



## Role of recreational meetings in employee motivation: A study on Indian perspective

Mrs. Priya Sanjay  
Gawade

Assistant Professor, KES SHROFF COLLEGE OF COMMERCE, KANDIVALI  
(WEST), MUMBAI - 400067

### ABSTRACT

*This study is an attempt to determine the effect of recreational meetings including indoor and outdoor meetings, competitions, religious and non-religious meetings and celebrations of various events organized by enterprises towards improving the job satisfaction of their employees. The study shows that companies have started amending their old methodology of operating and adopting a variety of new non-monetary methods of employee motivation. Because of the dynamism in business world and the competition among firms, many companies are inculcating recreational activities like fun, entertaining and gathering activities at the workplace for employees. This paper also highlights the importance of the recreational activities which not only help in better interpersonal relationships between employees but fosters a better workplace environment. Despite the growing need of such extracurricular activities at the workplace, Indian firms are yet to realise its full potential, as not many firms embracing this new Human Resources strategy. There is a dearth of research on this subject in Indian corporate context. The findings of this research are beneficial for the management of organizations to adopt methods of recreational meetings to enhance the job satisfaction among employees in Indian organisations.*

**KEYWORDS :** Employee Motivation, Recreational Meetings, Entertainment and Fun Activities.

### Introduction

The notion of recreational meetings and entertainment activities in the workplace was popularized first in the USA, and later engulfed into other parts of the world (Darell, 2011; Huffmon, 2011). The trend of recreational activities started gaining momentum during mid to late-1990s and today, recreational meetings, company level competitions, social gatherings and celebration of special events for the purpose of employee engagement and for alleviating the workplace stress are gradually becoming a popular routine. Using recreational meetings and fun-filled activities results in a healthy environment wherein work is executed in a motivated, collective and encouraging manner, and special events along with fun and frolic activities are made an indispensable part of the company's culture. However, the existing body of theoretical knowledge on the role of recreational meetings in Indian organisations is unsatisfactory, as not much research has been done to explore the phenomenon.

Indian economy is being widely recognized as one of the most dynamic economies in the world, exhibiting rapid progress. Besides, on the path of becoming a major global hub for outsourcing business, Indian enterprises are expending their business globally through collaborating and acquiring global firms (Huffmon, 2011). This tremendous transformation has been happened due to significant rate of growth in inputs majorly employable capital and semi-skilled labour as well as total factor productivity (TFP). Within half decade from today, the Indian economy is expected to increase its labour pool by approximately 250 million, at a rate of about 18 million per year, which is greater than the total employable labour force of Germany (Pattanayak, 2005). This process is famously known as 'demographic dividend' in economics literature and has attracted a new interest in the Human Resource Management (HRM) in Indian Economy.

There are many disadvantages attached with workplaces that are not thriving and stimulating. Without an inspirational and exciting workplace, an organization fails to attract the brightest and the most qualified employees. Due to the greater turnover rate, organizations bear significant high labour costs as compare to a highly motivated workplace (Orrick, 2002). Furthermore, a non-recreational workplace leads high absenteeism among employees and cause a significant number of work-related problem at workplace. Such a workplace environment devoid of motivation has a bad impact on employees' physical and mental health as it affects their work-life balance too (Pattanayak, 2005). An organization is adversely affected when a trusted employee with immense knowledge, creativity and intellectual capital, leaves the organization due to the monotonous environment. Hence, the organization is likely to suffer consequences when it fails to address innovation and rapidly transformation according to various changes in the business environment and unable to keep up its edge on competitors in this highly competitive business world.

This study explores the importance of recreational meetings in employee satisfaction and thus retention. It is primarily concerned with the role of recreational meetings including all informal ways that an organization can adopt to motivate their employees to extract the best talent in them, to the maximum benefit of the enterprise. The paper highlights some points on empirical research in the above mentioned context specific to India. Therefore, this study is beneficial for Indian organizations as it would enhance their knowledge regarding recreational meetings and various entertainment activities, and their positive impact on job satisfaction of an employee as regarded under Human Resource Management. The work-play dynamics given the rising complexity in business in are causing scholars to put more efforts in researching Human Resources Management (HRM) in a broader and more reflective perspective. Thus it has become important to address the role of recreational meetings in motivating employees and enhancing firms' financial and non-financial performance.

### Literature Review

'Recreation' in the context of Human Resource Management (HRM) can be stated as an activity that an employee want to do for amusement and to minimize work-related stress. Not only does it stimulate and motivate employees but also resuscitate them to perform their duties efficiently (Oak, 2012). In traditional HRM, work and recreational activities were separated by well-defined organizational boundaries and it was also presumed that work responsibilities should be devoid of recreational activities, but HR practitioners have today realised that recreational meetings are the most influential tool to cope up with the dynamism and complexity in the modern era. (McGhee, 2010).

There are a number of researchers and professionals who tend to oppose observance of such cultures in an organization as mere wastage of time, and increases errors at work, causing damages to an equipment (White and Little, 2004). A recent report by Society for Human Resource and Management (SHRM) recommended more recreational meetings, stating that enterprises that do not endorse and encourage recreational meetings have higher occurrences of accidents or negative performance (Arthur et al, 2006).

In Kerr's (2011) view, in order to add more fun and excitement at the work place in an organization on a perpetual basis, recreational meetings or social gatherings are generally thought to be the most effective tool. This positive addition to employee management under HRM creates a sense of liveness and happiness at the workplace along with positive feelings of inter personal connection among all members of an enterprise (Kerr, 2011). Most the businesses today often fail to recognize the fact that allowing to involve their employees in recreational meetings and activities is a more basis and necessary component, in order to have a strong, profitable and growth orient-

ed enterprise. In fact, it has been widely recognized that recreational meetings promote co-operation and strategic skills among employees, which can be considered as a backbone of growth of an organization (Darell, 2011).

According to business trend analyst John (2011), job satisfaction can be determined by analysing attitudinal characteristics that show what an employee feels about his or her assigned work and the prevailing workplace conditions. The set of feelings that come up could be either positive or negative. In Huffmon's view (2011) "integrating recreational meetings and other fun-filled activities in organizational culture can be termed as one of the modern day approaches to keeping the employees contented". In the past, various monetary rewards like bonuses, incentives, perquisites like paid vacations offered to employees were often used by Human Resource Managers to keep the labour workforce of the organization highly motivated. These methods did work but only to achieve success in the short-run, therefore the need for a more holistic approach towards employee motivation was felt.

On the other hand, in recent years, a number of efforts have been made by senior level managers to adopt ways for long-term motivation among employees. Huffmon (2011) mentions that, this can be achieved by a qualitative innovation of the culture and working environment of the organization. She further asserts that adopting this approach can bring desired benefits not only for the employees but also for customers and the organization.

There exists a positive relationship between recreation, fun-filled activities and job satisfaction with the help of various existing theories and explanations on the phenomenon. These include theories put forth by Frederick Herzberg's well known two factor theory, David McClelland's -Three Need Theory and Abraham Maslow's very famous hierarchy of needs theory (Pattanayak, 2005). Miner et al. (2011) in their study on 600 employees in the telecom sector of USA took into consideration various needs, drives, and incentives of employees, and their possible interactions, and found a positive relationship between recreational meetings and employee motivation. Another study by Linz (2003) on 5600 public sector employees in United Kingdom to explore the impact of recreational meetings on employee motivation found that an employee's actions and concerns are affected by external non-monetary incentives like recreational meetings, rewards, feedback, social relations and mutual gatherings in the workplace, which stimulates the motivation of an employee. On similar lines a study by Carter et al. (2011), on 26 member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report that the information, reward, and personal elements are main three factors that impact motivation. They added that Human Resource Managers should work to encourage and motivate employees by providing some slot of time for recreational meetings, fringe benefits for their performance and specific skills in work, this would make em-

ployee more commitment toward job. A recent research by Business Today (2013) on stratified sample of Indian Railways' employees to establish a relationship between recreational meetings and employee motivation, proved that it holds true in Indian context. The study also showed that provision of recreational meetings added not only to better outcomes of blue collared workers but also that of brown collared workers.

However, despite the glaring importance of recreational meetings in boosting employee motivation in the workplace, contemporary Indian firms are yet to capitalise on this strategy. There have been little or no researches signifying the role of recreational meetings in organisations today. Due to this dearth of data, and the relative neglect of studies focusing on recreational meetings, no significant relationship can be established. Thus, this leaves a scope of further study and research on relationship between employee motivation and recreational meetings.

## Conclusion

The findings of the paper indicate that recreational meetings and related recreational activities, more than ever before, are becoming an indispensable element in managing employees in dynamic business environment. Particularly in light of the recent economic downturn, responding to personal and individualistic needs of the employees continue to play significant role in organizational growth in order to retain the key employees. Organising fun-filled activities such as common games at work place, picnics, celebrations of festivals and special events, within and outside the organization not only help an employee to engage in interactive conversations, which results in a better setup interpersonal relationships in an organization, but also lighten up the organization work load while making organisational environment more comfortable and a stress-free work place.

Job satisfaction should account not just work compensation but also the work and the work environment. First of all, efforts should devot-ed to make the basic employment incentives such as fair compensation, positive working conditions, etc. Each and every incentive has its own significance in keeping the employees contented. Management should also focus on non-monetary incentives and recreational meetings, such as providing and maintaining a high-quality and superior work atmosphere, along with try to incorporate the employee's suggestions in decision making. As the paper indicates that a major factor for making organizational workplace workable and enjoyable is a responsibility of the employer itself. Having above mentioned type of arrangement at workplace, even the very difficult work can be enjoyable and not traumatic for an employee. Thus, the provision of optimal amount of recreational meetings and fun-filled activities along with a satisfactory work schedule is required in order to make an employee contented.

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