buses held	On Road	Off-Road*	Vehicles Utilization (%)
2003-04	9042	7729	1313	85.48
2004-05	8473	7113	1360	83.95
2005-06	8118	6767	1351	83.36
2006-07	7987	6854	1133	85.81
2007-08	8076	6932	1144	85.83
2008-09	7628	6697	931	87.79
2009-10	Data Not Available	6514	Data Not Available	-
2010-11		6327		-

* Off-Road means the vehicle (Bus) is not of that condition which can be used on road.

Source: Cumulative Costing and Operational Results of GSRTC from 1999-00 to 2010-11

According to the data shown in Table 3, the Vehicle Utilization has been less than 90%. Due to shortage of proper maintenance staff and materials, the percentage of off-road vehicles has increased. From the financial point of view, the numbers of Off-Road vehicles held by GSRTC add to the operational cost, i.e., maintenance cost plus the value of the vehicles gets depreciated. So if more number of vehicles is off-road, it naturally adds to the cost. This also has adverse effect on the EPKM in Paisa as well as CPKM in Paisa.

Further, with CPKM in Paisa increasing more than EPKM in Paisa over the last 12 years, there does not remain a question of Margin (Profit). Deficit (Loss) is bound to occur. But, one must note that right from the year 1999-00; GSRTC has been incurring heavy losses, which has increased manifold by the year 2010-11. In 1999-00, GSRTC recorded a deficit (loss) of 28472.53 Lacs Rs., which has gone up to 47599.38 Lacs Rs. in 2010-11. So, GSRTC is incurring heavy losses and unable to take corrective measures by initiating remedial policy measures.

With increasing population, the need of road transportation must have increased, as most of our population still prefers to travel by ST Buses due to its economic services. But, with sharp reduction in staff over the years, the existing people, even though might be getting the benefit of Over Time rate, are not very much able to satisfy the ever growing demand of public from GSRTC. Even, they themselves are complaining of increased burden of workload over a period of time. Most of time, the Drivers and Conductors are forced to do 'double' or even 'triple' duties due to dearth of staff. This leads to adverse behavioural reactions of these employees; who directly come into contact with the real customers – the passengers, in the form of quarrelling with passengers, using abusive language, not stopping at the pickup stands, not caring for the condition of the bus, rash driving etc. This further damages the images of GSRTC in the minds of general public and lowers down public's interest in travelling by GSRTC buses.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the facts and figures indicating the adverse effects of the so-called strategic move of recruiting less than the required staff in GSRTC, the following recommendations can be given. The given recommendations, if implemented in the right spirit, will certainly help GSRTC not only to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of GSRTC, but also to foster better Quality of Work Life (QWL) for the employees by having the right number and right types of people at various levels in the organization.

- ☞ Burden of excessive work load in terms of doing double duty, staying at work beyond stipulated work hours etc. is basically the result of under staffed manpower position of GSRTC. In addition to lowering the operational efficiency of GSRTC, this shortage of staff in various categories, is adversely affecting the perceived availability of QWL for these employees in GSRTC. So, systematic Manpower Planning Process must be initiated by GSRTC to ensure the availability of the right number and right types of people at the right places to perform the right duties, and thereby not only taking care of the operational efficiency of GSRTC; but also relieving these employees of the unnecessary burden of additional duties. This will even have positive impact on passengers' satisfaction as the instances of cancellation of routes due to non-availability of Driver &/or Conductor, or frequent breakdown of buses due to poor maintenance, would reduce significantly.
- ☞ If systematic manpower planning can't be started over night, at least systematic evaluation of the entire recruitment process should take place. Lead time, Time Lapsed Data (TLD), yield ratios, cost per hire and such other data should form the base for selecting a particular source of recruitment.
- ☞ Recruitment and Selection must be given strategic importance and should not be handled as an 'ad hoc' function.
- ☞ With scientific methods and correct estimates of future manpower requirements at various levels, well planned efforts should be made to initiate recruitment and selection process well in time.
- ☞ Allocation of work/duties to the employees needs to be reviewed to ensure optimum utilization of the existing manpower in GSRTC. If required, job analysis process should be initiated for major groups of jobs, so as to avoid duplication of efforts, overlapping nature of duties, and consequently wastage of human resources.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Considering the negative operational implications of having less than required people in GSRTC, we can certainly conclude that the so-called smart strategic move of GSRTC to reduce the number of staff has not paid off to GSRTC. With several positions remaining vacant in various categories as on date also, GSRTC is not being able to live up to the expectations of the public. So, GSRTC and for that sake, every organization must accept, respect and appreciate the basic fact that there can be several other options to combat losses or declining financial performance situation. So, instead of targeting your employees for cost cutting either by laying off some of them or by recruiting less than the required, every organization must strive to attain optimum utilization of the available manpower.

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In this age of Commerce, Economics, Computer, I.T. & Management and cut throat competition, a group of intellectuals felt the need to have some platform, where young and budding managers and academicians could express their views and discuss the problems among their peers. This journal was conceived with this noble intention in view. This journal has been introduced to give an opportunity for expressing refined and innovative ideas in this field. It is our humble endeavour to provide a springboard to the upcoming specialists and give a chance to know about the latest in the sphere of research and knowledge. We have taken a small step and we hope that with the active co-operation of like-minded scholars, we shall be able to serve the society with our humble efforts.

Our Other Journals

