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RESEARCH ARTICLE

EXAMINING THE KEY DRIVERS OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG THE EXECUTIVES  
OF BHILAI STEEL PLANT

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the perception of job satisfaction among the executives of Bhilai Steel Plant, a public sector employer in Indian steel industry. Quantitative research design was used to investigate the magnitude of job satisfaction through survey technique. In all, 548 questionnaires were answered in full in which there were 445 males and 103 females. The data collected was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and R. Multiple regression analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient were used to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and the independent variables. The findings highlighted the significance of working conditions, interpersonal relations with peers and seniors, nature of work, level of salary and opportunity to participate in organizational decision making for job satisfaction of officers. The demographic variables of gender, age group and tenure in the organization had no noticeable impact on job satisfaction.

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INTRODUCTION

Satisfaction is the general feeling of contentment experienced by a person when his desire, need or expectation is fulfilled. The notion of job satisfaction focuses on measuring such contentment, specifically in the workplace. Different kinds of organisations not only provide distinct work atmospheres but also varied opportunities and advantages. Public sector companies offer more secure jobs along with prescribed hours of work, phased retirement provisions, pension schemes, yearly bonus, greater number of leaves, lesser work pressure and other facilities and allowances to their employees. This study strives to focus its attention on Bhilai Steel Plant as an Indian public sector employer and examine the primary drivers of job satisfaction among its employees working in different areas.

More than 31,000 employees and around 20,000 contractual labourers are employed in this undertaking at present. The organisation has provided housing, community welfare and recreational facilities, medical facilities in the form of a central hospital cum research centre along with 12 health centres and educational facilities through 48 schools administered by it.

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It has taken due care in ensuring the well being of its employees through occupational health and safety policy, employees welfare schemes, enhancing the quality of work and by taking significant steps towards increasing worker's participation in management. Since the enterprise has addressed several concerns directly and indirectly affecting job satisfaction levels, like job security and non-monetary benefits, the drivers for job satisfaction among its employees could thus exclude such as those mentioned above, and could be quite different from the commonly perceived ones. The study will investigate into the underlying reasons for job satisfaction among the executive employees.

Literature Review

**Edward E. Lawler III and Richard J. Hackman (1971)** - They conducted studies regarding corporate profits and employee satisfaction. They probed then predominant opinion that companies would prefer increasing their profits to the utmost level rather than focussing on job satisfaction of employees. They showed that though the simplification of work procedures improved and raised profit levels, it would lead to a drop in satisfaction levels. When the work was broken down into small tasks, it became monotonous, standardised and expendable. On one hand this fragmentation of work into

smaller chunks improved quality but on the other it reduced morale among the workers. They concluded that if companies continued to neglect employees' well being, it would affect them adversely in the long run. Their expenditure on increasing employee satisfaction would be lesser than the costs they would incur when it's not taken care of, leading to problems of absenteeism, labour turnover and ultimately reduction in productivity and profits.

**Donald P. Schwab and Marc J. Wallace Jr. (1974)** - They studied all the research work done on different facets of job satisfaction till then and found that relation of pay with satisfaction deserved further enquiry. They held that organizations should be more concerned about equating employee's satisfaction with their pay for it's one of the major costs that they incur. They examined 6 personal and organizational aspects of satisfaction among male and female employees of a large company which manufactured durable consumer goods. They found that several variables contributed to relating satisfaction with pay, still there were other unexplored factors that bore an impact on difference in satisfaction of employees who shared similar scores in variables used.

**Richard D. Arvey, H. Dudley Dewhirst and Edward M. Brown (1978)** - They conducted a long study on 245 working scientists and engineers in organisations where their managers were trained in Management by Objectives program. Two questionnaires were distributed among the respondents with time gap of 21 months between the two. They intended to evaluate percept of goal setting behaviour of managers along 4 attributes – goal clarity and planning, subordinate freedom, feedback and evaluation, participation in goal setting. Their intrinsic, extrinsic and total satisfaction was also delved into. They found positive correlations between changes in goal setting factors and changes in variables of satisfaction. They also concluded that job task had a moderating influence on goal setting-satisfaction relationships. Managerial behaviour regarding goal clarity and planning fell significantly over the period 21 months of study while the factors of feedback and evaluation showed substantial increase.

**Ashraf Shikdar and Biman Das (2003)** - They showed that satisfaction of the employees working in industrial production sector increased as result of specific and participative standards along with feedback regarding performance. Participative standard and feedback contributed the highest towards increasing job satisfaction. They also positively affected attitudes that workers had to their jobs. Monetary incentive when given with specific or participative standard together with feedback did not lead to any increase in satisfaction or job attitude. They suggested managers to use the blend of participative standard with feedback as their strategy to ameliorate satisfaction and job attitude in a monotonous industrial job.

**Saziye Gazioglu and Aysit Tansel (2006)** - They explored connections between different measures of job satisfaction and various personal and job characteristics. Data used was collected from 28,240 employees from workplace employee relations survey. The authors studied how satisfaction varied

with influence over job, amount of pay, sense of achievement and respect from supervisors. It was found that women, people with less educational qualifications, elder persons, non union members, managers, professionals and clerks were more satisfied. Higher incomes, job training, short working hours and large organisations induced greater satisfaction. When satisfaction was considered industry wise, people in manufacturing and financial sector were more satisfied than in wholesale and retail trade area. Same was true for workers in electricity, gas, water and construction sectors. Education and health sector registered greater satisfaction in sense of achievement but less in respect of pay.

**Paul E. Madlock (2008)** - He examined the impact of communication ability and leadership style of the supervisor on job and communication satisfaction of employees. Data was collected from 220 full time employees (which included 116 men and 104 women) working in a variety of companies in Midwest. Strong relation was found between communicating ability of supervisor and leadership style he used for getting tasks done and maintaining relations and job and communication satisfaction of employees. Communication ability was more effective in providing dual satisfaction to employees.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A quantitative research design using hypothesis testing was adopted in the study. The study involved use of survey based research which measured the characteristics of population through sampling and questionnaire design. The respondents selected for study included about 600 executives working under Bhilai Steel Plant in different sectors, like those related to production, administrative, educational areas etc. irrespective of their age group, gender and job profile. Questionnaires were used as survey instruments to get the needed information from the respondents. The questionnaire involved a set of close ended questions with Likert scale options in response categories to show the extent to which the person agreed or disagreed with the statements. Of the 600 questionnaires distributed among the executives, 548 were answered in full. Among the respondents, there were 445 males and 103 females.

When tenure of those employees was considered, it was found that 55.47% of them were working for more than 15 years, 26.64% for 10-15 years, 7.48% for 6-10 years and 10.4% of people for 1-5 years. 12.77% respondents belonged to the age group of 55 and above, 44.7% were between 45-55 years, 30.84% were between 35-45 years and 11.68% were between 25-35 years. The data collected through survey was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and R. Multiple regression analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient were used as the statistical techniques to find out which of the observed variables were able to predict the independent variable (job satisfaction) in the best possible way.

Overall job satisfaction is regarded as the dependent variable in this study. Following factors were taken as the independent variables:

- Gender of the respondent
- Age group the respondent belongs to

- Tenure of respondent in the organisation
- Equal opportunities for participation in decision making
- Clear policies regarding salaries, raises and bonuses
- Cooperation between different departments to accomplish goals
- Authority and responsibility given to employees as per role
- Challenging and interesting work
- Manageable daily workload
- Safe and comfortable working conditions
- Clear work instructions by seniors
- Access to seniors as and when needed
- Feedback by seniors on regular basis
- Adequate training for the employees as per the role
- Opportunities to develop knowledge and skills at work
- Fair distribution of work in a group
- Friendly and helpful colleagues
- Performance incentives being linked to standards and goals
- Level of salary and raises
- Job security and stability
- Free access to medical facility
- Subsidized residential facility
- Subsidized education for children

**Data Analysis**

**Table 2. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis**

Significant variables in regression model	p values in multiple regression
Equal opportunities for participation in decision making	0.000187
Cooperation between different departments to accomplish goals	0.000331
Challenging and interesting work	0.004969
Safe and comfortable working conditions	6.90e-07
Clear work instructions by seniors	0.000504
Feedback by seniors on regular basis	6.09e-06
Friendly and helpful Colleagues	0.007737
Level of salary and Raises	4.04e-07
Free access to medical Facility	0.002067
Subsidized education for children	0.003926

**Findings**

Individual factors covered by the questions showed moderate to strong correlation with job satisfaction. This is because any factor by itself does not determine job satisfaction. Satisfaction depends upon a combination of all these factors. The combined effect of all these factors on job satisfaction was high, as confirmed by the regression exercise. Out of the 20 variables taken in the study, following factors proved significant in shaping the perception of job satisfaction among the officers of Bhilai Steel Plant: cooperation between different departments

**Table 1. Results of Pearson’s Coefficient of Correlation**

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Strength of correlation
Gender	0.097	Weak
Years	0.15	Weak
Age	0.25	Moderate
Equal opportunities for participation in decision making	0.51	Strong
Clear policies regarding salaries, raises and bonuses	0.45	Strong
Cooperation between different departments to accomplish goals	0.56	Strong
Authority & responsibility given to employees as per role	0.55	Strong
Challenging & interesting work	0.52	Strong
Manageable daily workload	0.37	Strong
Safe and comfortable working conditions	0.51	Strong
Clear work instructions by seniors	0.52	Strong
Access to seniors as and when needed	0.35	Moderate
Feedback by seniors on regular basis	0.53	Strong
Adequate training for the employees as per the role	0.46	Strong
Opportunities to develop knowledge and skills at work	0.54	Strong
Fair distribution of work in a group	0.50	Strong
Friendly and helpful colleagues	0.50	Strong
Performance incentives being linked to standards and goals	0.42	Strong
Level of salary & raises	0.41	Strong
Job security and stability	0.33	Moderate
Free access to medical facility	0.30	Moderate
Subsidized residential facility	0.32	Moderate
Subsidized education for children	0.27	Moderate

to accomplish goals, safe and comfortable working conditions, clear work instructions given by seniors, friendly and helpful colleagues, the level of salary and raises in the organization, equal opportunities for participation in decision making, challenging and interesting work, feedback by seniors on regular basis, free access to medical facility and subsidized education for children.

- About 72% (396 out of 548) of all the officers were found to be satisfied with their job at Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP) while only about 7% (36 out of 548) expressed their discontent. With such low percent of dissatisfied workforce, a sizable portion of executives seemed to be fairly content working at the company.
- About 43% (233 of 548) of officers rated high interdepartmental cooperation in the company with job satisfaction.
- Satisfaction of 54% (296 of 548) of officers who participated in the survey with working conditions at BSP led to satisfaction with their jobs as well.
- Of the total survey respondents, 59% (323 of 548) of officers have agreed to the importance of work instructions acting as essential tools to enable them to complete their tasks.
- The survey results showed that 62% (342 out of 548) of officers linked the presence of friendly and helping colleagues with high job satisfaction.
- 48% (262 out of 548) of surveyed officers reported to be satisfied with their monetary compensation and the job.
- Of the surveyed officers, 43% (233 out of 548) stressed on importance of being able to participate in organizational decision making as a deciding factor for their job satisfaction.
- 54% (294 out of 548) of the surveyed officers agreed on the point that challenging and interesting work does have an influence on their high job satisfaction.
- Around 62% (337 out of 548) of the surveyed officers were found to be satisfied with feedback they received and their job, in general.
- In the survey, 55% (302 out of 548) of the officers maintained that satisfaction with subsidized medical facilities provided by BSP had a strong impact on their high job satisfaction.
- 53% (290 out of 548) of the officers confirmed the importance of subsidized educational facilities for their job satisfaction.
- The demographic factors of gender, age group and tenure of the respondent in the organization had no significance on individual's perception of job satisfaction

### Conclusion

Over the years, organizational perspective regarding employees has undergone substantial changes from being unavoidable costs to jealously guarded assets to that of prized partners in the success and development of the enterprise. Satisfaction of employees was not given any consideration during the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the primary focus of the companies was on securing greater profits and excelling in competition. However, with the onset of human relations movement and increasing competition brought about by

industrial growth, fulfillment of the needs of employees was prioritized for organizational development. Generally, job satisfaction in Indian public sector is presumed to be high, assured by job security and a host of incentives offered therein. However, several other factors are also involved in molding the job satisfaction as revealed in this study. For ensuring the contentment of its officers, BSP can revise the provisions included in its personnel policies that are related directly and indirectly to the factors reported as significant for their job satisfaction.

The organization can boost inter and intra departmental cooperation by reinforcing team philosophy among members of every department, including the assessment of individual's performance in team in his performance appraisal and sponsoring social activities so that employees get to know each other well. Latest safety measures can be installed in the plant and annual safety checks can be conducted, both of which will cater to the safety needs of officers. The increments of employees after their salary levels increase to higher grades should be adjusted without delay. The interpersonal relations of the officers with their seniors can be enhanced by holding personal discussions regarding performance and introducing the provision of regular guidance via written directions along with the results expected from them. Apart from that, job enrichment can be considered to break the monotony at work for the executives.

They can be rotated among different teams and different departments to broaden their knowledge base and skill set. The sectional, departmental and functional heads can hold regular meetings to communicate and discuss the decisions with executives working under them. They can also ask for their opinions and suggestions to improve the anticipated effect of decision on the company. Future research can be extended in the direction of analyzing job satisfaction of BSP employees over a period of 5-10 years. Secondly, comparison of job satisfaction of executives and non-executives working in the organization can also be undertaken. Finally, satisfaction of employees working in the plant area can be examined against those appointed in non-manufacturing institutions run by BSP like schools, hospitals, town administrative units etc.

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