

Job Insecurity Among Indian Managers

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Various studies have been conducted to identify the important motivational factors of Indian Managers¹. Their findings reveal that these factors are related to recognition for good work and accomplishment, personal growth and development, authority for decision-making, job security, promotion, monetary benefits, prestige of organization, etc.

Among these motivational factors, job security has been perceived as an important variable by Indian Managers². This may be due to the fact that job security influences not only the motivation of managers but also their morale, work performance and internal environment of an organization.

The concept of job security varies from individual to individual, society to society and country to country. The socio-economic, cultural, educational, legal, political and technological environments of a country shape the security concept of a person. A person belonging to a particular environment may be more dynamic, adventurous and enterprising than others. He may care less for job security and may be highly mobile whereas others coming from a different background may avoid taking risk and may give too much importance to job security.

A person's feeling for insecurity is mainly influenced by personal and job variables in an organization. Personal variables are related to his personality traits, such as courage, intelligence, childhood rearing, suppression of young mind by parents and society, etc., whereas job security depends on nature of job, employer-employee relationship, employee's union, accident benefits, etc. An attempt has been made in this paper to identify factors creating constant fear and feelings of insecurity among Indian managers working in public and private sector companies. These factors have been broadly classified into environmental variables and organizational variables. Environmental variables are uncontrollable for an employee whereas organizational variables are, to a great extent, within his control.

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Research Methodology

Twenty two undertakings (11 public and 11 private) located at Calcutta, Bokaro, Ranchi, Tatanagar, Hardwar, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Nasik, Faridabad, Chandigarh, Bhopal and Bombay where friends and old MBA students of Punjab Agricultural University were serving were selected for the present study. Majority of the undertakings are manufacturing units dealing in consumer nondurable, durable and industrial products. In these undertakings, lower, middle and top level managers working in different functional areas were selected for the present study. Due to uncertainty of managers' response, no particular sampling technique has been followed in the selection of these managers. In order to distribute questionnaires in an organization, a known person (friend or old MBA) working in the managerial grade of the organization, was approached. He acted as an investigator for a particular organization. The investigator was instructed that he should pick up respondents belonging to many States working in different levels. A minimum of three respondents and not more than 10 respondents were selected from each State. Where the number of respondents were less than 3 from one State, he was directed to include them.

The questionnaire was pretested on 10 managers working at different levels in a local organization. Necessary modifications were made on the basis of their comments and suggestions. After necessary changes, 490 questionnaires were sent to the investigators in 1978-79. A covering letter containing purpose of study with necessary instructions was attached to each questionnaire. An authority letter from the University was also sent to the investigator in this connection. After completing the questionnaire, the managers were requested to despatch it directly to the University. 144 managers (29.4%) returned the completed questionnaires, out of this 85 managers were working in public sector undertakings whereas 59 managers were serving in private sector companies.

The questionnaire included various questions relating to environmental and organizational variables. In the case of environmental variables there were 9 factors and each respondent was asked to rank them in descending order assigning 1 to most important factor, 2 to second important and so on giving 9 to least important factor. Weights were assigned to each rank in reverse order. For example, 9 weight was given to most important, 8 weight to second important and 1 weight to least important factor. The weighted average was found out by multiplying the product of the number of respondents. In the case of organizational variables, the manager's response was measured in percentage.

Research Findings

On the basis of mean score of each environmental factor, the various variables of insecurity have been categorized into most influential, and less influential groups. Environmental factors scoring a weighted mean of more than 7 (out of a maximum of 9) have been classified as most influential, factors scoring between 5 and 7 as influential and factors scoring less than 5 have been put in less influential class. Similarly organisational factors scoring more than 70 per cent have been classified into most influential, those in 50-70 per cent have been termed as influential and those scoring less than 50 per cent have been classified into less influential group. The classification of environmental variables is given in Table I.

Table I
Environmental Factors Causing Insecurity

Factors	w
Most Influential	
1. Regional feelings	7.6
2. Language problem	7.2
Influential	
3. Differences in cultural values.	6.8
4. Difference in nature of people	6.6
5. Sons of soil policy	6.4
6. Ecological impact on health	5.9
Less Influential	
7. Minority position	4.4
8. Different religion	3.6
9. Other factors	0.91

Table I shows that regional feeling (7.61) and language problem (7.2) are considered to be the most influential factors causing insecurity among Indian managers serving outside their home state. Difference in cultural values (6.8), temperament of people (6.6), fear of discrimination due to 'sons of soil' policy (6.4) and unfavourable ecological impact on health (5.9) are the influential factors of insecurity among Indian Managers. Minority feelings (4.4), religious feelings (3.6), and other factors* (0.91) constitute the less important group.

The above analysis indicates that some socio-cultural and educational variables are causing more insecurity than political and ecological variables. Religious minority feelings and other factors are not considered very important variables. Managers may feel embarrassed being in minority group as well as following different religious faith other than the majority of the local people but these factors do not make him highly insecure in the organization.

The response of the managers regarding insecurity due to organizational variables is given in Table II.

Table II
Organizational Factors Causing Insecurity

Factors	Percentage
Most Influential	
1. Lack of effective Manager's Association.	84
2. Poor relation with superior affecting promotion and increment	81
Influential	
3. Influence and interference of worker's union	67
4. Abrupt change in top management	66
5. Existence of secret information system	64
6. Dismissal from service without proper explanation	52
7. Lack of merit/seniority as basis of promotion	51
8. Unfavourable reaction on applying for outside job	51
9. Inadequate participation in decision making	50
Less Influential	
10. Non-cooperative attitude of colleagues	47
11. Decline in company's profit	41
12. Biased attitude of senior towards a community, group or individual	38
13. Insufficient accident benefits	29
14. Other factors.	11

Table II shows that the most influential group of organizational variables causing insecurity among different cadre of managers are lack of effective managers' association in an organization (84%) and poor relationship with seniors affecting promotion and increments (81 per cent). Increasing influence and interference of workers' union (65 per cent), abrupt change in top management (66 per cent) presence of secret information system (64 per cent), dismissal from service without proper explanation (52 per cent), lack of merit/seniority as basis of promotion (51 per cent), unfavourable reaction when applying for outside job (51 per cent) and inadequate participation in decision making (50 per cent) constitute the influential group causing insecurity among managers. Non-cooperative attitude of colleagues (47 per cent), decline in profits of an organization (41 per cent), biased attitude of senior towards a community, group or individual (38 per cent), insufficient accident benefits (29 per cent) and other factors** (11 per cent) constitute the less influential factors causing insecurity among managers.

The analysis of Table II reveals that absence of effective managers' union, increasing interference of trade union in day-to-day working of organization, strained relationship with superior (s), passing secret information of managers to their higher authority and sudden change in top management are considered more important than unfavourable attitude of colleagues and seniors towards a community and group, decline in profit or insufficient accident benefits. The managers are also concerned about improper dismissal, lack of proper promotion policy, discouragement for applying for outside job and inadequate participation in decision making. It indicates that managers want to form their own

* Other factors include food problem, high cost of living, away from native place, unable to look after family members, less familiarity with people, etc.

** Other factors include contract service, non-uniform implementation of policies, inefficient management, political rivalries, nature of job, etc.

union to protect their interests.* Such unions, in their view, may minimize, on one hand, the interference of trade union in their day-to-day working and may protect them from dismissal and ill-considered judgement of the higher authority on the other.

View of Managers on Job Insecurity

To know the general view of Indian managers on job insecurity, an open-ended question was asked 'Any other comment on job insecurity' in the questionnaire. Only 14 managers replied this question. Their responses are mainly related to personal competence and integrity, employment situations and mis-management.

Personal competence/integrity

"I have never faced this problem though I have always served in private organizations. Job insecurity exists only for those who are creating political trouble, though very good in their work and are not consistently sincere and regular".

× × × ×
 "Job insecurity is a very relative term. It depends on individual's approach and outlook of the work".

× × × ×
 "Job insecurity depends on the way of your approach and part played".

× × × ×
 "If the employee is professionally competent, he does not bother about job insecurity to a great extent".

Employment Situation

"For most people in the organization, job insecurity may become a main factor because throughout their service period, an employee may not be in a position to get equivalent job or slightly worse than the one in hand. The major reason being that specialized experience/training can be used in a particular organization only and not in every organization."

× × × ×
 "Due to present unemployment and under employment in the country".

× × × ×
 "Too much job security is harmful as a whole".

Managerial ineffectiveness

"It is immaterial in the case of a factory or organization sick in administration or in funds".

× × × ×
 "Non-professional, feudal managerial system".

× × × ×
 "Job security is totally dependent on the stability of your organization".

× × × ×
 "This is an old plant. It may shut down any time. On account of bad feelings of unskilled labour, too much labour trouble, very weak management. Everybody wants to spend time safely for himself".

× × × ×
 "Mismanagement sometimes makes one feel that the job is insecure. This often happens in private sector where the authority and responsibility of a senior man is often misused to his or immediate subordinate's wish".

× × × ×
 "In public sector, personal property of no one is invested. As such efficiency and productivity/profitability are not overall considerations. Organizational interest is often sacrificed at all levels of individual/personal interest; decisions are deferred; responsibility is shirked/shifted. Interference by politicians deprives one of his freedom of action. Since actions become questionable by anybody and everybody, one reacts by preferring not to take any action. Job security seems to be more in inaction rather than in action".

× × × ×
 The above views of managers reveal that manager's professional incompetence, lack of personal integrity and alternative job opportunities on one hand and mismanagement of organization on the other are mentioned as the important reasons for job insecurity. Political interference and pressure have also been mentioned for job insecurity. The general comments of Indian managers reveal that organizational environment is considered more important than external environment for job insecurity. This may be due to their closeness with organizational environment.

* Recently the managers of many Public Sector Undertakings have formed association to protect their interests.