

Concerns in Railways Organisation

What is the issue?

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- The Bibek Debroy Committee made its recommendation on railway reforms.
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- It needs a reassessment with a holistic approach, in terms of addressing the varied concerns in Railways.
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What are the concerns in Railways?

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- **Departmentalism** - The Bibek Debroy Committee refers to the negative aspects of functional specialisation as “departmentalism”.
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- Departmentalism is a major constraint for bringing about rapid change in the Railways organisation.
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- This manifests itself in the form of unhealthy competition amongst departments.
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- **Competition** - They compete for appropriating a larger share of scarce resources.
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- Competition for usurping a larger share of key general management posts also exists.
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- This is for better access to power, authority etc.
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- **Personnel** - Narrow departmental goals are pursued at the cost of organisational goals and objectives.
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- Resultantly, there is lack of team work and cohesion.
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- Departmentalism seems to mix up the issue of career progression with the

issue of departmental bias.

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- These are related issues, but it's important to address them separately to find a solution to "departmentalism".

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- **Cadres** - Currently the personnel for each of the departments are recruited as distinct cadres.

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- This takes place through the civil services examination for the four non-engineering disciplines.

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- For the five engineering disciplines, engineering services examinations are conducted.

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What are the concerns with the recommendations?

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- The Debroy Committee make suggestion for two services, by **merging the different cadres**.

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- One, recruited through the civil services examination and the other through the engineering services examination.

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- Merger of cadres would help resolve the inter-cadre tussle for top positions.

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- It is also expected to free managerial behaviour of departmental bias.

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- **Concerns** - However, the departments would still exist, and so would departmental goals.

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- So how far would single cadre or just two cadres lead everyone to work towards the organisational goal is uncertain.

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- Also, there are technical concerns in the merging of the cadre.

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- Decisions taken by non-technical personnel on technical matters would remain a concern.

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- Merged cadres may not necessarily lead to more focus on organisational goals rather than departmental goals.

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What is the way forward?

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- The merger of cadres is a major surgical intervention proposed by the Debroy Committee.
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- It is a possibly way of resolving career progression issues but not coordination issues.
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- Strengthening all coordination mechanisms that exist and the creation of such mechanisms where they do not exist is crucial.
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- So, unification of performance metrics across departments and merger of indices of performance is essential.
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- Departments can thus work synchronously towards the goals of the whole organisation.
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Source: Indian Express

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