

**Employee Attitudes and Organizational Change in
Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC)**

MA HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) has been a vital public transport institution in Kerala, contributing to social mobility and public service delivery. Despite its significance, the corporation has faced recurring financial crises, operational challenges and labour-related issues. While previous studies have largely focused on financial and administrative aspects, limited attention has been given to the role of employee attitudes in organisational change. This study examines how employee attitudes shaped the positive change of KSRTC in the recent years.

A qualitative exploratory case study approach was adopted. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with employees, trade union representatives, management personnel and passengers, supplemented by observation and documentary analysis. The data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework, supported by Yin's case study approach.

The findings indicate that employee attitude emerged as a critical factor in the revival process. Regular salary payments, improved labour-management relations, leadership interventions and organisational reforms contributed to higher employee morale, commitment and organisational ownership. Employees demonstrated greater service orientation and willingness to support institutional change, while trade unions increasingly adopted a constructive role in balancing employee welfare with organisational sustainability. Positive behavioural changes among employees also contributed to improved passenger experiences and enhanced public trust. However, challenges such as resistance to change, political influences and concerns regarding KSRTC SWIFT continued to affect organisational dynamics.

The study concludes that the changes of KSRTC cannot be explained solely through financial restructuring and administrative reforms. Organisational renewal was significantly influenced by changes in employee attitudes, workplace culture and labour-management relationships. Employee attitude functioned as a crucial link between institutional reforms and sustainable organisational change, highlighting the importance of employee engagement and organisational culture in the renewal of public sector institutions.

Keywords: Employee Attitude, Organisational change, KSRTC, Public Transport, Trade Unions, Organisational Culture, Labour Relations, Public Sector Management.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Public sector transport undertakings play an important role in governance and public service delivery by balancing financial sustainability with social responsibilities. They promote social inclusion and regional development by providing access to education, employment, healthcare and other essential services (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011).

The Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) is one of India's major public transport institutions and has been a vital part of Kerala's transport system for several decades. Through its extensive network, the corporation connects urban, rural and remote regions while supporting economic activity and social mobility. Despite its importance, KSRTC has faced persistent challenges including financial deficits, operational inefficiencies and complex labour relations. Research suggests that organisational change depends not only on financial and administrative reforms but also on employee commitment, organisational culture and workplace attitudes (Robbins & Judge, 2017; Schein, 2010).

In recent years, KSRTC has undertaken various initiatives aimed at improving efficiency, service quality and public confidence. Within this context, frontline employees such as drivers, conductors and mechanics play a crucial role as the primary interface between the organisation and the public. Their behaviour and service orientation significantly influence passenger experiences and organisational reputation (Schneider et al., 1998).

Recognising that employee attitudes are important determinants of organisational effectiveness and public trust (Robbins & Judge, 2017), the present study examines the relationship between employee attitudes and organisational change in KSRTC. By exploring the perceptions of employees, trade union representatives, management personnel and passengers, the study seeks to understand how behavioural and cultural factors contribute to the transition of KSRTC from crisis towards organizational change.

1.2 Public Transport and Social Development in Kerala

Kerala's development experience has long been associated with social welfare, human development and public service delivery. Efficient public transport systems contribute to social inclusion by enabling mobility for people who may otherwise face barriers due to economic limitations or geographical isolation (Evans & Johansson, 1998). In this context, KSRTC has functioned not merely as a transport operator but as an important social institution supporting regional connectivity and balanced development.

The corporation provides essential transportation services across rural, hilly and coastal regions that are often commercially unattractive to private operators. It also supports students, senior citizens and other vulnerable groups through various concession schemes and welfare-oriented services. During natural disasters, public emergencies and transport disruptions, KSRTC has frequently undertaken responsibilities extending beyond conventional transportation, highlighting its broader social role in maintaining economic and social continuity (KSRTC Annual Report, 2023).

The challenges faced by KSRTC therefore extend beyond financial considerations and raise broader questions about the role of public sector institutions in contemporary society. While financial sustainability remains important, the corporation's continued relevance depends equally on its ability to fulfil social responsibilities and maintain public trust. Understanding how employees contribute to this process forms an important focus of the present study.

1.3 Public Perception and the Narrative of Crisis

Public perception plays an important role in shaping the legitimacy, reputation and effectiveness of public institutions. Unlike private organisations that may be evaluated primarily through profitability and market performance, public sector organisations are often judged through public experiences, service quality and perceptions of accountability. In service-oriented organisations, employee behaviour becomes a particularly important factor influencing public evaluations and organisational reputation (Tse et al., 2006).

For much of the past two decades, KSRTC has frequently been associated with a narrative of institutional crisis. Public discussions, media reports and political debates have often focused on issues such as financial deficits, salary delays, pension liabilities, ageing fleets, operational inefficiencies and labour disputes. These recurring concerns contributed to the development of a widespread perception that KSRTC was struggling to maintain operational sustainability while fulfilling its social obligations.

Within this environment, frontline employees occupied a particularly significant position. Drivers, conductors and other operational personnel interact directly with passengers on a daily basis. Their conduct, communication and responsiveness often become the most immediate indicators through which the public evaluates the organisation. Research on service organisations suggests that employee behaviour strongly influences customer satisfaction, organisational image and public trust (Schneider et al., 1998). Consequently, employee

attitudes assume particular importance within public transport systems where interactions between employees and service users occur continuously.

At the same time, recent years have witnessed the emergence of alternative narratives surrounding KSRTC. Alongside reports highlighting financial and operational difficulties, increasing attention has been given to stories of employee dedication, passenger assistance and organisational improvement. Instances of employees helping passengers during emergencies, demonstrating professionalism and contributing positively to service delivery have received recognition through traditional media and social media platforms.

These developments indicate that public perception of KSRTC may be gradually evolving. While structural and financial challenges continue to exist, growing recognition of positive employee behaviour suggests the possibility of broader cultural and organisational change. This shift is particularly relevant to the present study because it highlights the relationship between employee attitudes, public trust and organisational revival.

The changing narrative surrounding KSRTC raises important questions regarding the role of employees in institutional transformation. If employee attitudes influence public perception, service quality and organisational reputation, they may also contribute significantly to broader processes of organisational change and institutional transformation. Exploring this relationship forms one of the central concerns of the present research.

1.4 Historical Evolution of KSRTC

The history of public road transport in Kerala dates back to the establishment of the Travancore State Transport Department (TSTD) in 1937, which laid the foundation for organised state-operated transport services in the region. Following Indian independence and state reorganisation, the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) was established in 1965 under the Road Transport Corporations Act, 1950, with the objective of combining public accountability with administrative flexibility and operational efficiency (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). Over the decades, KSRTC expanded its services across urban, rural and remote regions, contributing significantly to social mobility, economic integration and public welfare. However, rapid expansion, increasing workforce costs, political interventions and limitations in long-term financial planning gradually created operational and financial challenges. Thus, the evolution of KSRTC reflects both the developmental role of public sector institutions and the organisational difficulties associated with balancing social responsibilities and financial sustainability, providing the context for contemporary organisational change initiatives.

1.5 Organisational Structure and Workforce

The Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) is a state-owned public sector undertaking functioning under the administrative supervision of the Government of Kerala. Headed by the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD), the corporation operates through a network of regional offices, depots and various administrative departments responsible for finance, human resources, operations and engineering. At the operational level, drivers, conductors, mechanics and other staff constitute the backbone of service delivery, with drivers and conductors serving as the primary interface between the organisation and passengers.

The workforce of KSRTC represents a complex organisational community shaped by professional experiences, trade union affiliations and organisational culture. Employee attitudes, commitment and perceptions significantly influence service quality, workplace performance and organisational effectiveness (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Trade unions also play an important role in shaping labour relations and organisational dialogue, contributing both to employee welfare and institutional functioning (Verma & Mookherjee, 1996; Chhabra, 2007). Given the demanding nature of public transport services, employee commitment and behaviour are critical determinants of passenger satisfaction and organisational reputation. Understanding these attitudes is therefore essential for examining the broader process of organisational change within KSRTC.

1.6 Financial Crisis and Institutional Challenges

The financial crisis of KSRTC has been one of the most significant challenges in its recent history. Over the years, the corporation accumulated substantial liabilities due to structural, operational and policy-related factors. As a public transport undertaking, KSRTC is expected to operate socially necessary and often unprofitable routes while meeting rising costs related to fuel, maintenance, salaries and pensions. These pressures resulted in increasing dependence on government support and limited the corporation's ability to modernise its services. The crisis also affected employee morale, organisational trust and workplace attitudes, as delays in salary payments and uncertainty regarding the future of the corporation became recurring concerns (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Consequently, the financial difficulties of KSRTC extended beyond economic issues and generated wider discussions on institutional reform, organisational sustainability and revival, ultimately leading to initiatives such as the Sushil Khanna Committee Report and other reform measures.

1.7 The Sushil Khanna Committee and Institutional Diagnosis

One of the most significant efforts undertaken to understand the challenges faced by KSRTC was the appointment of the Sushil Khanna Committee by the Government of Kerala. The committee was entrusted with the responsibility of conducting a comprehensive examination of the financial, operational and administrative conditions of the corporation and recommending measures necessary for its revival. The report produced by the committee has since become one of the most influential documents in discussions concerning the future of KSRTC and public transport reform in Kerala.

The committee approached the problems of KSRTC from a multidimensional perspective. Rather than attributing the crisis to any single factor, the report identified a combination of structural, financial, managerial and operational weaknesses that had gradually accumulated over time. Among the issues highlighted were inefficient duty structures, weaknesses in route rationalisation, inadequate managerial autonomy, fragmented decision-making processes and limitations in financial planning and monitoring systems. The report argued that these problems had collectively contributed to the deterioration of organisational performance and financial stability (Khanna, 2019).

An important contribution of the Sushil Khanna Committee Report was its rejection of simplistic explanations that attributed the corporation's difficulties solely to employees or trade unions. Instead, the report emphasised that organisational problems must be understood within the broader context of governance structures, policy decisions, financial obligations and administrative practices. This perspective represented a significant shift from narratives that focused exclusively on labour costs or employee behaviour as the primary causes of institutional decline.

The report further highlighted the need for modern management practices, improved workforce productivity, enhanced operational efficiency and stronger accountability mechanisms. It recommended a comprehensive strategy involving financial restructuring, administrative reform, technological modernisation and human resource development. Such recommendations reflected contemporary public management approaches which emphasise organisational learning, performance improvement and institutional accountability (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011).

Particularly relevant to the present study is the report's recognition that organisational change ultimately depends upon the people responsible for implementing reforms. While financial

assistance, policy interventions and administrative restructuring may create opportunities for change, their effectiveness depends significantly upon employee cooperation, commitment and behavioural adaptation (Khanna, 2019).

The Sushil Khanna Committee Report therefore provides an important institutional diagnosis of KSRTC's crisis while simultaneously offering a framework for understanding the broader organisational change within KSRTC. Many of the themes explored in the present study, including organisational commitment, labour-management relations, service quality and employee attitudes, can be understood within the context of the challenges and recommendations identified by the committee.

1.8 Emerging Organisational Changes in KSRTC

In recent years, KSRTC has undertaken several initiatives aimed at improving organisational performance and restoring public confidence. These include the introduction of premium and tourism services, revenue diversification through activities such as courier services and commercial leasing, and the adoption of technological innovations including digital ticketing and online reservation systems. Alongside these reforms, increasing attention has been given to service quality and passenger engagement. Observers have also noted positive changes in employee behaviour and organisational culture, suggesting that behavioural transformation may be occurring alongside administrative and financial reforms. Research indicates that sustainable organisational change depends not only on structural interventions but also on changes in employee attitudes and workplace culture (Schein, 2010). These developments provide an important context for examining the relationship between employee attitudes and organisational change within KSRTC.

1.9 Statement of the Research Problem

Despite numerous policy discussions, administrative reforms and academic studies concerning KSRTC, the majority of existing analyses have focused on financial performance, operational efficiency, labour costs, industrial relations and governance structures. While these studies have contributed significantly to understanding the corporation's challenges, relatively limited attention has been given to the role of employee attitudes in shaping organisational change.

Organisational change is often discussed in terms of financial restructuring, technological modernisation and administrative reforms. However, the effectiveness of such measures depends largely upon the willingness of employees to accept change, adapt to new expectations

and actively participate in organisational transformation. Employees are not merely recipients of reform initiatives; they are important actors whose attitudes and behaviours influence the success or failure of organisational change processes.

Within the context of KSRTC, this issue assumes particular significance because employees directly influence passenger experiences, service quality and public perceptions of the corporation. Positive employee attitudes can contribute to organisational commitment, improved public trust and enhanced service delivery. Conversely, employee dissatisfaction, resistance to change or low morale may undermine organisational effectiveness and hinder organisational change efforts.

Although employee behaviour has occasionally been discussed within studies of labour relations and organisational management, there remains limited qualitative research examining employee attitude as a central factor influencing organisational change within KSRTC. Existing studies rarely explore how employees perceive organisational reforms, how their attitudes evolve during periods of organisational change and how behavioural transformation influences organisational outcomes.

The present study addresses this gap by examining the relationship between employee attitudes and organisational change in KSRTC. Through an exploration of employee experiences, passenger perceptions, trade union perspectives, management viewpoints, observation narratives and documentary evidence, the study seeks to understand how employee attitudes influence the ongoing organisational changes within KSRTC.

1.10 Significance of the Study

The significance of the present study lies in its attempt to highlight the human dimension of organisational change within a major public sector institution.

By focusing on employee attitudes within the context of KSRTC, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how behavioural factors influence institutional outcomes. The findings provide insights into the relationship between employee commitment, labour relations, public trust and organisational sustainability. Such insights are particularly valuable in the context of public sector organisations where social responsibilities and commercial pressures coexist.

The study is also significant from a policy perspective. The findings may assist policymakers, transport administrators and organisational leaders in designing interventions that recognise the importance of employee engagement and organisational culture. By identifying the factors

that encourage positive employee attitudes, the study may contribute to more effective approaches to organisational renewal within public transport systems.

Furthermore, the study contributes to the growing body of qualitative research on public sector management and organisational change. Through its emphasis on lived experiences, perceptions and organisational culture, it provides a perspective that complements existing financially and administratively oriented studies on KSRTC and similar institutions.

1.11 Scope of the Study

The present study focuses on the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) and examines the role of employee attitude in the organisational change process. The study is situated within the broader context of public sector management, organisational behaviour and institutional change, with particular attention given to the interaction between employee perceptions and organisational transformation.

The analysis encompasses the perspectives of multiple stakeholders associated with KSRTC, including employees, trade union representatives, management personnel and passengers. By incorporating these diverse viewpoints, the study seeks to develop a comprehensive understanding of how employee attitudes influence organisational performance, service delivery and public trust.

The study adopts a qualitative case study approach and therefore prioritises depth of understanding rather than statistical generalisation. Particular emphasis is placed on employee experiences, workplace culture, labour-management relations, passenger interactions and organisational practices that contribute to the change process. Observation narratives and documentary evidence are also utilised to strengthen the analysis through triangulation.

While the findings offer insights that may be relevant to other public sector transport organisations, the conclusions are primarily applicable to the institutional context of KSRTC. The study does not attempt to evaluate the financial performance or operational efficiency of the corporation in isolation but rather seeks to understand how employee attitudes interact with these factors within the broader process of organisational renewal.

1.12 Chapterization of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organised into six chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Institutional Context of KSRTC

This chapter introduces the study, provides the institutional background of KSRTC and discusses the historical, organisational and policy context within which the research is situated. It also presents the statement of the research problem, significance of the study and scope of the research.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter critically reviews existing national and international literature relating to employee attitude, organisational behaviour, public transport systems, organisational change, industrial relations and trade unionism. The chapter identifies the research gap and establishes the conceptual foundation for the present study.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter explains the methodological framework adopted for the study. It discusses the research design, case study approach, sampling procedures, data collection methods, ethical considerations and analytical framework based on Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis and Yin's case study methodology.

Chapter 4: Verbatims

This chapter presents the narratives generated from interviews conducted with employees, trade union representatives, management officials and other stakeholders associated with KSRTC. Observation narratives and documentary evidence are also presented as part of the empirical data.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussions

This chapter analyses the data using thematic analysis and presents the major themes emerging from the study. It examines the relationship between employee attitudes, organisational ownership, financial confidence, labour-management relations, passenger service culture, leadership interventions and organisational renewal.

Chapter 6: Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion

This chapter presents the major findings of the study, policy suggestions, theoretical implications, practical implications, limitations of the study and scope for future research. It

concludes by discussing the broader significance of employee attitude in the change of public sector organisations.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Review of literature is an important part of any research study as it helps the researcher understand the existing body of knowledge related to the topic under study. It provides an overview of previous studies, reports, theories and scholarly discussions connected to the research problem. Through the review of literature, the researcher can identify major concepts, findings, research trends and gaps in earlier studies. In the context of the present study, reviewing earlier works is essential to understand how issues related to employee attitude, organisational crisis, public transport management, trade unionism, employee behaviour and organisational transformation have been examined in relation to public transport corporations across the world, India and particularly the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation.

Public transportation occupies an important position in modern societies as it supports mobility, economic development, social inclusion and regional connectivity. Across the world, public transport systems have evolved not merely as commercial enterprises but also as public welfare institutions responsible for ensuring affordable and accessible transportation to all sections of society. The functioning and sustainability of such systems depend not only on financial and infrastructural factors but also on organisational culture, employee behaviour, service quality and public trust. In recent decades, many public transport corporations across different countries have experienced financial crisis, competition from private operators, technological transformation and changing passenger expectations. These developments have increased academic interest in studying employee behaviour, organisational commitment, labour relation and institutional reform within public transport organisations.

In India, State Road Transport Corporations (SRTCs) have historically played a major role in connecting urban and rural populations. However, many transport corporations in India currently face challenges such as financial losses, operational inefficiency, labour disputes, ageing fleets and declining competitiveness. At the same time, several transport corporations have attempted change strategies through modernization, service reforms, employee training, technological innovation and restructuring measures. In this context, employee attitude has emerged as an important factor influencing organisational functioning, passenger satisfaction and institutional sustainability. The present chapter therefore examines the historical development of public transportation and reviews international, national and regional literature related to employee attitude and organisational change in public transport systems.

2.2 Public Transportation: History and Development

Having seen the brief origin of public transportation and its importance, let us see the history and development of the same in detail.

2.2.1 International History and Development of Public Transportation

Public transportation has a long historical evolution closely connected with urbanization, industrialization and economic development. In early societies, transportation systems mainly depended on animal-driven vehicles and water transport. However, with the Industrial Revolution during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, large-scale urban growth created the need for organized and affordable transportation systems capable of moving large populations efficiently. This led to the development of railways, trams, buses and urban transit systems in several parts of Europe and North America.

During the nineteenth century, horse-drawn omnibuses emerged in cities such as Paris and London, providing one of the earliest forms of organized public road transportation. Later, steam-powered and electric tram systems transformed urban mobility in major industrial cities. The development of motorized buses during the early twentieth century further expanded public transportation by enabling flexible and large-scale passenger movement. Countries gradually recognized public transportation as an essential public service connected to economic productivity, labour mobility and social integration.

After the Second World War, many governments across the world nationalized or strongly regulated transportation systems to ensure affordable mobility for the public. Public transport corporations and transit authorities were established in several countries to provide organized bus and rail services. In many welfare-oriented societies, public transportation came to be viewed not merely as a profit-oriented activity but as an essential public utility connected to social justice and regional development.

In recent decades, public transportation systems across the world have faced several challenges such as increasing operational costs, environmental concerns, private sector competition, changing travel behaviour and financial sustainability problems. At the same time, modernization efforts involving electric mobility, digital ticketing, intelligent transport systems and customer-oriented service reforms have become increasingly important. Studies conducted internationally also highlight that employee behaviour, professionalism, service orientation and

organisational culture significantly influence passenger satisfaction and institutional reputation in public transportation systems.

2.2.2 History and Development of Public Transportation in India

The history of organized public transportation in India developed alongside colonial administration, railway expansion and urban growth during the British period. Railways became the backbone of transportation during colonial rule, while road-based public transportation expanded gradually in urban and regional areas. In the post-independence period, the Government of India and various state governments recognized transportation as an important developmental and welfare mechanism necessary for economic growth and social integration.

As road connectivity improved, several states established State Road Transport Corporations (SRTCs) under the Road Transport Corporations Act, 1950. These corporations were created to provide affordable, accessible and socially inclusive transportation services to the public. Unlike private operators focused mainly on profitable routes, SRTCs were expected to serve rural, remote and socially important areas even when operations were not commercially viable.

Over time, SRTCs became major public service institutions in many states. They played a significant role in connecting villages, supporting educational mobility, facilitating labour movement and enabling regional economic development. However, many transport corporations gradually began facing operational and financial difficulties due to rising fuel prices, increasing labour expenditure, political interference, competition from private operators, ageing fleets and administrative inefficiencies.

Different states in India responded differently to these challenges. Some transport corporations attempted reforms through modernization, digital management systems, employee training and operational restructuring. South Indian states such as Karnataka and Tamil Nadu became particularly noted for comparatively stronger transport systems, better fleet management and service-oriented operational practices. Their experiences are often studied as examples of relatively effective public transport administration within India.

2.3 History and Development of KSRTC

The Kerala State Road Transport Corporation traces its origin to the Travancore State Transport Department established in 1938 under the administration of the erstwhile princely state of Travancore. It was one of the earliest organized public road transport systems in India.

Following the formation of the state of Kerala in 1956, the transport system expanded gradually to serve the mobility needs of the growing population. In 1965, KSRTC was officially constituted under the Road Transport Corporations Act, 1950 as an independent public sector undertaking.

Over the decades, KSRTC became one of the most important public institutions in Kerala. It played a major role in connecting urban centres, villages, hilly regions, coastal areas and socially marginalized communities. The corporation became deeply integrated into the social and cultural life of Kerala, often being viewed not merely as a transport provider but as a public service institution with emotional significance among the people.

However, KSRTC also experienced prolonged periods of crisis characterized by financial losses, salary delays, increasing operational expenditure, ageing buses, labour disputes, political intervention and competition from private operators. Reports such as the Sushil Khanna Committee Report identified several structural and managerial problems affecting the organization. In recent years, KSRTC has attempted various change initiatives including fleet modernization, premium services, digital systems, Budget Tourism Cell initiatives, SWIFT operations and operational reforms. Simultaneously, changes in employee behaviour, trade union approaches and public engagement have also become important aspects of the organization's change process.

2.4 Review of Related Studies

Having dealt with the introduction to the public transportation system across the globe, India and Kerala, let us enter into the review of literature per se.

2.4.1 International Studies

Research conducted internationally on public transport organizations highlights the importance of employee behaviour, service quality, organisational culture and passenger satisfaction in determining the effectiveness and sustainability of transportation systems. Studies from Europe, North America and Asia increasingly emphasize that public transportation institutions cannot survive solely through infrastructural investment and financial reform; rather, employee commitment and customer-oriented service behaviour are equally important.

Hensher and Stanley, 2003, in their work on public transport service delivery, argue that passenger satisfaction is strongly influenced by employee interaction, punctuality and

responsiveness. The study notes that frontline employees represent the public face of transport organizations and therefore directly shape public trust and institutional image.

Redman et al., 2013, in their study on passenger experience in public transport systems, identify employee conduct, communication behaviour and customer service orientation as major determinants of public perception. The study suggests that employee attitude significantly affects whether passengers continue to prefer public transportation over private alternatives.

Currie and Delbosc, 2011, while examining public transport sustainability, observe that organizational morale and employee engagement influence operational reliability and service continuity. They argue that financially struggling transport systems often face declining employee motivation, which further weakens service quality and passenger confidence.

Button, 2010, in his study on public transport economics and service delivery, argues that the success of public transportation systems depends not only on infrastructure and financial management but also on service quality and employee professionalism. The study highlights that employees working in public transportation represent the organisation directly before the public and therefore their behaviour significantly influences institutional image and passenger trust. The researcher further notes that transport organisations facing financial crisis often experience decline in employee morale, which eventually affects operational efficiency and public confidence.

Eboli and Mazzulla, 2007, in their research on service quality in public transport systems, identify employee courtesy, responsiveness, communication and passenger assistance as important indicators influencing passenger satisfaction. The study finds that passengers evaluate transportation services not only based on punctuality and affordability but also based on how employees interact with them during travel. The researchers conclude that customer-oriented employee behaviour is essential for improving public perception and sustaining public transport usage.

van Lierop, Badami and El-Geneidy, 2018, in their study on employee engagement and passenger loyalty in public transportation, observe that organisational commitment among employees positively influences passenger satisfaction and service reliability. The study argues that employees who feel valued and supported by the organisation are more likely to demonstrate responsible behaviour, patience and professionalism in dealing with passengers. The researchers therefore recommend organisational policies focusing on employee

motivation, behavioural development and workplace satisfaction as part of institutional sustainability strategies.

Research on transport corporations in East Asian countries such as Japan and Singapore highlights the role of continuous employee training and discipline in maintaining high-quality public transport systems. These studies indicate that professional service behaviour, punctuality culture and customer respect are systematically developed through institutional training and organisational culture.

Several international studies also discuss the impact of stress, fatigue and mental health challenges among public transport employees. Long working hours, traffic pressure, public interaction and operational demands often affect employee well-being and work behaviour. Researchers therefore increasingly recommend employee support systems, behavioural training and workplace counselling as important organizational interventions.

2.4.2 National Studies

Studies conducted in India on State Road Transport Corporations mainly focus on financial crisis, labour relations, passenger satisfaction, operational efficiency and administrative reforms. However, several studies indirectly or directly emphasize the importance of employee behaviour and organisational culture in transport system sustainability.

Mahesha, V., 2023, on the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation often highlights its comparatively better fleet management, employee discipline and customer-oriented operational culture. Studies examining Karnataka's transport corporations observe that employee training, technological adaptation and service quality initiatives have positively influenced public perception and operational efficiency.

Murugan, S. V., & Arumugam, A., 2018, in their studies related to the Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation discuss the importance of staff discipline, route management and passenger interaction in maintaining large-scale public transport operations. Researchers note that behavioural training and institutional regulation contribute significantly to employee professionalism and service continuity.

Ramesh Kumar, 2015, in a study on employee satisfaction in Indian transport corporations, identifies salary security, recognition and management support as major factors influencing employee morale and work commitment. The study argues that dissatisfied employees are more likely to demonstrate negative behaviour toward passengers and organizational systems.

Sharma and Singh, 2018, while studying public sector transport reforms in India, note that financial restructuring alone cannot ensure organizational change unless employees become active participants in the reform process. The study emphasizes that organisational change depends heavily on employee readiness, institutional trust and behavioural adaptation.

Srinivasan and Aravindan, 2019, in their study on passenger satisfaction and employee performance in South Indian transport corporations, identify employee attitude, communication behaviour and punctuality as major factors influencing passenger perception regarding public transportation services. The study notes that passengers often associate the quality of the entire organisation with their direct interaction with drivers and conductors. The researchers emphasize that positive employee behaviour contributes significantly to public trust and organisational image.

Prakash and Ravi, 2017, while examining labour relations and organisational efficiency in State Road Transport Corporations in South India, argue that cooperative industrial relations and employee participation positively influence organisational functioning. The study highlights that confrontational labour culture and excessive conflict between trade unions and management often weaken service continuity and public confidence. The researchers suggest that employee involvement in organisational decision-making can improve commitment and reduce resistance toward reform measures.

Nagaraj and Mahesh, 2021, in their study on employee stress and work culture among bus transport employees in India, identify long duty hours, traffic congestion, passenger pressure and financial insecurity as major causes of workplace stress among transport workers. The study finds that psychological stress and burnout negatively affect employee behaviour and passenger interaction. The researchers recommend behavioural training, stress management programs and employee welfare initiatives as important measures for improving organisational climate and service quality within transport corporations.

2.4.3 Regional Studies

Thomas Mathew, 2013, in his study “A Revival Model for KSRTC” examines the financial and operational crisis of the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation. The study argues that the problems of KSRTC are not merely due to declining demand but are deeply rooted in structural inefficiencies, weak human resource planning and low labour productivity. It highlights issues such as high staff–bus ratio, wage burden and poor performance monitoring. Although the study mainly focuses on financial change strategies, it indirectly suggests that employee

efficiency, discipline and work commitment are central to any meaningful change process. The study implies that organisational recovery is not possible without improving employee performance and accountability.

Mansoor N. K. et al., 2023, in their project “Challenges and Solutions: An Analysis of Issues Related to KSRTC in Malabar” analyse employee and passenger perceptions regarding KSRTC’s crisis. The study finds that employee dissatisfaction related to salary delays, work pressure, stress and health issues significantly affects service quality and organisational functioning. It shows that negative employee attitude contributes to declining public trust and operational inefficiency. The study suggests that improving employee morale and satisfaction is necessary for restoring service quality and organisational stability.

Vini M. S. and Sreekrishnan P., 2017, in their study “An Evaluation of the Performance of Kerala State Road Transport Corporation” analyse financial and operational indicators of KSRTC. The study identifies increasing operational costs and declining earnings per bus as major concerns affecting the corporation. A significant reason highlighted is the rise in employee-related expenditure without corresponding productivity improvement. Though the study mainly focuses on financial and operational performance, it indirectly points to the importance of employee productivity, discipline and work attitude in ensuring organisational sustainability.

Sanesh C., 2015, in his article “Human Resource Issues in Kerala State Road Transport Corporation” discusses issues such as lack of systematic HR planning, weak grievance redressal mechanisms, limited employee training and ineffective personnel administration. The study reports dissatisfaction among employees due to poor human resource management practices and argues that traditional administrative approaches reduce employee motivation and organisational commitment. The findings indicate that employee attitude is significantly shaped by HR practices and organisational support systems.

Karunesha Kumar K. and Nagaraju B., 2014, in their study “Evaluation of Employees’ Perception with Special Reference to KSRTC” examine employee perception regarding organisational policies and management practices. The study finds differences in employee perception across job categories and experience levels. It emphasizes that employee perception strongly influences work behaviour, organisational discipline and commitment toward the institution. The study supports the argument that positive employee attitude is necessary for organisational stability and effective public service delivery.

Dhanabhakya M. and Nisamudheen T., 2016, in their study on drivers and conductors in KSRTC, analyse employee perception regarding HRM practices within the corporation. The study identifies dissatisfaction related to recruitment, welfare measures, training systems and organisational fairness. It concludes that perceived inequality and administrative dissatisfaction negatively affect employee morale and work effectiveness. The study further suggests that improving fairness and transparency in organisational practices can positively influence employee behaviour and commitment.

Liji V. P., Johnson N. J., and Rajkumar S. V., 2017, in their case study on passenger satisfaction in KSRTC, identify employee behaviour, punctuality and service attitude as important determinants of public satisfaction. The study finds that staff conduct directly shapes passenger trust, public confidence and organisational image. The findings establish a clear relationship between employee attitude and service quality, thereby linking employee behaviour to organisational sustainability and change.

Jose L. and Akkara J., 2019, in their study on depot-level performance in KSRTC using Data Envelopment Analysis, examine operational efficiency across different depots. The study finds underutilisation of labour, managerial inefficiencies and uneven productivity levels within the corporation. Although quantitative in nature, the study suggests that productivity improvement requires employee cooperation, discipline and positive work orientation, which are closely connected to employee attitude.

Khanna S., 2019, in the government-commissioned report “Kerala State Road Transport Corporation: Crisis and Turnaround Strategy” provides a detailed analysis of the financial distress and structural crisis faced by KSRTC. The report identifies rigid work practices, resistance to reform, operational inefficiencies and high labour costs as major barriers to change. It argues that organisational turnaround requires behavioural change, employee accountability, constructive trade union participation and institutional discipline. The report strongly emphasizes that change strategies cannot succeed without employee cooperation and positive organisational attitude.

Jintu S. and Francis S. M., 2020, in their study on social sustainability of public transportation, identify punctuality, safety and employee behaviour as key factors influencing passenger perception regarding KSRTC services. The study shows that employee conduct and commitment significantly influence public confidence in public transportation systems. It

suggests that employee attitude plays a major role in rebuilding organisational credibility and passenger trust.

Antony T. and Latha R., 2023, examine trade union responses to new salary proposals and reform measures in KSRTC. The study finds that employee acceptance of reform initiatives largely depends on perceived fairness, welfare impact and trust in management. The research highlights that employee attitude toward organisational revival directly affects the implementation and success of financial restructuring measures within public transport corporations.

Akhila S. and Vinod A. S., 2024, analyse employee perception regarding trade union influence in HR practices within KSRTC. The study finds that employees generally perceive trade unions as important mechanisms for protecting labour rights and employee welfare. However, the study also notes that excessive politicisation and confrontational union practices may delay organisational reforms and administrative modernization. The findings suggest that employee morale, organisational trust and work commitment are shaped by both HR systems and trade union dynamics.

Studies on industrial relations and trade unionism in India by Sarma (2000), Rao (1996), Chhabra (2007), Karnik (1979), Verma and Mookherjee (1996), and Unnithan (2003) provide theoretical understanding regarding labour-management relations, collective bargaining, organisational conflict and industrial stability. These studies help explain how employee behaviour and organisational culture are influenced by broader institutional, legal and political contexts, especially in public sector organisations where trade unions play an active role in administrative and operational matters.

Collectively, the KSRTC-specific studies indicate that employee attitudes, HR practices, labour-management relations, trade union dynamics and service behaviour are closely associated with organisational functioning. However, these factors have largely been examined independently, creating the need for an integrated qualitative study exploring how employee attitudes interact with broader processes of organisational change within KSRTC.

2.5 Conclusion of Review

The reviewed literature demonstrates that public transportation systems across the world face multiple challenges relating to financial sustainability, operational efficiency, employee management, passenger satisfaction and organisational reform. International studies

consistently highlight the importance of employee behaviour, organisational culture, service quality and customer-oriented practices in shaping the effectiveness and public image of transport institutions. Research conducted in different countries further emphasizes that employee commitment, workplace motivation and organisational support play a significant role in maintaining service quality and institutional performance.

The national-level literature on Indian State Road Transport Corporations similarly indicates that financial restructuring and administrative reforms alone are insufficient to achieve sustainable organisational outcomes. Studies from Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and other transport corporations suggest that employee discipline, management support, service orientation and labour-management relations significantly influence operational effectiveness and public trust. The literature also demonstrates that employee participation and positive workplace attitudes contribute to the successful implementation of organisational reforms and change initiatives.

The literature relating specifically to KSRTC reveals that the corporation's challenges are closely associated with financial constraints, HR-related issues, industrial relations dynamics and organisational inefficiencies. Several studies identify employee dissatisfaction, inadequate HR practices, operational challenges and resistance to change as factors affecting organisational performance. At the same time, existing research highlights the importance of employee behaviour, service attitude, punctuality and passenger interaction in shaping public confidence and organisational effectiveness.

Overall, the reviewed literature establishes that employee attitudes constitute an important dimension of organisational functioning within public transport systems. However, existing studies have largely examined financial performance, operational efficiency, trade unionism, HR practices and passenger satisfaction as separate areas of inquiry. Limited attention has been given to understanding how employee attitudes interact with organisational culture, labour relations, leadership interventions and public perception within a broader process of organisational change. This gap provides the foundation for the present study, which seeks to explore the relationship between employee attitudes and organisational change in KSRTC through a qualitative perspective.

2.6 Research Gap

A critical review of existing literature reveals that research on public transport corporations has largely focused on operational efficiency, financial performance, labour costs, passenger satisfaction, industrial relations and administrative reforms. International and national studies

have examined employee behaviour, organisational culture and service quality in relation to public transportation systems. Similarly, studies related to KSRTC have analysed financial challenges, trade union dynamics, HR practices and operational inefficiencies. However, most existing studies examine these dimensions separately rather than through an integrated perspective focusing on employee attitudes and organisational change.

Although several studies indirectly discuss employee morale, work commitment and passenger-oriented behaviour, limited research has systematically examined employee attitudes as a central factor influencing organisational change within a public transport corporation. Existing literature does not sufficiently analyse:

- i. how employee attitudes evolve during periods of organisational change
- ii. how employees perceive and respond to organisational reforms and management initiatives
- iii. how behavioural changes influence public trust and passenger satisfaction
- iv. how trade union culture affects employee attitudes and organisational transformation
- v. and how employee attitudes contribute to broader organisational outcomes within public transport systems.

Furthermore, very limited qualitative research has been conducted on KSRTC from the perspective of employee attitudes, lived experiences and organisational culture. Most available studies are quantitative, administrative or financially oriented in nature. There remains a lack of in-depth qualitative exploration connecting employee attitudes, trade union dynamics, organisational culture, public perception and organisational change within the contemporary KSRTC context.

Therefore, the present study seeks to address this gap by examining the relationship between employee attitudes and organisational change in KSRTC. By analysing employee experiences, passenger perceptions, organisational practices, trade union perspectives and documentary evidence, the study attempts to understand how employee attitudes influence organisational behaviour, service delivery and institutional transformation within a major public sector transport organisation.

CHAPTER 3:
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study examines the relationship between employee attitudes and organisational change in the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC). Given the complexity of organisational change and the subjective nature of employee attitudes, a qualitative research approach was adopted. Qualitative methods enable the researcher to explore perceptions, experiences and interpretations of individuals involved in organisational processes and workplace transformation.

The chapter outlines the research design, data sources, sampling strategy, methods of data collection and the techniques used for analysing the data. It also discusses the ethical considerations and limitations of the research.

3.2 Title of the Study

Employee Attitudes and Organizational Change in Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC)

3.3 Definitions

Concepts constitute the foundation of any research study as they provide clarity and direction to the investigation. Defining the key concepts helps in establishing a common understanding of the terms used throughout the study and avoids ambiguity in interpretation. The present study employs both conceptual and operational definitions to explain the major concepts associated with employee attitude, organisational revival and public transportation in the context of KSRTC.

3.3.1 Employee Attitude

Conceptual Definition: Employee attitude refers to the set of beliefs, feelings, perceptions and behavioural tendencies that employees hold towards their organisation, work, colleagues and responsibilities. According to Robbins and Judge (2017), employee attitudes influence organisational commitment, job satisfaction, workplace behaviour and overall performance. Employee attitude reflects how individuals perceive their work environment and how such perceptions shape their actions within the organisation.

Operational Definition: For the purpose of this study, employee attitude refers to the perceptions, behaviour, commitment and orientation of KSRTC employees towards their work, passengers, trade unions, management and the organisation as a whole. It includes employee

willingness to serve passengers, commitment to organisational survival, acceptance of organisational reforms, work culture, discipline and contribution towards organisational change and institutional effectiveness within KSRTC.

3.3.2 Organizational Change

Conceptual Definition: Organisational change refers to planned or unplanned alterations in organisational structures, processes, culture, leadership practices and employee behaviour intended to improve organisational effectiveness.

Operational Definition: In this study, organisational change refers to the changes occurring within KSRTC in relation to employee attitudes, leadership practices, labour-management relations, service orientation, organisational culture and operational functioning.

3.4 Research Design

The study adopts a qualitative exploratory research design. The objective is not merely to measure attitudes but to understand how employees perceive organizational change and how these perceptions influence their behaviour and contribution to the changes within KSRTC.

Qualitative research is particularly suitable for this study because employee attitudes are shaped by complex interactions between organizational policies, leadership practices, trade union dynamics and broader socio-economic factors. The qualitative approach allows the researcher to capture these nuances through in-depth discussions and observations.

The study uses multiple qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews, field observations and informal interactions with passengers. The use of multiple sources of data enhances the credibility of the research through methodological triangulation.

3.5 Research Setting

The research was conducted within the operational context of the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC), which has experienced significant financial and organizational challenges in recent years. The organization has been undergoing reforms aimed at improving efficiency, financial sustainability and service delivery.

Data collection was carried out primarily in and around bus depots and bus stands, where frontline employees such as drivers, conductors and trade union leaders interact directly with passengers and perform their routine duties. Observations were also conducted during actual

bus journeys in order to capture the everyday practices and interactions of employees in their work environment.

3.6 Research Questions

The general research question guiding this study is:

How have employee attitudes shaped organisational change in KSRTC?

The study further explores the following specific research questions:

- i. What were the major factors contributing to the crisis in KSRTC?
- ii. What changes in employee attitudes have occurred recently?
- iii. What organisational and leadership factors have influenced these attitudinal changes?
- iv. How do employees and trade unions contribute to KSRTC's changes?
- v. What challenges have been encountered in transforming employee attitudes?

3.7 Sources of Data

The study relies on both primary and secondary sources of data.

3.7.1 Primary Data

Primary data was collected through:

- i. Interview guide with KSRTC employees and stakeholders
- ii. Field observations during bus journeys
- iii. Informal conversations with employees and passengers

3.7.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data was collected from various documents and sources including:

- i. Government reports related to KSRTC reforms
- ii. Policy documents and committee reports such as the Sushil Khanna Committee Report
- iii. Newspaper articles and media reports
- iv. Social media fan pages of KSRTC such as Ente KSRTC, Anavandi etc.
- v. Academic literature on public sector management and employee attitudes

These sources provided contextual understanding of the organisational challenges and organisational change initiatives in KSRTC.

3.8 Sampling Method

A purposive sampling technique was used for selecting respondents for the study. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to identify individuals who possess relevant knowledge and experience related to the research topic.

The respondents were selected from different stakeholder groups in order to capture multiple perspectives on employee attitudes and organizational change.

The main categories of respondents included:

- i. Drivers and conductors (frontline employees) from different depots of KSRTC
- ii. Retired employees
- iii. Trade union representatives of different political affiliations to gather comprehensive understanding without political bias
- iv. Human resource officials within KSRTC
- v. Government officials or policymakers associated with transport administration

The inclusion of multiple respondent categories enabled the researcher to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the institutional dynamics influencing employee attitudes.

3.9 Data Collection Methods

Different data collection methods are used in this study. They are briefly mentioned here.

3.9.1 Interview Guide

The primary method of data collection was semi-structured interviews. An interview guide was prepared based on the research objectives and key themes of the study. The guide included questions related to:

- i. Employee experiences of organisational challenges
- ii. Changes in employee attitudes in recent years
- iii. Role of leadership and management practices
- iv. Influence of trade unions on employee attitudes
- v. Employee perceptions of KSRTC SWIFT and other organisational changes

Semi-structured interviews allowed flexibility in conversation while ensuring that the key research themes were addressed. Respondents were encouraged to elaborate on their experiences and provide examples from their work environment.

3.9.2 Observation

In addition to interviews, non-participant observation was used as a complementary data collection method. Observations were conducted during travel in KSRTC buses and within bus stand environments.

The objective of observation was to understand:

- i. Employee interactions with passengers
- ii. Behavioural patterns of frontline staff
- iii. Operational practices during routine service
- iv. Indicators of employee commitment, discipline and service orientation

Field notes were recorded during and immediately after the observation process. These observations helped capture aspects of employee attitudes that may not always emerge through interviews.

3.9.3 Informal Conversations

During field visits, brief informal interactions were also conducted with passengers and employees. These conversations provided additional insights into public perceptions of KSRTC employees and the perceived changes in employee behaviour over time.

Such informal interactions served as supplementary qualitative evidence supporting the broader analysis of employee attitudes.

3.9.4. Documentary Analysis

In addition to primary data collected through in-depth interviews and non-participant observation, this study employs qualitative document analysis to examine secondary sources relevant to the functioning and organizational changes within the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation. The documents analysed include the Sushil Khanna Committee Report (2019), KSRTC annual reports, trade union newsletters and bulletins and newspaper articles published over the last five years. These sources were selected to provide insights into policy frameworks, financial conditions, organizational responses and public discourse surrounding KSRTC. The documents were systematically reviewed and thematically analysed to identify patterns related

to crisis, reform initiatives, employee roles and institutional change. This method complements the interview and observational data by offering historical and contextual depth and enables triangulation of findings, thereby enhancing the credibility and robustness of the study.

3.10 Data Analysis

The data collected through interviews, observations, documentary analysis and informal interactions were analysed using thematic analysis. The study follows the principles of Braun and Clarke's (2006) Thematic Analysis in conjunction with Robert K. Yin's Case Study Method. Thematic analysis was selected because it provides a systematic framework for identifying, analysing and interpreting patterns of meaning within qualitative data. Yin's case study approach complemented the analysis by facilitating an in-depth understanding of employee attitudes within the real-life organisational context of KSRTC.

The analysis was carried out through the following six stages proposed by Braun and Clarke:

3.10.1 Familiarization with the Data

The first stage involved familiarization with the collected data. All interview recordings, field notes from observations, documentary sources and notes from informal conversations were transcribed and reviewed repeatedly. The researcher read the transcripts several times to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences, perceptions and viewpoints regarding employee attitudes and organisational change. This process enabled the researcher to become immersed in the data and identify preliminary ideas relevant to the research questions.

3.10.2 Generating Initial Codes

In the second stage, the data were systematically coded. A code is a label attached to a meaningful piece of information. Coding involved identifying meaningful statements, phrases and observations related to the study objectives. Similar ideas expressed by different respondents were grouped under preliminary codes. Examples of such codes included employee commitment, salary delay, organisational loyalty, passenger relations, trade union influence, management practices, organisational reforms, employee morale, public perception and service orientation. The coding process helped organize large amounts of qualitative data into manageable analytical units.

3.10.3 Searching for Themes

After the initial coding process, related codes were examined and grouped together to identify broader themes. The researcher looked for recurring patterns across interviews, observations and documentary sources. Codes associated with similar meanings were clustered into potential themes representing significant aspects of employee attitudes and organisational change. During this stage, preliminary themes such as organisational crisis, trade union participation, changing employee attitudes, leadership and management influence, organisational reforms and factors contributing to changes began to emerge from the data.

3.10.4 Reviewing Themes

The identified themes were then reviewed and refined. The researcher examined whether the themes accurately reflected the coded data and whether they were consistent with the overall dataset. Some themes were merged, modified or reorganized to ensure conceptual clarity and coherence. Data extracts supporting each theme were re-examined to confirm their relevance. This stage ensured that the final themes represented meaningful patterns rather than isolated observations.

3.10.5 Defining and Naming Themes

Once the themes were finalized, each theme was clearly defined and named. The essence of each theme was identified and its relationship to the research objectives was established. Sub-themes were also developed where necessary to capture specific dimensions of broader themes. Particular attention was given to understanding how employee attitudes influenced organisational change and how factors such as management practices, trade union activities, organisational culture and employee commitment interacted within the KSRTC context.

3.10.6 Producing the Report

The final stage involved interpreting the themes and presenting them in a coherent narrative form. The findings were organized theme-wise and supported using verbatim statements from respondents. Data obtained through documentary analysis and observations were integrated wherever relevant in order to strengthen the analysis. This process of combining multiple sources of evidence facilitated triangulation and enhanced the credibility of the findings. The themes were then discussed in relation to the research questions, relevant literature and the conceptual framework of the study.

In addition to thematic analysis, the study adopts Robert Yin's pattern-matching logic, wherein themes emerging from interviews and observations are compared with findings from documentary sources such as the Sushil Khanna Committee Report, KSRTC Annual Reports, trade union publications and media reports. This process enabled the researcher to identify areas of convergence and divergence across different data sources and develop a deeper understanding of the role of employee attitudes in the organizational changes of KSRTC.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were carefully maintained throughout the research process. Respondents participated voluntarily in the study and the purpose of the research was explained to them prior to the interviews.

To protect the identity of participants, anonymity has been maintained by using generalized categories such as 'Driver', 'Conductor', or 'Union Representative' rather than personal names. Sensitive statements made by respondents were handled with confidentiality. The researcher also ensured that the data collected was used solely for academic purposes.

The researcher also acknowledges that studies involving employee attitudes and organisational change are not entirely value-free. To minimise bias, multiple stakeholder perspectives were included, participant confidentiality was maintained and triangulation of interviews, observations and documentary sources was employed. Efforts were made to ensure that participants' experiences were represented authentically while maintaining academic neutrality.

3.12 Limitations of the Study

Like any qualitative research, the study has certain limitations. The study has taken KSRTC as a single case.

- i. The number of respondents is limited, which may not fully represent the views of all KSRTC employees.
- ii. The findings are based on perceptions and experiences of respondents, which may be influenced by personal biases.
- iii. Time constraints limited the number of observations and interviews that could be conducted.
- iv. The time of the research was that of a shift in management and politics due to the election and formulation of a new government in the state. This would have affected the responses.

CHAPTER 4:
VERBATIMS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the interview narratives collected as part of the qualitative investigation into employee attitudes and organisational change in the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC). The narratives represent the lived experiences, perceptions and reflections of employees, retired personnel, trade union leaders, passengers, supporters of the corporation and management representatives. The inclusion of multiple stakeholder groups enabled a comprehensive understanding of how employee attitudes are shaped and how they influence organisational change within KSRTC.

The interview narratives are presented in an expanded and descriptive form in order to preserve the context, meaning and depth of the respondents' experiences. Rather than reducing responses into short quotations, the narratives seek to reflect how the participants themselves understand the crisis, recovery and transformation of KSRTC. Particular attention has been given to issues relating to employee behaviour, organisational commitment, trade union culture, management practices, passenger relations and public perceptions, as these emerged repeatedly throughout the data collection process.

The purpose of this chapter is not to analyse the data but to present the voices of the participants in a coherent manner. The narratives provide the empirical foundation upon which the subsequent thematic analysis is built. By presenting the respondents' experiences in detail, the chapter enables the reader to appreciate the complexity of the revival process and the various ways in which employee attitudes are perceived to have influenced organisational change within KSRTC. The themes, patterns and interpretations emerging from these narratives will be systematically examined in the following chapter using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework within the broader case study approach proposed by Robert K. Yin.

4.2 Respondent 1 - Frequent Traveller (Kottayam District)

The respondent is a frequent traveller who regularly depends on KSRTC services in Kottayam district for both personal and occupational purposes. He clarified at the outset that his understanding of the organization is limited to what is visible to passengers and that he does not possess detailed knowledge about internal administrative or policy matters. However, he emphasized that his views are shaped by continuous engagement with KSRTC services over a long period of time. He repeatedly told that if there are a private bus and a KSRTC bus going to Ernakulam from Kottayam, he would always choose KSRTC no matter what.

When asked about the crisis in KSRTC, he stated that he was aware of the issue primarily through media and public discussions, including reports of financial losses, salary delays and government interventions. However, he noted that as a passenger, he could not clearly define the crisis in technical terms. What he could observe, according to him, was a period in the past when KSRTC services appeared highly unreliable, with irregular timings, cancellations and poor maintenance. He remarked that the situation had improved in recent years, though not completely and described the current phase as one of gradual recovery rather than full stability.

A major concern raised by the respondent was the condition of KSRTC buses, particularly in comparison with private operators. He explained that many KSRTC buses are old and less competitive, especially on high range and long-distance routes. According to him, private buses tend to offer better comfort, speed and overall travel experience, which influences passenger preference. At the same time, he acknowledged that KSRTC continues to operate in areas where private buses are absent, thereby fulfilling an important social responsibility. In his view, this dual character - being less competitive in some routes while indispensable in others - defines KSRTC's current position.

The respondent observed a noticeable change in employee behaviour, which he considered one of the most significant developments in recent years. He stated that employees appear to be making conscious efforts to improve service quality, including calling passengers, maintaining schedules more carefully and interacting more positively with travellers. He interpreted this as an indication that employees have become more aware of the organization's fragile condition and are actively trying to contribute to its revival. According to him, "employees are trying their level best to boost up the organization," and this effort is visible in day-to-day operations.

One of the most important changes identified by the respondent was the decline in strike-related disruptions. He recalled that in earlier periods, sudden strikes were common and caused considerable inconvenience to passengers. In contrast, he noted that such incidents have become rare in recent times, which he described as a major relief for regular travellers. He suggested that trade unions and employees may have developed a better understanding of the consequences of frequent strikes on the organization's sustainability.

The respondent also commented on improvements in certain categories of services, particularly newer or upgraded bus types. He noted that services such as Premium Super Fast buses offer better speed and relatively improved travel experience, contributing to passenger satisfaction.

These services, according to him, demonstrate that KSRTC is capable of providing competitive options when appropriate investments and planning are made.

When discussing employee behaviour, the respondent provided a balanced perspective. He acknowledged that some employees may exhibit negative attitudes but cautioned against generalization. As he put it, “some employees are arrogant - which organization is free from arrogant employee? At least a sub sect of the population will be arrogant always. Generalization in this regard is not good.” He further explained that while a small number of such employees create a negative impression, the majority of KSRTC staff are generally cooperative and service-oriented. This distinction, in his view, is important in understanding public perception.

The respondent expressed concern regarding fare-related issues, particularly the cess charge imposed by KSRTC. He noted that such charges make KSRTC tickets comparatively higher than those of private buses, which may influence passenger choices. However, despite this, he stated that he continues to prefer KSRTC due to a sense of safety and emotional connection. In his words, “still I travel in KSRTC because I feel safe... and like any Malayali, AANAVANDI IS A FEELING.” This statement reflects the cultural and emotional significance attached to KSRTC beyond purely economic considerations.

On the issue of free travel and concessions, the respondent expressed a critical view. He pointed out that various concessions, including those for students, differently-abled persons and elected representatives, along with proposals for expanded free travel schemes, could adversely affect the financial sustainability of the organization if not adequately compensated by the government. He suggested that while such policies may be socially or politically motivated, they must be balanced with the financial realities of running a public transport system.

When asked about organizational aspects such as human resource policies, management strategies, or structural reforms, the respondent acknowledged his limited knowledge. He stated that such aspects are not directly visible to passengers and therefore difficult to evaluate from his perspective. This admission adds credibility to his responses, as it clearly distinguishes between observed realities and unknown organizational processes.

In conclusion, the respondent characterized KSRTC as an organization undergoing gradual improvement. While he acknowledged the persistence of several challenges, including outdated buses and financial pressures, he emphasized that visible changes in employee behaviour, reduced strike activity and improved service segments indicate a positive direction.

He suggested that continued improvements in service quality and infrastructure would be essential to attract more passengers and sustain the revival process.

4.3 Respondent 2: KSRTC Enthusiast, Social Media Supporter, Daily Traveller

As part of the qualitative study examining the role of employee attitudes in the revival of KSRTC, an interview was conducted with a well-known supporter of the corporation in social media communities. He is associated with online platforms dedicated to KSRTC enthusiasts, including the widely followed Facebook community “I Love My KSRTC and Anavandi” which serve as a space for travellers and supporters to share experiences, news and discussions about the corporation.

He has been a frequent traveller in KSRTC buses for many years and actively documents experiences related to KSRTC operations, employee behaviour and service improvements.

He explained that his association with KSRTC goes beyond ordinary commuting. According to him, KSRTC buses are deeply connected to the everyday life of people in Kerala.

He stated: “For many Malayalis, KSRTC is not just a transport service. It is part of our daily life and memories. From school days to long-distance travel, almost everyone in Kerala has travelled in an ‘Aanavandi’.”

He noted that this emotional connection is one of the reasons why many people actively support KSRTC on social media and defend it during difficult periods.

When asked about the situation of KSRTC three years ago, he described it as a period marked by financial crisis and negative public perception.

According to him salary delays created frustration among employees. The media narrative often blamed employees and trade unions. Passengers frequently complained about behaviour and service.

He said: “There was a time when people used to criticize KSRTC employees for everything. Salary was delayed and employees were under pressure. Naturally, morale was low.” He emphasized that the negative atmosphere affected both the employees and the public perception of the organization.

He strongly believes that significant changes have taken place in the past three years, particularly in the behaviour and attitude of KSRTC employees. He explained that many drivers

and conductors now show a stronger sense of responsibility toward passengers and the organization.

According to him: “Today we can see a visible difference in the attitude of many employees. They interact better with passengers and show more commitment to their duty.”

He narrated several real-life incidents that, according to him, demonstrate the humane and responsible attitude of KSRTC employees.

Helping Patients: He mentioned cases where KSRTC buses have been used to rush patients to hospitals in emergency situations, even when the bus was not scheduled to stop nearby.

“There are many incidents where drivers diverted to hospitals or stopped immediately to help a patient reach the hospital. These things show that many KSRTC employees treat their duty as a social responsibility.”

Ensuring Passenger Safety: Another example he highlighted was incidents where drivers and conductors waited with female passengers late at night until their guardians arrived.

“There have been cases where buses reached the last stop late at night and the crew waited until the girl’s parents came to pick her up. That kind of concern for passenger safety shows a lot about the attitude of the employees.”

Competing with Private Buses: He also spoke about the increasing enthusiasm among KSRTC staff when competing with private buses for passengers.

“Nowadays you can see conductors actively calling passengers at bus stands and explaining routes and fares. Earlier this kind of passenger engagement was less common.”

He interpreted this as a sign that employees are now more conscious about attracting passengers and improving the corporation’s revenue.

He also linked employee attitude change with broader improvements in KSRTC services. He mentioned several developments that he believes have strengthened the corporation in recent years.

Purchase of New Buses: He noted that the introduction of new buses has improved passenger confidence. “When passengers see new buses on the road, they feel that the corporation is modernizing.”

Introduction of Gramavandi: According to him, the Gramavandi services have played an important role in strengthening KSRTC's connection with rural communities.

“Gramavandi buses are very important for people in villages. They provide connectivity to places where private buses rarely go.”

Resistance to Privatization: He also spoke about debates related to privatization policies such as the 140-kilometre rule, which would allow private operators to run long-distance services.

According to him: “Many KSRTC supporters strongly opposed such policies because they felt it could weaken the public transport system.”

The creation of KSRTC SWIFT was another major development he discussed. While acknowledging that the initiative was controversial among employees, he believes it was introduced as part of the effort to improve operational efficiency. The advent of SWIFT has made in the regular employees an impression that the management may run the show with the contract labourers. This has made serious impacts on the employee attitude like being careful of the dealing with the passengers, mindfulness regarding existential issues, change from active unionism like aggressive union activities and fear of losing job to an extent.

He highlighted several innovations in KSRTC services: AC Premium Super Fast buses, Premium Super Fast services, Limited Stop Super Fast (LS1 and LS2) buses and so on. According to him, these services are designed to compete with private operators while providing better comfort and saving of time for passengers.

When discussing recent developments in KSRTC, he highlighted the growing popularity of the Budget Tourism Cell (BTC) initiatives introduced by the corporation. According to him, these tourism services have helped KSRTC create a new image among the public, especially among families, students and travel enthusiasts.

He explained: “Earlier people mostly saw KSRTC only as a transport service for daily travel. But the Budget Tourism Cell changed that perception. Now KSRTC buses are also associated with tourism and leisure travel. Now trips are affordable for the common masses as well.”

He noted that the BTC services have organized affordable tour packages to destinations such as Munnar, Vagamon, Ponmudi, Gavi, Wayanad and other scenic locations. Besides it operates pilgrimage tourist services as well. These tours are usually planned as one-day or multi-day trips and are priced in a way that makes them accessible to ordinary passengers. The crew of

these services are carefully selected so that they interact and deal with passengers friendly and it gives a great impression for the tourists.

He added that many travellers prefer these services because they are safe, organized and economical, especially for families and elderly passengers. According to him, “The biggest advantage of these tourism packages is that people can travel without worrying about planning the route, parking, or accommodation. KSRTC takes care of everything.”

He also mentioned that the double-decker sightseeing buses introduced in cities like Thiruvananthapuram and other tourist centres have created excitement among passengers and tourists. According to him, these initiatives demonstrate that KSRTC is capable of adapting to new opportunities beyond conventional transport services.

He also spoke positively about the chartered bus system introduced by KSRTC in recent years. According to him, chartered services allow institutions, offices and groups to hire KSRTC buses for regular commuting or special trips.

He explained: “The chartered bus system is a very practical idea. Many offices and institutions now hire KSRTC buses for daily staff transportation. It is convenient for passengers and also ensures steady revenue for the corporation. The crew are very friendly and accommodative.”

He further noted that chartered services are increasingly used by marriage parties, chartered tourists, pilgrimage and party meetings and so on. In his view, the system benefits both passengers and the corporation.

He said, “For passengers, it provides reliable and comfortable transportation. For KSRTC, it helps bring additional income and ensures better utilization of buses.” He also pointed out that these initiatives reflect an effort by KSRTC to diversify its services and compete with private transport providers.

He further noted several passenger-oriented initiatives: On-demand stops at a nominal fare, Non-stop or bypass rider services to reduce travel time, more air-conditioned buses on long-distance routes etc.

One initiative he found particularly interesting was the concept of a business-class bus service between Thiruvananthapuram and Ernakulam, which may include facilities such as a bus hostess, food service and onboard restroom which will be launched soon.

According to him, such innovations show that KSRTC is attempting to modernize its services and compete with other modes of transport.

When asked what he believes is the most important factor behind KSRTC's recent improvements, He emphasized the role of frontline employees.

He stated: "Policies and new buses are important, but the real face of KSRTC is the driver and conductor. If they behave well and show commitment, passengers will trust the service."

There was once a time the employees left the bus on the road even if the string of the bell is broken - literally. Now the scenario has changed to that extent where we see the employees try to change the flattened tyre before the mechanical department arrive, for the smooth continuity of the travel. According to him, this attitude change has made a lasting impression in the mind of the passengers.

He believes that the gradual improvement in employee morale and behaviour has played a significant role in rebuilding public confidence in KSRTC.

The interview with him provides an external perspective on the transformation of KSRTC from the viewpoint of a dedicated supporter and frequent traveller. His observations suggest that changes in employee attitudes, combined with organizational reforms and service innovations, have contributed to a more positive public perception of the corporation in recent years.

4.4 Respondent 3: Driver from Payyanur Depot

The respondent, a driver from the Payyanur depot of KSRTC, presents a deeply reflective and experience-driven narrative of the organization's transformation. His identity within the organization is complex - he is both a committed insider and a critical observer. Unlike many of his colleagues, he is not affiliated with any trade union, a position that places him somewhat outside the dominant institutional culture but simultaneously gives him a certain degree of autonomy in thought and action.

He begins his narrative by recalling his earlier association with trade union activities. His voice carries a mixture of disappointment and clarity as he reflects on why he chose to withdraw.

"I was part of a trade union around twelve years ago... at that time I believed that unions were working for employees and for the organization. But slowly I realized that many were more interested in their own benefits than the institution."

He pauses briefly, as if weighing his words, before continuing.

“I didn’t see any real contribution toward improving KSRTC. So I decided to step away. It was not an easy decision.”

Remaining unaffiliated in an organization like KSRTC, where union presence is historically strong and politically embedded, has social consequences.

“Now I work independently... I don’t have pressure from any union. But I am also isolated in a way. People talk... they say things behind my back because I am not with any group.”

This statement reflects a subtle tension - freedom from institutional pressure coupled with social marginalization. It also highlights how deeply union identity is intertwined with employee life in KSRTC, even in a phase where union attitudes themselves are undergoing transformation.

The respondent’s operational experience is rooted in a long-standing rural route connecting Payyanur to Thabor, a relatively remote village located about 45 kilometers away. He has been driving this route for over eleven years and his familiarity with the terrain, passengers and competition is evident in the way he narrates his experiences.

He describes the route as divided into two distinct segments. The first segment, up to Cherupuzha, is highly competitive, with private buses operating at very short intervals.

“Between Payyanur and Cherupuzha, buses come every five minutes. Private buses are always there. It is a tough competition.”

Beyond Cherupuzha, however, the situation changes drastically.

“After that point, only KSRTC goes. No private buses. Because there is no profit for them.”

This distinction becomes crucial in understanding KSRTC’s dual role - not just as a transport operator, but as a provider of essential connectivity.

He explains with a sense of responsibility:

“That is where KSRTC stands apart. We go to places where others don’t go. People there depend on us completely.”

This reflects a deep internalization of KSRTC’s social mission, which coexists with the pressures of financial sustainability.

One of the most revealing parts of the interview emerges when he begins to describe how he strategically manages his service timings. Rather than strictly adhering to the printed schedule, he makes calculated adjustments based on passenger patterns and local realities.

“I don’t always follow the schedule blindly. Sometimes I delay the trip by one or two minutes... but it is a calculated delay.”

He elaborates this with a detailed example involving a construction site near a CRPF camp.

“There are migrant workers there. Their work ends at 5 pm. My scheduled time is around 5:04. If I go exactly on time, I miss them. So I reach at 5:06 or 5:07.”

He then explains the outcome:

“By that time, they come out and board the bus. Minimum ten passengers... sometimes more.”

He translates this into revenue:

“Each ticket is around ₹22. That means ₹220 extra income. My salary is not affected whether I do this or not. But KSRTC gains.”

This narrative demonstrates a remarkable level of micro-level economic thinking. It reflects not just awareness, but an active alignment of individual behaviour with organizational benefit.

However, such actions are not without consequences.

“Private buses don’t like this. They will question... sometimes it leads to arguments. We literally fight verbally at times.”

Despite this, he continues:

“Still, we do it. Because we know what we are doing is right for the organization.”

This captures a key dimension of employee attitude—a willingness to endure conflict in order to protect institutional interests.

Competition, particularly in the Malabar region, is a recurring theme throughout the interview. He describes it not merely as operational competition, but as a continuous struggle for survival.

“Private buses are very aggressive. They will try to take passengers at any cost. If we make even a small adjustment, they react immediately.”

In this context, employee behaviour has evolved significantly.

“Earlier, many KSRTC buses did not even stop properly. Even at designated stops, sometimes they would pass.”

He contrasts this with the present:

“Now things have changed. We stop even if someone shows their hand.”

This shift toward passenger-centric service is not presented as a directive from management, but as a gradual cultural change among employees themselves.

He explains the operational challenge:

“Stopping at every place can cause delay. But we adjust later. If the road is clear, we run faster and cover the time.”

This reflects a dynamic balancing of efficiency and service responsiveness, driven by employee judgment rather than rigid rules.

The respondent also speaks openly about past malpractices, indicating a willingness to critically examine the system.

“Earlier, there were cases where some employees adjusted trips to help private buses... even took money.”

Such practices, he suggests, were more common in earlier periods.

“Now it has reduced a lot. People are more careful. There is monitoring... and also fear of getting caught.”

This indicates the role of institutional surveillance and changing social norms in shaping employee behaviour.

Another visible change he highlights is the proactive effort to attract passengers. He personally engages in calling out to passengers at bus stands.

“When I park my bus, I call loudly... ‘Cherupuzha, Thabor!’ to attract people.”

He notes that this behaviour is gradually spreading.

“Earlier not many did it. Now others have started seeing this and doing the same.”

This seemingly simple act reflects a shift toward competitive engagement, where employees actively participate in improving occupancy.

His experience with long-distance services, particularly routes to Bengaluru, further illustrates this initiative.

“When I was driving Bangalore Super Express, if seats were empty after crossing Kerala border, I would call out at places like Virajpet, Hunsur... ‘Mysore - Bangalore, Bangalore!’”

He emphasizes transparency:

“I tell passengers clearly that our fare is slightly higher than Karnataka buses, but we reach faster. That avoids complaints later.”

He proudly recalls:

“We brought record collection for the depot during that time.”

Then, with a subtle laugh, he adds:

“After that... I was shifted to local routes.”

This laughter carries layered meaning. It may suggest internal organizational resistance to high-performing individuals, or perhaps an implicit commentary on how initiative is not always institutionally rewarded.

The respondent is particularly critical of management decisions, especially those affecting passenger comfort.

He points out issues with newly introduced buses:

“Seats are not comfortable for long journeys. Passengers expect comfort now. If they don’t get it, they go to private buses.”

This reflects a disconnect between procurement decisions and passenger expectations, which directly impacts operational success.

He further critiques the management’s lack of understanding of ground realities.

“They don’t know what we face daily. They don’t understand competition.”

He provides a practical example:

“I suggested a 4 am service from Thabor to Payyanur railway station. It will help people catch multiple trains. But no one listens.”

This indicates a gap between frontline knowledge and decision-making authority, which he identifies as a major limitation in KSRTC's functioning.

When discussing improvements, he identifies timely salary payment as a turning point.

"Earlier salary was delayed for months. That created a lot of stress."

He contrasts this with the present:

"Now salary comes on the first day of the month. That changed everything."

He explains the psychological impact:

"When your financial situation is stable, your mind becomes free. You can focus on your work. That automatically changes your attitude."

This aligns strongly with your research theme, showing how structural factors influence employee mindset and behaviour.

However, he expresses concern about political decisions such as proposals for free travel.

"Free travel may look attractive... but it will destroy KSRTC if not implemented properly."

He contextualizes this by comparing Kerala with other states, where public transport systems are structured differently.

One of his most powerful insights comes when he distinguishes between two types of crises.

"Salary delay was one crisis. But the real crisis is lack of vision."

He elaborates with examples:

Poorly planned infrastructure

Failure to expand profitable routes

Lack of foresight in fleet management

He also discusses premium services like Minnal buses, explaining their importance.

Minnal services are designed for:

High-speed travel

Minimal stops

Competition with trains

“These are very successful services. But the buses are old now. We need new ones.”

Toward the end of the interview, his tone becomes more hopeful as he speaks about younger employees.

“Young employees are different. They think... they plan... they don’t just follow instructions.”

He shares an example of a young driver who strategically waits at transit points to maximize passenger intake.

“That is intelligence. That is loyalty.”

He expresses this emotionally in Malayalam:

“Annam tharunna sthapanathodulla kooru...”

He explains it as loyalty toward the institution that provides livelihood.

In his concluding remarks, he offers advice:

“Do your part. Work for the badge.”

He adds:

“Pala thulli peruvellam... small efforts together make a big change.”

4.5 Respondent 4: Retired Driver

The respondent is a retired driver who had served in KSRTC for nearly three decades. Now living a quieter life as a pensioner, he speaks from a place of distance, experience and emotional attachment. His relationship with the organization did not end with retirement; rather, it has transformed. He continues to observe, reflect and even advise younger employees, carrying with him a deep sense of belonging to the institution that shaped his life.

He begins his narration slowly, almost as if revisiting a long journey.

“I worked in KSRTC for about 30 years... I have seen everything. Good times, bad times... everything.”

Retirement, for him, was not a clean break. Instead, it brought a different kind of struggle—financial insecurity tied to delayed pensions. He explains this with visible concern.

“When we retire, pension is everything. That is our only income. But there were times when pension was delayed... that is very difficult to manage.”

He leans forward slightly and adds:

“When salary is delayed, employees somehow manage because they are still working. But when pension is delayed, what can we do? We are at home. That is a very painful situation.”

This reflection brings forward an important dimension of the KSRTC crisis—not just affecting current employees, but extending into the lives of those who have already served. His experience as a pensioner makes him particularly sensitive to the financial health of the organization, because he sees it directly connected to the dignity of retired workers.

Even after retirement, he has not distanced himself from KSRTC. He maintains close contact with current employees and often acts as an informal advisor.

“Many youngsters call me and ask about routes, about timing, about how to handle situations. I tell them based on my experience.”

This continued involvement reflects how institutional knowledge flows beyond formal employment, sustaining the organization in subtle ways.

As he reflects on his long career, he begins to speak about how the culture within KSRTC has changed over the years. His tone carries both nostalgia and critical insight.

“I have seen many generations of employees. Earlier, the system was different. There was discipline... but also a different kind of attitude.”

He further explained: *“rathri service okke evideyum nirthikkodukkan thudangi. Super class servicilokke yathrakkaran chodhichal ippo mullan okke nirthikkodukkum...”*

He explains that earlier periods were marked by strong collective identity, largely shaped by trade unions.

“Union was very strong. Employees stood together. If there was an issue, everyone would come together.”

But he does not romanticize that period. He acknowledges its limitations.

“Sometimes it went beyond limits. Even small issues could lead to big reactions.”

He pauses, then contrasts it with the present:

“Now I feel employees are thinking differently. They understand that the organization must survive first.”

This shift, in his view, is one of the most important changes he has witnessed. It reflects a movement from collective assertion to collective responsibility, aligning closely with the idea of organizational revival.

When asked about the crisis in KSRTC, he responds with a sense of complexity rather than simplicity.

“Crisis... that word is not new for KSRTC. It was always there. Only the nature of crisis changes.”

He elaborates further:

“In earlier times, crisis was about operational issues... management issues... sometimes political issues. But in recent years, the crisis became very serious.”

He describes the recent phase with emphasis:

“There was no money for salary... no money to buy buses... no money for pension... even for running cases, there was no money.”

His voice carries a mixture of frustration and admiration when he adds:

“Still, employees worked. Even without salary, they worked. That shows something... that shows commitment.”

This statement reflects the resilience of employees, a critical factor in understanding how KSRTC has sustained itself through prolonged crisis.

Despite being critical of certain decisions, he repeatedly expresses that he sees the present trajectory as positive.

“Now I feel things are improving. Slowly... but improving.”

However, his optimism does not prevent him from pointing out specific concerns. One such issue is the reduction of duties in long-distance services.

“Earlier, long-distance buses had more duties. Now they reduce duties too much.”

He gives a concrete example:

“Take a trip from Kozhikode to Pondicherry. Only three duties... how will that be enough?”

He explains that reducing duties reduces visibility and availability.

“If buses are not available frequently, passengers will go to private buses. Once they shift, it is difficult to bring them back.”

This reflects his understanding of service frequency as a competitive strategy, something he believes management does not always fully appreciate.

He then shifts to discussing leadership and policy decisions, particularly recalling the earlier tenure of Transport Minister K. B. Ganesh Kumar.

“During his earlier time, many good decisions were taken. High-tech buses were introduced. Mini buses were brought for village services.”

He explains how mini buses helped connect interior areas, strengthening KSRTC’s social role.

“Those buses were useful for small roads and villages. That was a good move.”

His appreciation reflects his ability to evaluate policy decisions from a practical standpoint.

Though formally educated only up to the 10th standard, he speaks with a level of operational insight that comes from years of experience.

“I may not be highly educated... but I know how KSRTC works. I have lived it.”

This highlights the importance of experiential knowledge, especially in service-oriented public sector organizations.

He then reflects on his own past involvement in militant trade unionism. His tone becomes slightly introspective.

“Earlier, we were part of militant unions. Flash strikes were common.”

He explains that such strikes could happen suddenly, sometimes even for minor issues.

“At that time, we thought we were fighting for rights. But sometimes it affected passengers badly.”

Now, with the benefit of hindsight, he evaluates that phase differently.

“Now unions have changed. They understand that if KSRTC does not survive, nothing else matters.”

This reflects a paradigm shift from militant activism to survival-oriented unionism, aligning strongly with your research theme.

He expresses support for certain operational changes such as fleet rearrangement.

“Using buses where they are needed most is a good decision. That improves efficiency.”

He also strongly supports the driver-cum-conductor system.

“Driver-cum-conductor is a practical system. It reduces cost and increases efficiency.”

These views indicate his openness to reform, provided it aligns with operational logic.

When speaking about management, he adopts a balanced approach.

“I support management in public... but I criticize in private.”

He explains this as a matter of loyalty:

“We should not damage the image of KSRTC outside. But internally, we must speak the truth.”

This reflects a nuanced understanding of institutional loyalty combined with critical engagement.

He also speaks about the Sushil Khanna report, which proposed reforms for KSRTC.

“That report had many good suggestions. Improving efficiency, reducing losses, restructuring...”

But he quickly adds:

“The problem is not in ideas. The problem is in implementation. Many things were not done properly.”

This highlights a recurring issue in public sector organizations—the gap between policy formulation and execution.

As the conversation moves toward conclusion, he returns to the idea of crisis.

“Crisis was always there. But now it is slowly changing.”

He reflects on the present with cautious optimism:

“Employees are more responsible now. Management is also trying. If both continue like this, KSRTC will stand.”

His final tone is not overly optimistic, but grounded and realistic.

“It will not become perfect overnight. But it will survive... that is important.”

4.6 Respondent 5: Member, Kerala State Transport Workers Co-operative Society Ltd.

The interview was conducted in an informal setting where the respondent, a conductor cum station master and a CITU leader, reflected on his long experience as a KSRTC conductor and his involvement with trade unions. The discussion revolved around the transformation of employee attitudes, union culture and operational practices during the period when KSRTC moved from a deep financial crisis toward gradual recovery.

He repeatedly emphasized that the revival of KSRTC is not merely a financial or administrative matter but also a cultural transformation among employees and unions.

When asked about the crisis period, he first spoke about the COVID-19 pandemic.

He recalled:

“During the COVID time people were afraid to travel in public transport. Those who could afford it shifted to private vehicles or taxis. Naturally KSRTC suffered a huge loss. Buses were running almost empty in many routes.”

However, he noted that the situation changed gradually after the pandemic.

“After the COVID period things slowly started changing. Fuel prices increased and maintaining private vehicles became costly. People again started depending on public transport. That helped KSRTC recover slowly from a very deep loss.”

This shift in passenger preference indirectly contributed to the revival phase of KSRTC.

He described a visible change in the operational work culture.

Earlier, according to him, even minor complaints could lead to cancellation of trips.

“Earlier if there was even a small complaint about the bus, the crew might cancel the trip. But now the situation is different. We try to repair minor issues ourselves and continue the trip. Everyone knows that every trip matters for the organization.”

This change reflects a shift from procedural rigidity to operational responsibility among employees.

One of the important aspects discussed was the concept of “Other Duty.”

Explanation of “Other Duty”

“Other duty” historically referred to a system in which some employees - especially trade union office bearers - were relieved from regular operational duties to engage in union activities or administrative tasks.

According to him:

“Earlier the concept of ‘other duty’ was often used for union activities. Some employees did not perform their regular operational duties because they were involved in union work.”

However, he emphasized that the situation has changed drastically.

“Today everyone understands that if the organization collapses, unions also collapse. So now almost everyone works their actual duty. Other duty is now mostly given to senior employees for administrative support, like a senior conductor helping as a station master.”

This reflects a shift in union philosophy: organization first, union later.

He strongly rejected the public perception that employees only create problems.

He pointed out that many revenue-generating initiatives actually came from employee suggestions through trade unions.

Yathra Fuels: “Yathra Fuels” is a fuel retail initiative connected with KSRTC where fuel stations operate under the corporation or associated cooperative structures. These initiatives help diversify revenue sources.

Logistics Services: KSRTC logistics services allow buses to transport parcels and goods along with passenger services. This utilizes existing routes for additional income.

Budget Tourism Cell (BTC): The Budget Tourism Cell (BTC) is a tourism initiative where KSRTC operates affordable tour packages to tourist destinations using its buses. These include day trips and multi-day tours. This operated by depots, not centrally.

He proudly stated:

“Ideas like Yathra fuels, logistics services and the Budget Tourism Cell did not come only from officers. Many suggestions came from employees through unions. Workers also want the organization to survive.”

He referred to the statement made by former Finance Minister Thomas Isaac.

He explained:

“Dr. Thomas Isaac once said that the government has pumped in money equivalent to buying two KSRTCs. That shows how much support the government has given.”

He also highlighted the ₹75 crore monthly pension support provided by the government for retired employees.

According to him:

“KSRTC was in a deep pit. Now it has just come up to the ground level. It still has to run. That is the present situation.”

Kerala’s transport sector traditionally has multiple trade unions affiliated with different political ideologies. However, He emphasized that cooperation among unions has improved.

“Today unions cooperate with each other in many matters related to improvement of KSRTC. When the organization is in crisis, everyone understands the importance of unity.”

This cooperation contributed to several reforms including training programs and operational improvements.

According to He, three factors explain the shift in employee attitudes.

1. Educated Workforce

“Many employees today are highly educated. Their outlook is different.”

2. Training and Monitoring

Trade unions and management together provide unofficial awareness sessions.

3. Personal Initiative

He gave an example:

“There are employees of stay buses in remote places who wash buses themselves to attract passengers even though there are cleaning staff. That shows personal initiative.”

He also highlighted the service culture in premium buses like Garuda, Gajaraj, AC and Deluxe services.

“Employees are instructed to treat passengers like VVIP in such buses. It is in line with the treatment of passengers in other states especially Karnataka RTC where the conductor in

premium services like Rajahamsa, Airavatha, Ambari and Clubb class, keeps the luggage of the passengers and consider their requests like hostess. They are trained in such a way that they will never lose their customer base”

He then spoke about KSRTC SWIFT. Swift is a government-owned company formed in 2021 to operate long-distance services of KSRTC with the aim of improving operational efficiency and addressing financial crisis.

He explained the perception among workers.

“Initially some employees feared that SWIFT would replace permanent workers with contract workers. But now that fear is not there.”

He clarified that SWIFT operates mainly super-class buses such as Super Fast, Super Deluxe and premium services like Garuda and Gajaraj, which generate higher revenue.

“SWIFT employees are contract workers but their salary is calculated based on duty hours and overtime. It is not extremely low.”

He also mentioned the expectation that SWIFT could be merged back into KSRTC in the future.

Another aspect he highlighted was disciplinary accountability.

“In SWIFT there are strict rules. Employees can be dismissed for certain violations. That fear itself makes them more cautious in dealing with passengers.”

This created a service-oriented behavior among employees.

He further moved on to explain the “140 km case” refers to regulatory disputes regarding route permits and operational limits that affected private bus operators’ ability to run certain services beyond specified distances. Super class services including Fast Passenger services were strictly limited to KSRTC alone. Private buses were allowed to run below 140 kilometres as Limited Stop Services. Such cases often involved legal battles with private operators and regulatory authorities.

He explained that trade unions played a strong role during such struggles.

“Unions stood firmly with the organization when there was pressure from private operators. It was not easy to overcome those challenges.”

Another example involved the Mangaluru - Kasaragod route, which was heavily dominated by private buses.

He explained that coordinated efforts between transport authorities and employee support helped KSRTC expand its services on the route.

“Employees worked with dedication to make those services successful because it was important to reclaim the route.”

He was enthusiastic in explaining the Rahul Tom vs KSRTC case which he also involved as a trade union leader. It was a dispute over permits granted to a private operator on the Kottayam - Kumily route. KSRTC and its employees’ association challenged the permit in court arguing that the route was part of a notified scheme reserved for the state transport undertaking. The Kerala High Court examined the legality of the permits granted by the Regional Transport Authority.

He reflected:

“This case showed how employees and unions stood with KSRTC to protect its routes from private operators.”

One of the most important themes in the interview was the transformation of union ideology.

He explained:

“Earlier militant trade unionism was common. Lightning strikes could happen even for small issues.”

But today the philosophy has changed.

He quoted a famous line associated with the trade union movement:

“Chumarundenkile chithram varaykkaan patoo.”

He explained its meaning emotionally:

“If the wall exists, only then we can draw a picture. That means if KSRTC survives, only then unions and employees can survive.”

This reflects a shift from militant unionism to responsible unionism.

He mentioned about Gramavandi then. Gramavandi is a rural connectivity initiative where KSRTC operates buses in remote villages to ensure transport access even when passenger numbers are low.

According to him:

“Gramavandi services are not always profitable, but they are socially important.”

According to him, the Budget Tourism Cell started with a simple trip to Malakkappara, but later expanded across Kerala and neighbouring states.

He described it enthusiastically.

“BTC trips are very popular. The crew behave very friendly. Sometimes they sing songs and interact with passengers. People enjoy the journey. People depend heavily on KSRTC these days for tour, trips and chartered services than the private buses. BTC is cheaper and service oriented.”

He added:

“This initiative increased profit many times.”

He described the challenges of handling reservation passengers.

“In a bus with reservation, there may be 40 passengers. The conductor may have to call each of them before reaching the pickup point. Imagine calling 40 people and each person giving different responses. Passengers ask: why cant you wait some ten minutes? They don’t understand how it will be if everyone demands for a ten minutes each.”

Some passengers do not answer calls, while others arrive late.

“It is a stressful situation, but still employees try to remain calm. These incidents are common across depots, but I see a change in the attitude of the employees in terms of change of attitude towards such deviations.”

Unions often advise employees to separate personal life from work.

“Unions tell the employees to leave family problems at home and not bring them to work. But every person is different. Still, employees are improving in this aspect.”

He strongly criticized the HR department of KSRTC.

“The HR department is probably the weakest department in KSRTC.”

He explained several reasons:

HR functions are limited

Employee grievances are often handled elsewhere

HR officials lack operational experience

“They know theory but not the ground reality. Transport operations cannot be understood from textbooks.”

He stressed that HR officials should visit the field and understand real situations such as passenger demand and route dynamics.

When asked about the most important reason for attitudinal change, He answered immediately.

“Salary on time. That is the biggest reason.”

Earlier salaries were delayed for months, creating financial stress.

“When salary comes on time, to be precise on the first day of the month, employees can plan their life better. Financial stability improves work-life balance. Naturally attitude becomes positive.”

He explained the operational challenge when buses are asked to stop outside designated stops.

“Every unscheduled stop can cause at least three minutes of delay. That includes slowing down, stopping and accelerating again.”

For long routes, repeated delays affect duty schedules.

However, he said employees now explain such constraints politely to passengers.

Earlier there were instances where employees allegedly collaborated with private operators.

But with the rise of social media and monitoring systems, such practices declined.

“Now employees are afraid of being caught. Punishment transfers are rare today because behaviour has improved.”

He then spoke about the CMD squad which refers to inspection or vigilance teams operating under the office of the Managing Director. They monitor operational efficiency, ticketing practices and employee conduct.

He explained:

“Earlier ticket checking squads focused mainly on passengers without tickets. Now the focus is more on operational efficiency and employee practices.”

He cited several incidents where KSRTC crews gained public appreciation.

Examples include:

Waiting for relatives when a girl passenger was dropped at night.

Rushing emergency patients to hospitals in KSRTC buses.

“These incidents show the human side of KSRTC employees.”

In his concluding remarks, He summarized the transformation.

“Today employees stop at proper stops to pick up passengers. That itself increases the revenue of the organization.”

He paused and reflected:

“Earlier the attitude was different. Now most employees understand that the survival of KSRTC means the survival of their own jobs.” He added: “*manthri, CMD okke munnil ninnu paniyedukkaan irangi. Ath oru tharangamaayi...*”

The interview highlights several dimensions of employee attitude transformation:

Economic awareness and productivity orientation

Shift from militant unionism to responsible unionism

Increased cooperation between unions and management

Financial stability through timely salary payments

Greater emphasis on passenger service and public perception

These factors collectively illustrate how employee attitudes contribute to the revival process of KSRTC.

4.7 Respondent 6: KSRTC Diver cum State Vice President INTUC

The respondent was a senior driver of KSRTC working in the Kasaragod Depot and presently serving as the State Vice President of INTUC, one of the major opposition trade unions functioning within KSRTC. Having spent decades in the organisation, he had witnessed different administrations, different governments, different management styles and different phases of crisis. Unlike many trade union leaders who speak purely from a political standpoint, he repeatedly emphasized that his foremost concern was the survival of KSRTC itself. Political

differences existed, trade union rivalries existed, criticisms against the government existed, but for him KSRTC remained larger than all of them.

As the discussion progressed, it became evident that he viewed the crisis of KSRTC primarily as a management crisis rather than an employee crisis. He was particularly critical of what he described as the absence of professionalism in the administration of the corporation. According to him, one of the biggest weaknesses of KSRTC has been the tendency to place people in managerial positions without ensuring that they possess the competence required to manage a large public transport undertaking.

In his opinion, public transport is a specialized sector. Running a bus corporation is very different from running an ordinary government office. It requires knowledge of transport economics, route planning, passenger behaviour, labour management, vehicle maintenance, scheduling and revenue optimization. Unfortunately, he felt that many of the people entrusted with decision-making responsibilities lacked this practical understanding.

At one point in the interview, he remarked that KSRTC had become a place where administrative decisions were often taken by people who had never truly experienced the realities of operating a bus service. He narrated instances where senior officers would prepare schedules, duty charts and operational directives from their offices without understanding the actual conditions prevailing on the roads.

According to him, the crisis of KSRTC cannot be understood merely by looking at financial statements. The real crisis lies in the disconnect between management and operations.

He explained: "A person sitting inside an air-conditioned office in Thiruvananthapuram cannot understand what happens in Kasaragod, Wayanad or Kattappana. They prepare schedules on paper. We operate those schedules on the road. There is a huge difference."

This gap between planning and reality was a theme that repeatedly surfaced throughout the interview.

He was particularly critical of what he termed "unscientific decision-making". According to him, many operational decisions within KSRTC are made without proper field-level consultation. Employees who actually operate the services are rarely asked for their opinions before policies are implemented.

He narrated several examples. One of the issues that appeared to frustrate him most was the preparation of duty patterns. According to him, duty allocation in KSRTC often ignores the actual workload involved in operating long-distance services.

He referred to a service from Thiruvananthapuram to Kollur Mookambika Temple in Karnataka and pointed out that while the schedule may officially account for only three duties, the actual physical and mental strain on the crew is equivalent to four or even five duties.

He elaborated on this issue in considerable detail. A driver or conductor operating such a service has to deal with traffic congestion, unexpected delays, road diversions, passenger issues, vehicle-related problems and numerous operational uncertainties. Yet none of these factors are adequately reflected in the duty calculations.

He asked: "Can anybody predict the traffic block in Kochi? Can anybody predict an accident on the highway? Can anybody predict a political procession or a road diversion or a temple festival or church feast blocking the roads?"

For him, the answer was obvious. Such realities are part of daily operations. Yet the management often calculates duties as though buses move in ideal conditions. This, according to him, creates enormous frustration among employees. He felt that many officers evaluate schedules based on theoretical travel times while completely ignoring practical realities.

The discussion then moved towards the issue of overtime. Here his criticism became even sharper. According to him, the overtime system prevailing in KSRTC is fundamentally unfair. He explained that in most sectors overtime wages are calculated at a higher rate than normal wages. By law, nationwide, overtime compensation is double the ordinary rate. In KSRTC, however, he argued that the opposite situation exists.

Using his own example, he explained that a regular duty may fetch him approximately Rs. 1800 based on his salary structure and seniority. However, overtime work may bring only about Rs. 900 for him. He laughed while explaining this situation, though the laughter carried visible frustration. "Only in KSRTC can you find such a system. The more you work, the less valuable your time becomes." According to him, such policies send the wrong message to employees. Instead of rewarding additional effort, the system appears to penalize it. This, in his opinion, gradually affects morale.

Another area that generated strong emotions during the interview was the issue of salary delays. The respondent belonged to a generation of KSRTC employees who had experienced repeated

delays in salary payments. He recalled periods when employees had no certainty regarding when they would receive their wages. Many workers had housing loans. Many had educational loans. Many had medical expenses. Many had children studying in colleges. Despite these responsibilities, salary payments were frequently delayed.

He recalled situations where employees would check their bank accounts every morning hoping that the salary had been credited. The uncertainty created tremendous psychological pressure. According to him, the public often fails to understand the extent of suffering caused by salary delays. People may think of salary merely as a monthly payment. For an employee, however, it determines the functioning of the entire household. School fees, loan repayments, rent, electricity charges and medical expenses all depend upon timely salary payments.

The respondent felt that salary delay became one of the most important reasons behind employee frustration during the crisis years. He observed that the recent improvement in salary disbursement has had a noticeable positive impact on employee morale. For the first time in many years, employees have started receiving their salaries with a degree of predictability. He considered this one of the few genuinely positive developments in recent times. According to him, timely salary payment has done more to improve employee attitude than many administrative reforms combined. As he explained: "When a person knows that his salary will come on time, half his tension disappears. Then he can focus on his duty."

The respondent also spoke extensively about political influence within the organisation. According to him, politics affects operational decisions far more than it should. He alleged that schedules, duties and route allocations are sometimes influenced by political affiliations and trade union loyalties. In his view, employees associated with ruling-party unions occasionally enjoy certain advantages while those associated with opposition unions face difficulties. Although he admitted that such practices may not be officially acknowledged, he believed that they continue to exist in subtle forms.

As the discussion progressed, the respondent moved beyond internal management issues and began speaking about what he believed was a deeper problem affecting KSRTC. According to him, one of the greatest mistakes committed by successive governments and administrative authorities was the failure to understand the true nature of the corporation itself.

He explained that KSRTC should never be viewed purely as a profit-making institution. For him, KSRTC was fundamentally a public service organisation. It was created not merely to earn revenue but to provide mobility, accessibility and connectivity to the people of Kerala. He

felt that many of the difficulties presently faced by the corporation originate from the tendency to evaluate KSRTC using standards that are more suitable for private companies than for public service institutions.

He explained this point through a simple example. A private bus operator may choose to operate only on profitable routes. If a route does not generate sufficient income, the operator may simply discontinue the service. KSRTC does not have such freedom. The corporation operates services to remote villages, hill regions, tribal settlements and coastal areas where passenger numbers may be low. Many of these services generate little revenue. Yet they continue because the people living in those regions depend upon them.

According to him, this is the very essence of public transport. "A private operator looks at profit. KSRTC must look at people. That is the difference." He felt that governments often forget this distinction while evaluating the corporation's performance. The respondent recalled numerous instances from his years of service where buses operated with very few passengers because the service itself was socially necessary.

He narrated stories of early morning services connecting villages to hospitals, schools, railway stations and markets. Such services rarely generated significant income. However, they played a vital role in the lives of ordinary people. He asked a question that remained hanging in the conversation. "If KSRTC withdraws from these routes, who will serve those people?" For him, this question lies at the heart of the debate regarding public transportation.

He expressed the feeling that many critics fail to appreciate the welfare role played by KSRTC. According to him, people often see an empty bus and immediately conclude that the service is a loss-making exercise. What they do not see are the social obligations attached to public transportation. A bus may appear empty during one segment of the journey. The return trip may be full. The route may connect isolated communities to essential services. It may support students, patients, workers or elderly citizens who have no alternative means of transportation.

The respondent repeatedly returned to this idea. In his view, KSRTC should be treated in the same manner as public education or public healthcare. Schools are not evaluated solely on profit. Hospitals are not evaluated solely on profit. Public transportation should also be viewed through a broader social lens. This belief formed one of the strongest foundations of his understanding of the crisis.

Another area that generated considerable discussion was the attitude of other government departments towards KSRTC. According to him, the corporation often functions without adequate institutional support. He felt that many departments view KSRTC as a burden rather than as a partner in public service delivery. The respondent was particularly critical of the lack of coordination between KSRTC and certain regulatory agencies. In his experience, whenever conflicts arise involving private operators, public complaints or operational disputes, the corporation frequently finds itself isolated. He believed that many officials outside KSRTC do not fully appreciate the challenges involved in operating one of the largest public transport systems in the state.

He narrated situations where enforcement actions were carried out without considering the operational realities faced by the corporation. At several points in the interview, he expressed disappointment regarding what he perceived as a lack of institutional empathy.

According to him, there exists a widespread tendency to blame KSRTC whenever problems occur. If a bus arrives late, KSRTC is criticized. If traffic congestion causes delays, KSRTC is criticized. If a mechanical issue occurs, KSRTC is criticized. If an accident happens involving any public transport vehicle, KSRTC is often drawn into the discussion regardless of direct responsibility.

He felt that the corporation functions under constant scrutiny while receiving relatively little support. This perception, he argued, affects employee morale. Employees begin to feel that their efforts are not recognized.

The respondent then moved to another issue which, according to him, receives very little public attention. This concerned the development and design of bus stations and transport hubs. He pointed out that in several locations KSRTC buses are allocated bays that are less accessible than those assigned to private operators. According to him, such decisions directly affect passenger convenience and consequently influence revenue collection. He argued that passenger behaviour is shaped by convenience. When private buses are positioned closer to market centres, railway stations or major pedestrian zones, passengers naturally gravitate towards them. Meanwhile, KSRTC services may be located further away, creating an additional burden for passengers. He considered this another example of how public institutions sometimes fail to support their own transport corporation.

What troubled him most was the cumulative effect of these issues. Each individual decision may appear minor. Together, however, they create significant operational disadvantages.

Throughout this section of the interview, one theme became increasingly clear. The respondent did not view the crisis of KSRTC as the result of a single mistake or a single policy failure. Instead, he described it as the outcome of hundreds of small administrative decisions accumulated over many years. Some decisions affected scheduling. Some affected staffing. Some affected infrastructure. Some affected employee morale. Others affected public perception. When combined, they created the crisis that people see today.

The discussion then shifted towards employee welfare, particularly the issue of Dearness Allowance. Here again, his frustration was evident. According to him, employees of many government and public sector institutions receive revisions and benefits with relative regularity. KSRTC employees often experience delays, reductions or uncertainty regarding similar entitlements. He referred to discussions surrounding DA revisions and questioned why employees of the corporation should be treated differently from workers in other public institutions. For him, this issue was not merely financial. It was symbolic. It reflected the value placed on employees by the system. He explained that when workers feel neglected, it gradually affects their relationship with the organisation. Employees begin to wonder whether their sacrifices are recognized.

The respondent was careful not to suggest that financial issues alone determine employee attitude. However, he strongly believed that fairness matters. People may continue working despite difficulties. People may even tolerate hardships for long periods. What becomes difficult is the perception that they are being treated unfairly. This distinction appeared important to him.

One of the most revealing parts of the conversation emerged when he began discussing the gap between management assumptions and operational reality. He recalled instances where schedules were designed with travel times that bore little resemblance to actual road conditions. He laughed while describing some of these situations. Yet the laughter carried visible disbelief. According to him, there are schedules which expect buses to cover distances within timeframes that are practically impossible under current traffic conditions.

He specifically referred to major corridors such as the Thiruvananthapuram–Ernakulam sector. Anyone who regularly travels through these routes understands the extent of traffic congestion present on many days. Despite this reality, unrealistic expectations continue to appear in schedules. The result is predictable. Employees struggle to maintain timing. Passengers become dissatisfied. Complaints increase. Management interprets the delays as operational

inefficiency. Employees interpret them as unrealistic planning. This cycle repeats continuously. For the respondent, this represented one of the clearest examples of decision-making without field-level understanding. He strongly believed that senior officials should periodically travel with operational crews and experience actual route conditions themselves. Only then, he argued, can policies be designed realistically.

Towards the end of this phase of the discussion, he returned once again to a theme that would continue throughout the interview. That theme was loyalty. Despite the criticisms he expressed regarding management, scheduling, government attitude, employee welfare and institutional support, he repeatedly emphasized that his loyalty remained with KSRTC. He explained that trade union leaders are often portrayed as permanent critics of management. His own position was different. Criticism, according to him, becomes meaningful only when it is aimed at improvement.

"If I criticize KSRTC, it is because I want KSRTC to survive. If I did not care about the organisation, there would be no reason to speak." This statement captured the underlying tone of the interview. Even while discussing crisis, failure and injustice, his concern was not destruction. His concern was renewal. For him, the future of KSRTC remained worth fighting for.

The conversation then gradually moved towards another important area: the public perception that employees and trade unions were responsible for the crisis. On this issue, his response was passionate, deeply emotional and rooted in years of personal experience within the corporation. This perception, according to him, creates dissatisfaction among employees and contributes to mistrust within the organisation. He repeatedly stressed that transport administration should be based on merit and operational requirements rather than political considerations.

Perhaps the most passionate part of the interview emerged when he spoke about the reservation system and management's unwillingness to listen to frontline employees. According to him, many operational improvements could be achieved if management genuinely consulted drivers and conductors before implementing policies.

He referred to the online reservation system and explained that those who actually interact with passengers often have valuable insights regarding its shortcomings. Yet such insights rarely reach the decision-making level. He felt that KSRTC suffers from a culture where decisions are imposed from above rather than developed through consultation. The management,

according to him, often assumes that technical expertise alone is sufficient. What is missing is operational wisdom.

As he put it: "A system may look perfect inside a computer. The real test begins when passengers start using it." This statement summarized much of his criticism regarding management culture. For him, the crisis of KSRTC was never simply a question of money. It was a crisis of listening. It was a crisis of understanding. It was a crisis of connecting administration with reality. Most importantly, it was a crisis created by the widening distance between those who make decisions and those who implement them.

The conversation gradually shifted towards one of the most sensitive topics surrounding KSRTC: the widespread public perception that employees and trade unions were responsible for the crisis of the corporation. The respondent smiled when the question was raised. It was obvious that he had heard the accusation countless times over the years.

According to him, very few people outside the organisation truly understand what happens inside KSRTC. Most members of the public encounter the corporation only through occasional travel experiences, media reports or political discussions. Naturally, they form opinions based on what is visible to them. What remains invisible are the struggles taking place behind the scenes.

He stated very firmly that blaming employees alone for the crisis is both unfair and inaccurate. In his view, the crisis of KSRTC was created over several decades through policy failures, management inefficiencies, political interference, financial neglect, delayed reforms and unrealistic expectations. Employees merely functioned within that system.

At this point, his voice became more emotional. He asked a question that appeared to come from years of accumulated frustration. "Despite all these problems, despite salary delays, despite uncertainty, despite all the difficulties, we continued operating the buses. Which other department would continue functioning like this under such conditions?"

He paused briefly after making this statement. For him, this was perhaps the most overlooked aspect of the KSRTC story. According to the respondent, there were periods when employees had no clarity regarding salary payments. There were periods when pension payments were delayed. There were periods when financial insecurity affected entire families. Yet buses continued to run. Services continued to operate. Schedules continued to be completed. The organisation did not collapse. He believed that this fact alone deserved greater recognition.

According to him, trade unions played a crucial role in ensuring this continuity. The public often associates trade unions with strikes, protests and agitation. The respondent argued that such an understanding reflects only one side of trade union activity. The other side, according to him, is far more important. Trade unions function as stabilizing institutions during times of organisational crisis. They act as channels through which employee frustration can be expressed without completely disrupting operations. They create communication between workers and management. They prevent hopelessness from spreading among employees. They convince workers to continue despite disappointment. They provide a sense of collective support.

In his words, much of the criticism directed at trade unions ignores these contributions. He reflected on the difficult years when KSRTC faced severe financial stress. During those years, employees had every reason to become demoralized. Yet the organisation continued functioning.

The respondent believed that trade unions deserve significant credit for this outcome. According to him, irrespective of political affiliation, unions repeatedly appealed to employees to protect the organisation. There were disagreements. There were protests. There were demands. There were confrontations. Even so, the ultimate objective remained the same. KSRTC had to survive.

The respondent repeatedly returned to this idea throughout the interview. He explained: "If the organisation falls, everybody loses. Management loses. Employees lose. Passengers lose. Trade unions lose. Nobody gains from the destruction of KSRTC." This realization, according to him, gradually transformed the culture of trade unionism within the corporation.

He acknowledged that earlier generations of trade union activity were often more confrontational. Flash strikes were more common. Political rivalries were stronger. Union identity frequently overshadowed organisational concerns. He did not deny this history. At the same time, he felt that the realities of the modern world have forced significant changes.

Today's employees, according to him, understand that public opinion matters. The public no longer tolerates frequent disruptions. The public no longer supports unnecessary strikes. Employees themselves have become more aware of the consequences of confrontation. Most importantly, they understand that their future depends upon the survival of the institution. This understanding has fundamentally altered the relationship between unions and the organisation.

He explained this transformation using a practical example. In earlier years, a dispute regarding benefits or allowances might quickly escalate into large-scale protests. Today, employees are more likely to seek negotiation and discussion before considering such measures. This does not mean that conflicts have disappeared. Rather, the methods of addressing conflicts have changed.

The respondent viewed this as a sign of maturity. He believed that both employees and unions have become more pragmatic. The objective is no longer merely to win a dispute. The objective is to solve the problem without damaging the organisation.

At one point he remarked: "We cannot behave as though KSRTC exists separately from us. We are KSRTC." This statement appeared to summarize his entire perspective. The organisation was not an abstract institution. It was a community of workers, passengers and public stakeholders. Damaging the organisation would ultimately damage everyone connected to it. The respondent also spoke about what he considered a serious problem in public discourse.

According to him, a small number of negative incidents involving employees often receive disproportionate attention. When an employee behaves rudely, the incident may spread widely through social media. When a confrontation occurs between staff and passengers, videos circulate rapidly. When disciplinary issues arise, they become subjects of public discussion. Such incidents create powerful impressions. The difficulty, according to him, is that people begin to generalize. One employee becomes representative of all employees. One incident becomes representative of the entire organisation. He strongly disagreed with such generalizations.

He did not hesitate to acknowledge that problematic employees exist. He openly admitted that not every employee behaves ideally. However, he argued that this reality exists in every profession. Police departments have difficult officers. Government offices have unhelpful staff. Hospitals have employees with poor attitudes. Private companies face similar issues. KSRTC is no different. Yet public perception often treats isolated incidents as evidence that the entire workforce is problematic. According to him, this creates a distorted image of the organisation.

He estimated that the vast majority of employees remain committed to their duties. Many work under challenging conditions without public recognition. Many handle difficult passengers patiently. Many perform responsibilities far beyond what is formally required. Such stories rarely receive attention. Only negative incidents become news. This imbalance, according to him, shapes public opinion unfairly.

The discussion then moved towards the broader question of employee loyalty. The respondent believed that loyalty to KSRTC remains much stronger than many people realize. He based this belief on his daily experiences interacting with employees across different depots and services.

According to him, most workers continue to identify strongly with the organisation. Many have spent their entire careers within KSRTC. Many have family members who also worked for the corporation. Many view the organisation as a significant part of their personal identity. This emotional connection cannot be measured through financial statements or productivity reports. Yet it plays a major role in sustaining the institution.

He explained that when employees continue working despite delayed salaries, uncertain promotions, operational pressures and public criticism, they are demonstrating a form of commitment that often goes unnoticed. Such commitment cannot be explained purely through economics. There is an emotional dimension involved. There is a sense of belonging involved. There is a sense of responsibility involved.

He repeatedly referred to KSRTC as more than a workplace. For him, it represented a public institution that carries historical and emotional significance within Kerala society. This emotional attachment, he believed, explains why many employees continue contributing even during difficult periods.

As the conversation progressed further, another theme began emerging. The respondent started discussing how trade unions themselves have changed over time. His observations revealed a significant shift from ideological unionism towards what may be described as survival-oriented unionism. According to him, the question facing trade unions today is no longer simply how to protect employee rights. The question is how to protect employee rights while ensuring that the organisation itself survives. This shift in thinking would later become one of the most important themes of the interview.

As the discussion moved from the question of crisis to the role of trade unions, the respondent's position became particularly interesting. Being a senior leader of an opposition trade union, one might expect his narrative to be dominated by criticism of the government and the management. While criticism certainly existed throughout the interview, what emerged more strongly was a deep concern regarding the future of the organisation itself.

At one stage of the conversation, he made a statement that captured much of his thinking: "*Union full swing political aayi mathram idapettaal, KSRTC munnott pokilla.*" He repeated the

statement more than once during the discussion. According to him, if trade unions function solely as political instruments, the organisation will not progress. Political affiliations are part of trade union life. That reality cannot be denied. At the same time, he believed that excessive politicisation can become dangerous when it begins to overshadow organisational interests.

The respondent explained that trade unions within KSRTC have undergone significant transformation during the last decade. Many employees who joined the organisation during earlier generations witnessed a period when trade union identity was often stronger than organisational identity. Union rivalries were intense. Political affiliations influenced workplace relationships. Demonstrations, protests and confrontational approaches were common tools used to express dissatisfaction.

He was careful not to completely condemn that period. According to him, those practices emerged within a particular historical context. Employees lacked many of the mechanisms available today for expressing concerns. Trade unions therefore relied heavily upon collective action to make their voices heard. Nevertheless, he felt that circumstances have changed.

In his view, the Kerala of today is different from the Kerala of thirty years ago. The workforce is different. Society is different. Public expectations are different. Technology is different. Consequently, trade unionism has also changed.

The respondent believed that the modern employee understands something that earlier generations may not have fully appreciated. The organisation itself must survive. Without the organisation, there can be no employment. Without employment, there is little meaning in trade union activity. This understanding has gradually altered the priorities of many unions operating within KSRTC.

According to him, during the most difficult phases of the corporation's financial crisis, unions were repeatedly confronted with difficult choices. Employees were angry. Salary payments were delayed. Allowances were pending. Promotions were uncertain. Working conditions remained challenging. In such circumstances, unions could have chosen a path of constant confrontation. They could have intensified agitation. They could have paralysed operations. They could have pursued aggressive industrial action.

The respondent argued that such an approach would have been disastrous. Instead, unions adopted a more balanced strategy. They raised concerns. They protested where necessary. They registered opposition to unfair policies. At the same time, they ensured that services continued.

The respondent viewed this as one of the greatest contributions of trade unions during the crisis years.

According to him, many decisions taken by management were unpopular among employees. Some were viewed as anti-worker. Others were considered impractical. Even then, unions often encouraged employees to continue cooperating in order to protect the organisation.

He explained: "We did not remain silent. We opposed what needed to be opposed. At the same time, we did not want KSRTC to collapse." This distinction appeared important to him. Opposition did not necessarily mean obstruction. Criticism did not necessarily mean destruction. Trade unions could challenge management while still supporting the survival of the institution.

The respondent felt that this aspect is rarely understood outside the organisation. Public discussions often portray unions as obstacles to reform. His own experience suggested a far more complex reality. Many reforms, according to him, were implemented because unions cooperated despite reservations. Many services continued because employees accepted difficult conditions. Many operational decisions became possible because workers chose organisational survival over immediate confrontation.

Throughout the interview, he repeatedly emphasized that cooperation should not be mistaken for agreement. There were numerous occasions when unions disagreed strongly with management decisions. There were occasions when policies appeared unrealistic. There were occasions when employee concerns were ignored. Even under such circumstances, unions often chose negotiation over escalation. This, in his view, represented a major cultural shift within KSRTC.

One of the most revealing discussions emerged when the conversation turned towards militant trade unionism. The respondent smiled when this subject was raised. He had personally witnessed the era of militant union politics. He had participated in trade union activities during periods when demonstrations, flash strikes and aggressive mobilization were far more common than they are today. He acknowledged this history openly.

At the same time, he was convinced that such approaches have significantly declined. The reasons, according to him, are both social and organisational. First, society itself has changed. The public today reacts very differently to strikes and service disruptions. People depend

heavily upon transportation for employment, education, healthcare and daily life. Consequently, tolerance for prolonged disruptions has reduced considerably.

The respondent believed that employees are fully aware of this reality. They live within the same society. They experience the same frustrations as ordinary citizens. They understand how public opinion is formed. This awareness influences their behaviour.

Second, education has transformed the workforce. The respondent repeatedly highlighted the increasing educational profile of KSRTC employees. According to him, earlier generations often entered service with relatively modest educational qualifications. Today's workforce is different. Many employees possess university degrees. Many have professional qualifications. Many are familiar with technology, social media and contemporary organisational practices. This educational transformation has influenced employee thinking. The respondent believed that educated employees tend to adopt a broader perspective regarding organisational issues. They are more likely to understand financial constraints. They are more likely to appreciate the relationship between public image and organisational sustainability. They are more likely to seek negotiation before confrontation.

This does not mean that they abandon employee rights. Rather, they pursue those rights through different methods. He explained: "Today's employees think differently. They ask questions. They analyse situations. They do not simply react emotionally." The respondent viewed this as a positive development. Education, according to him, has contributed significantly to the decline of militant union culture.

Another factor influencing this transformation is public visibility. Unlike earlier periods, employee behaviour is now constantly observed. Passengers carry smartphones. Incidents are recorded instantly. Videos spread through social media within minutes. News channels amplify controversies. Public scrutiny has increased dramatically.

The respondent believed that this environment encourages greater restraint. Employees know that a single incident can attract widespread attention. Trade unions know that public support can disappear quickly if they are perceived as irresponsible. As a result, both workers and unions have become more conscious of public perception.

Interestingly, the respondent argued that this change has affected all trade unions regardless of political affiliation. He specifically observed that even unions traditionally associated with militant approaches have moderated their strategies. The reason, according to him, is simple.

The realities of the present era leave little room for old methods. Organisations must compete for public trust. Transport corporations depend upon passenger confidence. Frequent disruptions damage that confidence. Therefore, unions increasingly recognize the importance of balancing employee interests with public expectations.

At this point in the interview, he offered an observation that reflected a remarkable degree of organisational maturity. "First there must be a job. Then there can be a trade union." The statement was simple. Its implications were profound. For him, the future of unionism is inseparable from the future of the organisation. Protecting employees requires protecting KSRTC. Strengthening labour rights requires ensuring institutional sustainability.

The respondent believed that this understanding has become one of the defining features of contemporary trade unionism within the corporation. He acknowledged that disagreements remain. Political differences remain. Ideological differences remain. Yet beneath these differences exists a shared recognition that KSRTC must survive. Without that common understanding, he believed, the corporation would have faced even greater difficulties during the crisis years.

By the end of this section of the interview, a clear picture had emerged. The respondent did not see trade unions as passive observers of the crisis. Neither did he see them as the primary cause of the crisis. Instead, he viewed them as institutions that evolved alongside the organisation itself. They criticized. They negotiated. They resisted. They cooperated. Most importantly, they adapted. In his opinion, that adaptation played a significant role in preventing the crisis from becoming a collapse.

The conversation then moved towards another important issue: the changing attitudes of employees themselves. According to the respondent, the transformation in employee behaviour cannot be explained through a single factor. Public image, education, technology, organisational pressure and changing social expectations have all played a role.

When the discussion moved towards employee attitude, the respondent became noticeably reflective. Unlike some questions where his responses were immediate and forceful, this subject appeared to require deeper consideration. He remained silent for a few moments before beginning his answer. It soon became clear that he did not believe attitudinal change could be explained through a single reason. According to him, many factors have worked together over the years to reshape employee behaviour within KSRTC.

He was also careful not to exaggerate the extent of change. According to him, employees are human beings. Human nature itself has not changed. Every organisation contains individuals with different personalities, different temperaments and different approaches to work. Some employees are naturally patient. Some are easily irritated. Some are highly committed. Others perform only what is required of them. Such differences, he argued, are found in every workplace.

Nevertheless, he believed that a visible shift has occurred within KSRTC during the last decade. The respondent attributed this transformation primarily to changes taking place in society itself. According to him, the modern employee functions in a completely different environment from that experienced by earlier generations. Technology has altered communication. Social media has altered accountability. Public expectations have altered workplace behaviour.

In his words: "Earlier, what happened inside a bus remained inside a bus. Today nothing remains inside a bus." This observation became one of the most important insights of the interview.

The respondent explained that every passenger today carries a mobile phone equipped with a camera. Any disagreement between an employee and a passenger can be recorded instantly. A video can reach thousands of people within minutes. News channels frequently pick up such incidents. Social media pages discuss them extensively.

According to him, this constant visibility has significantly influenced employee behaviour. Employees know they are being watched. Employees know they can be recorded. Employees know their actions may be judged by people far beyond the immediate situation. The respondent believed that this awareness encourages greater caution. A driver may control his anger. A conductor may choose his words more carefully. An employee who once reacted impulsively may now think twice before responding. This does not necessarily mean that all employees have become perfect. However, it has certainly increased accountability.

He described social media as a form of indirect supervision. Unlike formal disciplinary systems, social media operates continuously. There are no fixed working hours. There are no official inspections. Yet employees remain conscious of its presence. According to the respondent, this has contributed significantly to the behavioural changes visible today. The discussion then moved towards education. Here his views were particularly strong.

Throughout the interview he repeatedly returned to the idea that educational advancement has transformed the workforce. According to him, KSRTC employees today are fundamentally different from those who joined the organisation several decades ago. Earlier generations often entered service immediately after completing basic education.

Many employees possessed limited exposure to broader social, economic and organisational issues. Today's situation is very different. Many drivers possess university degrees. Many conductors are graduates. Some hold postgraduate qualifications. Several have qualifications that would enable them to work in entirely different sectors.

The respondent believed that this educational transformation has had profound consequences. Educated employees tend to analyse situations differently. They understand organisational realities more clearly. They are more aware of public perception. They are more conscious of the relationship between service quality and institutional survival. Most importantly, they are capable of viewing issues from multiple perspectives.

He explained that when an employee understands the financial challenges faced by the corporation, he may still disagree with management decisions. At the same time, he is less likely to respond emotionally without considering the broader implications. The respondent felt that education has contributed to a more mature workforce. This maturity, according to him, has gradually reduced unnecessary confrontations. It has encouraged dialogue. It has encouraged patience. It has encouraged practical thinking.

Another factor highlighted by the respondent was organisational pressure. At first this appeared to be a negative factor. As the discussion progressed, however, it became evident that he viewed it in a more complex manner. According to him, the severe financial crisis experienced by KSRTC forced employees to confront difficult realities.

There was a time when many workers assumed that the organisation would continue functioning regardless of circumstances. The prolonged crisis challenged that assumption. Employees witnessed salary delays. Employees witnessed pension delays. Employees witnessed public criticism. Employees witnessed discussions regarding restructuring, privatization and alternative operating models. These developments created anxiety. At the same time, they also created awareness.

The respondent believed that many employees began to realise that organisational survival could no longer be taken for granted. This awareness produced behavioural changes. Workers

became more conscious of passenger satisfaction. Workers became more conscious of revenue generation. Workers became more conscious of public opinion.

The respondent explained that survival itself became a motivating factor. Employees understood that if passenger confidence continued declining, the organisation's future would become increasingly uncertain. Consequently, many workers began making greater efforts to improve their interactions with passengers. This change did not emerge because somebody ordered them to behave differently. It emerged because circumstances forced them to reconsider their relationship with the organisation.

The respondent considered this one of the most significant developments within KSRTC. The conversation then moved towards public relations and passenger interaction. According to him, one of the greatest changes visible today is the growing recognition that passengers are not merely travellers. They are the foundation of the organisation itself. Without passengers there can be no revenue. Without revenue there can be no salaries. Without salaries there can be no organisation. This relationship appears obvious when expressed in simple terms. The respondent felt that it was not always fully appreciated in practice. Today, however, employees understand it much more clearly.

He explained that passenger complaints are taken more seriously than before. Employees are more aware of the importance of maintaining positive relationships with travellers. Many conductors attempt to provide better information. Many drivers make greater efforts to maintain schedules. Many employees consciously avoid unnecessary conflicts.

The respondent did not claim that all problems have disappeared. What he observed was a gradual movement in a positive direction. One particularly interesting aspect of the discussion concerned generational differences. According to him, younger employees often approach their responsibilities differently from older generations. They are more comfortable with technology. They are more familiar with digital systems. They are more responsive to changing passenger expectations.

At the same time, he felt that older employees contribute valuable operational experience. The challenge, according to him, is to combine these strengths effectively. He believed that KSRTC possesses a wealth of practical knowledge accumulated over decades. Senior drivers understand routes in remarkable detail. Senior conductors possess extensive experience dealing with passengers. Younger employees bring new ideas and new skills. He also felt that

organisational success depends upon creating meaningful cooperation between these generations.

As the conversation progressed, he returned once again to the issue of public perception. According to him, one negative incident often receives more attention than hundreds of positive ones. A conductor helping an elderly passenger rarely becomes news. A driver waiting a few extra moments for a struggling passenger rarely becomes news. Employees assisting school children rarely become news. Acts of kindness occur daily across the organisation. Most remain unnoticed. When a conflict occurs, however, it attracts immediate attention.

The respondent believed that this imbalance affects the public image of KSRTC employees. Despite this frustration, he acknowledged that employees must accept the realities of contemporary society. Public service institutions operate under constant scrutiny. The only sustainable response is to improve behaviour continuously. This belief appeared to guide much of his thinking.

Towards the end of this section, the respondent offered a thoughtful reflection on the nature of organisational culture. According to him, culture cannot be changed through circulars or official orders. Culture changes gradually through everyday experiences. Employees observe one another. Employees learn from one another. Employees adapt to changing circumstances. Over time, these small changes accumulate. Eventually, they begin shaping the organisation itself.

He believed that KSRTC is currently experiencing such a transformation. The process remains incomplete. Many challenges remain unresolved. Even so, he felt that the direction is positive. Employees today are more conscious of their responsibilities. They are more aware of public expectations. They are more aware of the importance of organisational survival. These developments, according to him, represent genuine attitudinal change.

The conversation then turned towards one of the most controversial developments in recent years: KSRTC SWIFT, contract labour and the growing debate regarding the future structure of public transportation employment in Kerala.

The moment the discussion shifted towards KSRTC SWIFT, there was a visible change in the respondent's tone. Throughout the interview he had criticised management decisions, questioned administrative practices and expressed dissatisfaction regarding several aspects of

the organisation. Yet his criticism had generally been measured. When the topic of SWIFT emerged, however, his response became sharper, more emotional and considerably more direct.

It quickly became evident that this was not merely another policy issue for him. For the respondent, SWIFT represented a larger debate regarding the future of public sector employment, labour rights and the identity of KSRTC itself.

He began by making his position absolutely clear. "see, SWIFT is not KSRTC." The statement came without hesitation. According to him, many people mistakenly assume that SWIFT is simply another operational wing of KSRTC. In reality, he viewed it as a separate structure functioning under a different philosophy.

Before elaborating on his concerns, he acknowledged why SWIFT was introduced in the first place. The respondent was aware of the official arguments. KSRTC required modernization. Premium services required better operational flexibility. Financial constraints limited recruitment possibilities. The corporation needed mechanisms to improve efficiency and generate revenue. He did not deny the existence of these concerns. What troubled him was the method chosen to address them.

According to the respondent, SWIFT introduced a parallel employment structure within the public transport sector. This parallel structure, in his view, has implications that extend far beyond the operation of a few premium buses.

He explained that traditional KSRTC employment was based upon permanence, institutional loyalty and long-term organisational commitment. Employees joined the organisation with the expectation of building an entire career within it. They underwent training. They accumulated experience. They developed emotional attachment to the corporation. The respondent belonged to this generation.

SWIFT, according to him, represents a different philosophy altogether. Workers are engaged on contractual arrangements. Employment security is comparatively limited. Long-term organisational identification becomes weaker. The entire relationship between employee and institution changes.

For him, this change raises important questions regarding the future character of public transportation. The respondent then moved towards the issue that concerned him most: wages. According to him, the remuneration structure within SWIFT does not provide a strong foundation for long-term commitment.

He referred to the daily wage system and argued that such arrangements inevitably create insecurity among workers. A person who is uncertain about his future naturally thinks differently from a person who enjoys stable employment.

The respondent was careful not to criticise SWIFT employees themselves. In fact, he repeatedly expressed sympathy towards them. According to him, many of these workers are performing difficult duties under challenging circumstances. The problem, in his opinion, lies with the system rather than with the individuals.

He explained: "The workers are not the problem. The structure is the problem." This distinction remained important throughout his discussion of SWIFT. He believed that the employment model itself creates vulnerabilities. Employees may feel pressure to satisfy management expectations because their future employment depends upon continued approval. Employees may avoid raising legitimate concerns. Employees may become reluctant to question decisions. Such conditions, according to him, are unhealthy in any workplace.

The respondent also spoke extensively about training. Throughout the interview he repeatedly returned to the idea that public transportation is a specialized service requiring specific skills. Driving a bus is not merely a matter of operating a vehicle. Conducting services is not merely a matter of issuing tickets. Employees interact with passengers from diverse social backgrounds. They deal with emergencies. They handle conflicts. They manage unexpected situations. They represent the organisation before the public.

According to him, these responsibilities require systematic preparation. He expressed concern that the training ecosystem associated with SWIFT is not comparable to the traditional institutional culture that existed within KSRTC. In his view, behavioural training deserves particular attention. He believed that technical competence alone is insufficient. Employees must also learn communication skills, passenger management, conflict resolution and service ethics.

Throughout the conversation he repeatedly stressed that passenger interaction has become increasingly important in the modern era. Passengers expect professionalism. Passengers expect courtesy. Passengers expect information. Passengers expect assistance. Meeting these expectations requires training. The respondent felt that insufficient attention has been given to this dimension.

Another aspect that generated considerable discussion was experience. According to him, public transportation involves responsibilities that extend beyond ordinary driving. Heavy vehicles operate under complex conditions. Long-distance services present unique challenges. Passenger safety depends upon the judgement and maturity of frontline staff. For this reason, he believed that experience should remain an important criterion in recruitment and deployment.

The respondent expressed concern that the growing emphasis on contractual systems may gradually reduce the value placed upon accumulated institutional experience. He viewed this as a serious risk. Knowledge acquired through decades of service cannot easily be replaced. Experienced employees possess practical insights that are rarely found in manuals or training materials. They understand routes. They understand passenger behaviour. They understand operational realities.

The respondent feared that excessive dependence upon contractual structures could weaken this reservoir of knowledge over time. The discussion then moved towards a broader national debate: labour reforms and the future of employment.

Although the respondent did not engage in detailed legal analysis, he demonstrated a strong awareness of contemporary discussions regarding labour codes and contractual employment. According to him, many workers across sectors have become concerned about the increasing acceptance of contract labour models. These concerns are not limited to KSRTC. They exist throughout the public sector.

The respondent believed that the growth of contractual employment reflects a wider shift in administrative thinking. Governments and organisations increasingly seek flexibility. Permanent employment is often viewed as expensive. Contractual arrangements are perceived as economically attractive. From a purely financial perspective, he acknowledged that such arguments may appear reasonable.

The difficulty arises when human realities are ignored. The respondent repeatedly returned to this theme. Employees are not merely cost centres. They are individuals with families, responsibilities and aspirations. Job security influences behaviour. Financial stability influences mental well-being. Institutional belonging influences commitment. According to him, these factors cannot be ignored when designing employment systems.

At one stage of the discussion, he reflected on the psychological dimensions of employment. A worker who feels secure may focus upon service quality. A worker who constantly worries about renewal of contracts may approach work differently. The respondent believed that employment conditions inevitably shape attitudes. Consequently, discussions regarding employee behaviour cannot be separated from discussions regarding employment structures. This observation was particularly relevant to the broader theme of the present study.

The conversation then turned towards a concern frequently expressed by permanent employees during the initial years of SWIFT's operation. Many feared that SWIFT represented the beginning of a gradual replacement process. There was anxiety regarding future recruitment. There was anxiety regarding the possibility of reducing permanent appointments. There was anxiety regarding the long-term identity of KSRTC.

The respondent acknowledged that these fears were widespread. According to him, many employees genuinely worried that the corporation might eventually move towards a predominantly contractual workforce. Such fears generated considerable resistance during the early stages of implementation. He recalled numerous discussions within trade union circles regarding these possibilities.

The respondent himself remained sceptical. Even today he continues to question the long-term implications of the model. Nevertheless, he acknowledged that reality has evolved differently from some of the more extreme predictions. KSRTC continues to function. Permanent employees continue to form the backbone of the organisation. The corporation remains a public institution.

Even so, his concerns regarding the broader direction of employment policy remain unchanged. Throughout the discussion, one idea repeatedly surfaced. The respondent believed that organisational revival should not come at the expense of employee dignity. Efficiency matters. Financial sustainability matters. Operational flexibility matters. At the same time, employee welfare matters. Job security matters. Professional development matters. The challenge, according to him, lies in balancing these objectives rather than sacrificing one for another.

Towards the conclusion of this section, he offered a reflection that connected SWIFT to the larger story of KSRTC. According to him, every revival effort ultimately depends upon people. Buses can be purchased. Technology can be introduced. Policies can be revised. Routes can be restructured. None of these measures will succeed unless employees believe in the organisation.

The respondent therefore argued that revival strategies should strengthen employee confidence rather than weaken it. This, in his view, is the central lesson that policymakers must remember.

The discussion then moved towards another important area: management reforms, human resource practices and the respondent's assessment of whether KSRTC possesses an effective HR system capable of supporting organisational transformation.

As the interview progressed into questions concerning human resource management and organisational reform, the respondent once again returned to a theme that had appeared repeatedly throughout the discussion: the crisis of KSRTC is fundamentally a crisis of management rather than a crisis of employees.

Unlike many respondents who tend to focus primarily on salary, benefits or working conditions, he consistently directed attention towards the administrative structure of the corporation. In his view, most discussions about KSRTC become trapped at the operational level. Employees are criticised. Drivers are criticised. Conductors are criticised. Trade unions are criticised. Very rarely, according to him, does public discussion examine the quality of management itself.

He felt strongly that many of the difficulties experienced by the corporation originate at higher administrative levels. At one point he remarked: "Whenever there is a problem, people look at the driver, conductor or union. Nobody asks who made the decisions." The statement reflected a frustration that seemed to have accumulated over many years.

According to the respondent, frontline employees merely execute policies. They do not design them. They do not determine fleet strategy. They do not formulate financial plans. They do not decide recruitment policies. Yet when outcomes are negative, criticism frequently falls upon those visible at the operational level. He believed this tendency has prevented meaningful discussion regarding structural weaknesses within the organisation.

The respondent was particularly critical of what he perceived as a lack of transport-specific expertise among decision makers. Throughout the interview he repeatedly stressed that public transportation is a specialised field requiring practical understanding. Managing a transport corporation involves far more than administrative qualifications. It requires knowledge of route economics, passenger behaviour, vehicle utilisation, workforce deployment, traffic conditions and operational realities.

According to him, many senior officers possess theoretical qualifications but lack sufficient field exposure. This disconnect, in his opinion, creates a recurring pattern. Policies are

formulated based on assumptions. Implementation reveals practical difficulties. Employees struggle to make the policies work. Management interprets the difficulties as resistance. Employees interpret them as ignorance. The cycle then repeats itself. He considered this one of the most damaging features of the organisational culture.

The respondent narrated several examples where employees had warned management regarding potential problems before implementation. In many cases, these warnings were ignored. Later, when the predicted difficulties emerged, the responsibility shifted back to the workforce.

According to him, this creates frustration because employees feel unheard. He repeatedly emphasised the importance of consultation. Drivers understand road conditions. Conductors understand passenger behaviour. Mechanical staff understand vehicle performance. Depot-level employees understand local operational realities. Ignoring these sources of knowledge, according to him, weakens decision-making.

At this point in the interview, he reflected on the difference between authority and expertise. A person may occupy a senior position. That does not automatically mean he possesses the most accurate understanding of a situation. The respondent believed that KSRTC has not always recognised this distinction.

One of his strongest criticisms concerned what he described as the absence of meaningful employee participation in decision-making. He acknowledged that meetings, consultations and discussions do occur from time to time. Nevertheless, he felt that these mechanisms often function more as formalities than as genuine opportunities for participation.

According to him, many important decisions are effectively finalised before consultation begins. Employees are informed rather than involved. Trade unions are consulted after policies have been conceptualised. In certain cases, only the ruling party trade unions are heard and the political bias is reflected in the policy as a result of this. Suggestions are heard but not necessarily considered. This, he believed, limits the effectiveness of organisational reform.

The respondent argued that employees are more likely to support change when they feel ownership over the process. People naturally resist decisions imposed upon them. The same individuals may support those decisions if they are allowed to participate in shaping them. He considered this principle applicable not only to KSRTC but to organisations in general.

As the discussion moved deeper into human resource management, he offered an observation that was both simple and revealing. According to him, KSRTC does not possess a human resource culture in the modern sense. The statement was not intended as a criticism of individual officers. Rather, it reflected his broader perception of the organisational structure.

He explained that in many private organisations, the HR department functions as an active bridge between management and employees. It addresses grievances. It supports training initiatives. It assists in career development. It monitors employee welfare. It promotes organisational culture. It facilitates communication. He says, the situation within KSRTC is different.

He struggled to identify instances where employees viewed the HR function as a meaningful source of support. In his opinion, HR remains largely administrative rather than developmental. This distinction appeared important to him. Administrative functions are necessary. Records must be maintained. Compliance requirements must be fulfilled. Service matters must be processed. Yet human resource management involves much more than administration. It involves people. The respondent felt that this aspect remains underdeveloped within KSRTC.

Another area that attracted criticism was training. Interestingly, he did not claim that training is absent. His concern was that training often lacks continuity and strategic direction. According to him, training should not be viewed as a one-time activity. Public transportation is constantly evolving. Passenger expectations change. Technology changes. Regulations change. Consequently, employees require continuous learning opportunities.

The respondent believed that systematic training could play a major role in improving both service quality and employee morale. He referred to examples from neighbouring states where transport corporations invest significantly in behavioural development programmes. Employees are trained not only in technical skills but also in customer interaction. Passengers are treated as valued stakeholders. Professionalism becomes part of organisational identity. The respondent felt that KSRTC could benefit from adopting similar approaches.

At several points in the interview, he returned to the relationship between employee attitude and organisational support. According to him, behaviour cannot be examined in isolation. Employees function within systems. Those systems influence attitudes. When workers feel respected, supported and valued, positive behaviour becomes easier. When workers feel neglected, frustration increases. This does not excuse poor conduct. The respondent was clear

on that point. Rather, it highlights the importance of understanding the conditions that shape behaviour.

He believed that many public discussions focus exclusively on symptoms while ignoring underlying causes. A rude interaction between an employee and a passenger may become news. Very few people ask what pressures that employee might be experiencing. A delay may generate complaints. Few people examine the scheduling decisions that contributed to the delay. According to him, effective human resource management requires attention to these deeper factors.

The conversation then moved towards recruitment and promotion. Here the respondent expressed significant concern. He believed that promotion systems require serious reconsideration. According to him, seniority remains important. Experience remains important. Neither should be ignored. At the same time, competence must receive greater attention.

The respondent worried that promotion does not always guarantee quality. A person may rise through the system without necessarily possessing the skills required for higher responsibilities. This problem becomes particularly serious when operational decisions affect thousands of passengers and hundreds of employees.

He argued that leadership positions should be filled through a combination of experience, competence and practical understanding. Without such balance, organisational effectiveness suffers. But he himself admitted that overcoming the perspectives and priorities of trade unions and the management in this regard is a herculean task. He considered it like the tail of the dog!

The respondent also spoke about accountability. Interestingly, his understanding of accountability extended in both directions. Employees must be accountable for their conduct. Management must be accountable for its decisions. According to him, accountability becomes meaningless when applied selectively. A driver who commits an error may face immediate consequences. Administrative mistakes affecting entire systems often receive less scrutiny. This imbalance, he believed, contributes to employee dissatisfaction.

One particularly revealing part of the discussion concerned organisational learning. The respondent questioned whether KSRTC systematically learns from its own experiences. The corporation has operated for decades. It has accumulated enormous practical knowledge. Thousands of employees have contributed to its development. Yet much of this knowledge remains undocumented. Retiring employees leave with valuable experience. Lessons learned

through decades of service disappear. Mistakes are sometimes repeated. According to him, a stronger learning culture could help the organisation avoid many recurring problems.

As the discussion approached its conclusion, the respondent returned once more to a point he had raised earlier. The future of KSRTC depends not only on buses, budgets or policies. It depends on people. Employees, managers, policymakers and passengers all form part of the same system. Improving one aspect while neglecting the others will produce limited results. Meaningful reform requires a holistic approach.

The respondent believed that KSRTC possesses tremendous potential. The workforce remains committed. Public affection for the organisation remains strong. The service continues to play an indispensable role within Kerala society. What is required, in his opinion, is better leadership, better consultation and a stronger understanding of human resource development. Only then can organisational renewal become sustainable.

The interview then entered its final phase, where the respondent reflected upon the future of KSRTC, the meaning of revival, the role of employee attitude in sustaining change and his hopes for the corporation in the years ahead.

As the interview entered its final stage, the discussion gradually shifted away from crisis and conflict towards questions concerning revival, recovery and the future. Up to this point, the respondent had spoken extensively about management failures, salary delays, operational difficulties, trade union transformation, SWIFT, labour issues and organisational weaknesses. Despite all these criticisms, what emerged most strongly during the concluding part of the conversation was not pessimism but hope.

In fact, one of the striking aspects of the interview was that the respondent never spoke as though KSRTC was beyond recovery. Quite the contrary. He repeatedly expressed confidence that the corporation could overcome its difficulties if the right decisions were taken at the right time.

When asked whether he sees the present situation as positive or negative, his answer came almost immediately. "Everything is moving in a positive direction compared to the past." The response was significant because it came from a person who had spent much of the interview criticizing various aspects of the organisation.

Most important point in the interview was this: he did not say KSRTC has overcome the crisis period or the revival has happened. According to him, revival should not be understood as a

single event. It is a gradual process. An organisation that spent decades accumulating problems cannot solve them within a few years. Expecting such miracles would be unrealistic. Instead, revival occurs through a series of small improvements that collectively change the direction of the institution.

The respondent believed that KSRTC has already begun moving along such a path. One of the first indicators he pointed towards was the improvement in salary disbursement. Earlier in the interview, he had spoken at length about the emotional and financial strain caused by delayed salaries. Returning to the subject now, he argued that timely salary payment has had consequences extending far beyond financial stability.

According to him, when employees receive their salaries regularly, their entire outlook changes. Family life becomes more predictable. Financial planning becomes possible. Stress levels reduce. Relationships improve. The employee approaches work with a clearer mind. These changes eventually influence workplace behaviour.

The respondent believed that many people underestimate the psychological impact of financial uncertainty. When a person spends every month worrying about whether salary will arrive, it becomes difficult to focus entirely on service quality. When that uncertainty begins to disappear, behavioural changes naturally follow. This, according to him, is one of the most important reasons behind the gradual improvement visible among employees today.

The discussion then moved towards public perception. The respondent believed that public opinion regarding KSRTC is also changing slowly. For many years, conversations about the corporation were dominated by stories of crisis. Salary delays became news. Pension issues became news. Financial losses became news. Conflicts became news. As a result, the public began associating KSRTC primarily with failure.

According to him, this narrative is now beginning to change. People are increasingly noticing improvements. Premium services are attracting attention. Reservation systems are functioning more effectively. Operational discipline has improved in several sectors. Employees are making greater efforts to interact positively with passengers. These developments may not completely transform public opinion overnight. Even so, they contribute to a gradual rebuilding of confidence.

The respondent stressed that public trust is one of the most valuable assets any public institution can possess. Without public trust, even the best policies become difficult to implement. Without

public trust, employees struggle to maintain morale. Without public trust, political support becomes uncertain. Consequently, rebuilding confidence must remain a central objective of revival efforts.

The conversation then turned towards employee attitude, which lay at the heart of the research itself. The respondent reflected on the changes he had observed during recent years. He acknowledged that problems continue to exist. Arrogant employees still exist. Conflicts still occur. Service failures still occur. No organisation can eliminate such issues entirely. Nevertheless, he believed that the overall direction is positive. Employees today understand the importance of passengers more clearly. Employees understand the importance of organisational survival more clearly. Employees understand the consequences of negative publicity more clearly. These changes have influenced behaviour in subtle but meaningful ways.

The respondent explained that attitudinal change rarely occurs through formal orders. Nobody can issue a circular commanding employees to develop positive attitudes. Attitudes evolve through experience. They evolve through necessity. They evolve through interaction with changing realities.

In his view, the crisis itself contributed to this transformation. The difficult years forced employees to reflect upon their relationship with the organisation. The possibility of decline made people appreciate the value of institutional survival. This realization encouraged many workers to reconsider their priorities. The respondent believed that the greatest attitudinal shift has occurred not merely among employees but also among trade unions. Throughout the interview he repeatedly returned to this theme.

Earlier generations often viewed trade union activity primarily through the lens of conflict. Today's unions, according to him, increasingly operate through the lens of survival. The objective remains protection of workers. The method, however, has changed. Unions now recognize that employee welfare and organisational welfare cannot be separated. A collapsing organisation cannot protect anyone. A thriving organisation creates opportunities for both employees and passengers. This understanding has become one of the defining characteristics of contemporary trade union culture within KSRTC. The respondent felt that this transformation deserves greater recognition.

Public discussions frequently focus upon past confrontations. Very little attention is paid to the ways unions have adapted to changing realities. According to him, many unions now invest

significant effort in maintaining operational continuity even while expressing disagreement with management. This balance is not always easy to achieve. Yet it has become increasingly important.

Another issue discussed during this concluding phase was the future of recruitment. The respondent remained concerned about the absence of large-scale permanent appointments. According to him, no organisation can sustain itself indefinitely without attracting new generations of employees. Fresh recruitment brings energy, new skills and new perspectives. It creates continuity. It ensures that institutional knowledge can be transferred from one generation to another. The respondent therefore viewed recruitment as a critical component of long-term revival.

At the same time, he emphasized that recruitment alone is insufficient. New employees require proper orientation. They require training. They require mentoring. Most importantly, they require a sense of belonging. Without these elements, organisational culture becomes fragmented.

Towards the end of the interview, the respondent reflected upon the unique place occupied by KSRTC within Kerala society. His observations were deeply personal. For him, KSRTC is not merely a transport corporation. It is part of the social history of the state. Generations have travelled in its buses. Students have depended upon its services. Workers have depended upon its services. Patients have depended upon its services. Entire villages have remained connected to the outside world because KSRTC continued operating routes that nobody else was willing to serve.

This social role, according to him, explains why public emotions surrounding KSRTC are so intense. People criticise the organisation because they care about it. People become angry because they expect more from it. People discuss its future because they view it as an important public institution. The respondent considered this emotional connection to be one of KSRTC's greatest strengths. Few organisations enjoy such affection despite decades of crisis. He believed that this goodwill should be protected carefully.

As the conversation approached its conclusion, he was asked what he considered the single most important requirement for ensuring the future of KSRTC. His answer was surprisingly simple. He did not mention buses. He did not mention technology. He did not mention infrastructure. Instead, he spoke about trust.

According to him, revival ultimately depends upon trust between management and employees. Trust between employees and passengers. Trust between the government and the corporation. Trust between trade unions and administrators. Without trust, every reform becomes a conflict. With trust, even difficult reforms become manageable.

The respondent believed that rebuilding this trust should become a priority for everyone associated with KSRTC. His final remarks reflected both realism and optimism. He acknowledged that many challenges remain unresolved. Financial pressures continue. Administrative problems continue. Labour concerns continue. Even so, he remained convinced that the organisation possesses the strength necessary to move forward. The workforce remains committed. The public continues to value the service. The institution continues to occupy a special place within Kerala's social fabric. These strengths, according to him, provide a solid foundation for renewal.

He was optimistic that the change of government in Kerala would make things rather easy for KSRTC in its revival attempts with more government aids, policy change in accepting the offer of the central government for about 900+ new electric buses for urban transport, and government aid to support the free travel for women etc. To the 'How' question on all of these he did not say specific answers but demanded for a 'wait and see' with a smile.

As the interview ended, one impression remained particularly strong. Throughout the discussion, the respondent had criticised policies, questioned decisions and highlighted organisational weaknesses. Yet beneath every criticism lay a consistent message. He was not speaking as an opponent of KSRTC. He was speaking as someone who wanted the organisation to survive, improve and regain its place as one of Kerala's most respected public institutions.

In many ways, his narrative reflected the broader theme of the present study itself. The story of KSRTC is not simply a story of crisis. It is also a story of adaptation, resilience and gradual renewal. From his perspective, employee attitude, trade union transformation and organisational survival are deeply interconnected. The future of the corporation will depend upon how successfully these elements continue to evolve together in the years ahead.

4.8 Respondent 7: Management Staff (Operations), KSRTC

I had the privilege to interview one of the senior most management staff of KSRTC and it provided incredible insights into what is actually happening within KSRTC.

When the discussion began, he did not immediately speak about employees, trade unions or politics. Instead, he chose to begin with the larger question of how the crisis of KSRTC should be understood. He appeared cautious about attributing blame to any single group. In his view, the crisis was never the result of one mistake, one government or one section of employees. Rather, it was the cumulative effect of several structural weaknesses that had developed over a long period of time.

According to him, people often simplify the story of KSRTC by reducing it to a financial problem. Newspapers highlight debt figures. Television discussions focus on losses. Political debates revolve around subsidies and government support. While all these issues are important, he felt that they tell only part of the story.

He explained that financial stress was certainly the most visible symptom of the crisis. Debt continued to increase year after year. Liabilities accumulated. Operational expenditure rose steadily. Revenue growth, however, did not always keep pace with these developments. As a result, the corporation found itself trapped in a cycle where more and more resources were required merely to sustain day-to-day operations.

According to him, many people outside the organisation do not fully appreciate the complexity of running a public transport corporation. He explained it further: A private company may choose where to operate. A private company may discontinue unprofitable routes. A private company may focus exclusively on commercial viability. But, KSRTC does not enjoy such freedom. The corporation carries a social responsibility. It operates services to villages, hill regions, coastal areas and remote localities where passenger numbers may be low but public need remains high.

He reflected on this aspect at length. In his opinion, one of the greatest challenges faced by KSRTC is that it is expected to function simultaneously as a welfare institution and a commercial enterprise. These two objectives do not always move in the same direction. A socially necessary service may not always be financially profitable.

A financially profitable decision may not always satisfy public expectations. The management therefore operates within a constant tension between service obligations and financial sustainability. As he described it, the crisis emerged when this balance became increasingly difficult to maintain.

The discussion then moved towards the issue of debt. Here his observations became more detailed. According to him, debt should not be viewed merely as a number appearing in financial statements. Behind every debt figure lies a series of operational realities. Salary obligations must be met. Pension obligations must be met. Fuel must be purchased. Spare parts must be procured. Vehicles must be maintained. Stations must function. Services must continue. Even during periods of severe financial stress, buses cannot simply stop operating. This creates a situation where borrowing often becomes unavoidable.

Then he explained that over time these liabilities accumulated to levels that placed enormous pressure on the organisation. Yet he was careful not to present debt as the sole explanation.

According to him, several external factors intensified the problem. One such factor was the withdrawal of diesel-related advantages previously enjoyed by the corporation. He explained that fuel expenditure represents one of the largest components of operating cost in any transport undertaking. The privilege for the bulk purchaser was taken away and it affects the organization badly. When diesel prices increase, the impact is immediate. When purchasing advantages disappear, the burden becomes even greater. The corporation therefore found itself spending substantially more merely to maintain the same level of operations. In his opinion, this factor is often overlooked when people discuss the financial condition of KSRTC.

The conversation then turned towards the use of organisational assets. At this point he reflected on a subject that has frequently appeared in public discussions regarding KSRTC: the commercial potential of bus station properties. According to him, the corporation possesses valuable assets spread across the state. Bus stations occupy strategically important locations in many towns and cities. These locations offer opportunities for commercial development.

The challenge, however, lies in converting potential into sustainable revenue. He referred to the Kozhikode bus station complex as an example frequently discussed in both administrative circles and public discourse. According to him, such projects demonstrate both the possibilities and the difficulties associated with property management. Commercial spaces exist. Potential revenue exists. Yet the expected returns do not always materialise in the manner originally envisioned.

Several factors influence these outcomes. Market conditions change. Tenant occupancy fluctuates. Maintenance costs emerge. Legal complications arise. Administrative delays occur. The result is that assets capable of generating substantial income do not always contribute as

effectively as anticipated. He did not describe this as a simple failure. Rather, he viewed it as part of a broader lesson regarding asset management within public institutions.

He then returned to a theme that would repeatedly appear throughout the interview: management systems. According to him, discussions about KSRTC often focus on drivers, conductors and trade unions because they are visible to the public. The less visible dimensions of administration receive far less attention. Yet organisational outcomes are shaped significantly by management practices.

He acknowledged that issues relating to man-management have existed within the corporation. Duty allocation, deployment patterns, political pressures, administrative preferences and operational constraints have all influenced how human resources were utilised. In his opinion, effective transport management requires continuous balancing. The workforce must be sufficient to operate services. At the same time, staffing patterns must remain financially sustainable. Achieving this balance has not always been easy. He observed that public transport corporations across India face similar challenges. Nevertheless, the consequences become particularly visible in a large organisation such as KSRTC.

He then began speaking about fleet condition. This appeared to be an issue that concerned him deeply. According to him, one cannot discuss organisational revival without discussing buses themselves. Buses are the public face of KSRTC. Passengers judge the organisation through the condition of its fleet. A well-maintained modern bus creates confidence. An ageing vehicle struggling through daily operations creates a very different impression.

He explained that one of the major difficulties faced during the crisis years was the inability to undertake fleet renewal at the required scale. New buses require significant investment. Financially stressed organisations often postpone such investments. The immediate consequence is that older vehicles remain in service for longer periods. Maintenance requirements increase. Breakdowns become more frequent. Passenger satisfaction declines. Competition becomes more difficult.

He was specific about the contributions of Mr. Ganesh Kumar as the minister for KSRTC. He was reminded of the many reforms he brought forward to the organization, providing salary on the first day of the month being the best among them. He observed that Ganesh Kumar worked highly on improving employee morale. He remembered the minister speaking once: *“jeevanakkarkk swathanthramaayi joli cheyyanulla sahacharyam nammal undakkikkodukkanam”*. This made the depot managers providing more freedom to the

operating employees especially in routes where they were competing with the private buses and to suggest better solutions in such schedules and routes.

Then he reflected on how private operators gradually began introducing newer vehicles while many KSRTC services continued operating with ageing fleets. According to him, this comparison shaped public perception. Passengers naturally compare comfort, reliability and appearance. When competitors appear more modern, expectations regarding KSRTC rise correspondingly.

The challenge then becomes not merely operational but psychological. Employees must represent an organisation that is constantly being compared with alternatives. Passengers expect improvement. The corporation struggles to secure resources necessary for that improvement. This tension became one of the defining features of the crisis period.

At this stage of the interview, the discussion slowly moved towards the human consequences of these structural problems. He was very clear on one point. Employee attitude cannot be separated from organisational conditions. He did not suggest that employees are free from responsibility. Nor did he accept the popular argument that employees alone created the crisis.

According to him, morale is influenced by context. People respond to the environment in which they work. When salary payments become uncertain, morale suffers. When public criticism intensifies, morale suffers. When employees repeatedly hear that their organisation is failing, morale suffers.

He reflected on the years during which salary delays became a recurring reality. According to him, this was perhaps one of the most damaging aspects of the crisis. Not because of the financial inconvenience alone. The deeper impact was psychological. Employees began losing confidence in the institution. Families experienced uncertainty. Future planning became difficult. An atmosphere of anxiety developed.

He expressed that these experiences inevitably influenced behaviour. A workforce operating under prolonged stress cannot be expected to display the same enthusiasm as a workforce functioning within a stable environment. Yet despite these difficulties, the organisation survived.

This fact appeared important to him. The buses continued operating. Services continued functioning. Employees continued reporting for duty. Trade unions continued engaging with management. Passengers continued travelling.

In his view, this endurance itself deserves recognition. As he reflected on those difficult years, one impression became increasingly clear. The crisis of KSRTC was not merely financial. It was operational. It was administrative. It was psychological. It was cultural. Most importantly, it was institutional. Understanding revival therefore requires understanding all these dimensions together.

And according to him, that understanding only began to emerge when the corporation started focusing not merely on survival, but on rebuilding confidence within the organisation itself.

As the conversation moved from the crisis years towards the revival period, the He repeatedly returned to a theme that appeared central to his understanding of organisational change. According to him, revival did not begin with the purchase of buses, the introduction of new technology or the launch of innovative projects. Revival began when employees started believing once again that the organisation had a future.

He explained that many discussions about organisational revival focus primarily on financial indicators. Revenue growth is measured. Debt figures are examined. Passenger numbers are compared. Operational statistics are analysed. While all these indicators are important, he felt that they fail to capture one of the most significant dimensions of revival: confidence.

According to him, an organisation begins recovering only when its employees regain confidence in the institution. Without employee confidence, reforms remain documents. Without employee confidence, policies remain announcements. Without employee confidence, organisational change rarely reaches the operational level.

He therefore viewed the restoration of employee confidence as one of the most important achievements of the revival period. He explained that during the years of severe financial stress, employees gradually lost faith in the system. The issue was not merely salary delay. Salary delay became a symbol of something larger. It signalled uncertainty. It created anxiety. It weakened trust. Employees began questioning whether the organisation would be able to meet its basic obligations. This uncertainty affected attitudes in ways that were not always visible.

According to him, employees continued performing their duties. Buses continued operating. Services continued functioning. Yet beneath this apparent continuity, morale was steadily deteriorating.

He then reflected on how difficult it is for an employee to remain fully committed when basic financial security is absent. A driver beginning duty in the early morning carries personal

responsibilities. A conductor reporting for work has family obligations. Every employee has loans, educational expenses, medical needs and household commitments. When salary becomes unpredictable, these concerns inevitably enter the workplace.

Also, the respondent was careful not to justify poor performance. At the same time, he felt that organisations must acknowledge the human realities affecting behaviour. According to him, management cannot demand commitment without providing stability. This principle shaped many of the revival measures introduced in recent years. One of the first priorities, therefore, was restoring salary discipline.

Then he described the decision to ensure timely salary payment as a turning point in the revival journey. From an external perspective, the reform may appear administrative. From an employee perspective, he believed it was transformational.

He explained that the management, with government support, made a conscious effort to create predictability. The overdraft arrangements, financial restructuring measures and other interventions were ultimately directed towards a simple objective: ensuring that employees received their salaries on time.

According to him, the significance of this change cannot be measured merely through accounting records. Its real impact became visible in employee behaviour. As salary payments became regular, anxiety reduced. As anxiety reduced, confidence improved. As confidence improved, attitudes gradually began changing.

He repeatedly used the phrase "ownership mentality" while discussing this period. According to him, one of the most encouraging developments was the emergence of a stronger sense of ownership among employees. He explained that when workers believe the organisation is collapsing, they naturally become defensive. Their focus shifts towards self-preservation. They become less willing to invest emotionally in institutional objectives. The situation changes when employees begin seeing signs of recovery. People become more optimistic. They become more willing to cooperate. They become more willing to contribute ideas. They begin identifying themselves with organisational success.

In his own words: "a happy house is the result of happy members in it. Similarly, only happy employees will make KSRTC happy and satisfactory...".

He believes that KSRTC is presently experiencing this transition. He illustrated this change through practical examples drawn from operational experience. According to him, employees

today are more willing to suggest route modifications aimed at improving profitability. Drivers often provide feedback regarding operational efficiency. Conductors contribute ideas regarding passenger behaviour and collection patterns. Depot-level employees identify opportunities for improving services. These actions may appear ordinary.

For him, however, they represent something much deeper. They indicate that employees have started viewing organisational success as their own success. This, in his opinion, is one of the clearest indicators of attitudinal transformation. The discussion then turned towards passenger relations. Here again, he linked organisational revival directly to employee behaviour.

According to him, one of the criticisms frequently directed at KSRTC during earlier periods concerned employee interaction with passengers. Complaints regarding attitude, communication and responsiveness often appeared in public discussions. He acknowledged these concerns without attempting to dismiss them.

At the same time, he argued that the present situation reflects noticeable improvement. He observed that employees increasingly understand the importance of passengers in sustaining the organisation. Passengers are no longer viewed merely as travellers. They are viewed as stakeholders. Every passenger choosing KSRTC contributes to the survival of the institution.

This understanding, according to him, has influenced employee behaviour in subtle but meaningful ways. He cited examples of crews making greater efforts to attract passengers on competitive routes. Employees have become more conscious of service quality. They have become more aware of public perception. They have become more attentive to passenger needs.

According to him, these developments are not the result of a single training programme or administrative order. Rather, they reflect a broader cultural shift occurring within the organisation. He described this shift as a movement from entitlement towards engagement.

In earlier periods, many employees viewed their responsibilities primarily through the lens of duty. Today, according to him, there is a growing recognition that organisational survival requires active participation. Employees cannot remain passive observers. They must contribute to the revival process itself.

This attitude, he believed, is becoming increasingly visible across different levels of the organisation. He then discussed one of the less visible dimensions of employee attitude: initiative.

According to him, some of the most encouraging examples of attitudinal change emerge during unexpected operational situations. A bus develops a minor defect during service. Instead of immediately cancelling the trip, employees attempt to resolve the issue. A route faces operational challenges. Employees work together to maintain continuity. Collection targets become difficult. Staff explore alternative approaches.

Then he interpreted these behaviours as signs of organisational commitment. Such actions cannot be mandated through circulars. They emerge when employees feel emotionally invested in the organisation.

He also highlighted the role played by recognition. Although KSRTC does not possess extensive incentive systems comparable to certain private organisations, efforts have been made to identify and appreciate good performance. The CMD Squad, monitoring mechanisms and performance reviews were all discussed in this context. According to him, employees need to feel that positive contributions are visible. Recognition creates motivation. Motivation influences behaviour. Behaviour shapes organisational culture.

He repeatedly stressed that employee attitude should not be understood as an isolated variable. It interacts continuously with organisational conditions. Good attitudes require supportive systems. Supportive systems encourage positive attitudes. The relationship is reciprocal. One strengthens the other. This understanding appeared to guide much of his thinking regarding revival.

As the discussion progressed further, he began speaking about revenue diversification initiatives such as budget tourism, logistics, Yathra Fuels, advertising and commercial activities. Interestingly, he did not present these projects merely as financial strategies. He believed they also carried psychological significance for employees.

According to him, when workers observe the organisation exploring new opportunities, they begin viewing the future differently. The corporation no longer appears trapped. It appears innovative. It appears adaptable. It appears capable of growth.

This perception matters because attitudes are shaped not only by present realities but also by expectations regarding the future. Employees who believe the organisation has a future behave differently from employees who believe decline is inevitable.

He therefore viewed these initiatives as contributing indirectly to attitudinal change. By creating hope, they strengthened commitment. By strengthening commitment, they supported

revival. Throughout this part of the interview, one message remained remarkably consistent. The He did not see employee attitude as a peripheral issue. He saw it as one of the central drivers of organisational renewal. Financial reforms created stability. Stability created confidence. Confidence encouraged ownership. Ownership improved behaviour. Improved behaviour strengthened public trust. Public trust supported revival. In his view, this chain of relationships explains much of the positive change currently visible within KSRTC.

As the discussion progressed further, he moved away from the traditional narrative of crisis and began speaking about revival in more practical terms. According to him, many people assume that revival simply means reducing debt or increasing revenue. While those aspects are certainly important, he felt that organisational revival is a much broader process. An organisation truly begins to revive only when employees stop viewing themselves as victims of circumstances and start seeing themselves as contributors to change.

This idea appeared repeatedly throughout the interview. In his view, one of the most encouraging developments in recent years has been the gradual transformation of employees from passive participants into active stakeholders in the organisation's future.

He explained that during the worst phases of the crisis, employees often felt disconnected from decision-making and uncertain about the future. Discussions inside depots were dominated by concerns about salaries, pensions, liabilities and survival. The organisation was constantly reacting to crises. Very little attention could be given to growth, innovation or long-term planning.

According to him, revival required a psychological shift before it could become an operational reality. Employees needed to believe that KSRTC was capable of growth. Employees needed to see evidence that the organisation was exploring new opportunities. Employees needed to feel that management was not merely attempting to survive another month but was actively planning for the future. Only then could attitudes begin changing in a meaningful manner.

He reflected on the introduction of several revenue diversification initiatives and explained that their importance extended beyond the income they generated. Budget tourism was one such example. According to him, the success of budget tourism demonstrated that KSRTC possessed capabilities that extended far beyond conventional passenger transportation. Initially, many people viewed the initiative with scepticism. Some questioned whether a transport corporation should involve itself in tourism. Others doubted whether passengers would respond positively.

The reality, however, turned out differently. The programme attracted considerable public interest. Passengers began associating KSRTC with experiences rather than merely transportation. Employees began witnessing a side of the organisation that was innovative, customer-oriented and commercially proactive. According to him, this had an important impact on employee morale.

For years, employees had become accustomed to hearing discussions centred on losses and liabilities. Budget tourism introduced a different narrative. It demonstrated that KSRTC could still create something successful. It demonstrated that the organisation could compete, innovate and attract public appreciation. Such developments, according to him, influence employee attitudes more than many people realise.

He explained that organisational pride is often connected to public perception. When employees observe passengers speaking positively about an initiative, they begin feeling differently about their own organisation. Pride gradually replaces embarrassment. Confidence begins replacing defensiveness. The emotional relationship between employee and institution strengthens. He believed that budget tourism contributed significantly to this process.

A similar impact, according to him, emerged through the expansion of logistics and parcel services. He noted that public transport corporations across the world increasingly explore supplementary revenue streams. Passenger transportation alone may not always provide sufficient financial stability. Consequently, organisations must utilise their existing infrastructure more effectively.

In the case of KSRTC, buses already travel across the state every day. Depots already exist. Personnel are already present. Networks are already established. The challenge lies in using these resources more creatively. According to him, logistics services represented one such effort. From a financial perspective, the initiative created an additional source of revenue. From an employee perspective, however, it created something equally important: a sense of relevance. Employees began understanding that KSRTC was capable of adapting to changing economic realities.

The organisation was not standing still. It was searching for opportunities. It was attempting to reinvent itself. He believed that this adaptability has an important influence on employee attitudes. People are generally more motivated when they perceive their organisation as dynamic and forward-looking. They become more willing to participate. They become more willing to support change. They become more willing to contribute ideas.

Throughout the discussion, he repeatedly returned to the importance of employee participation. According to him, one of the mistakes often committed during organisational reforms is the assumption that change can be imposed entirely from above. Management may formulate policies. Government may provide support. Consultants may offer recommendations. Ultimately, however, implementation depends upon employees. Without employee participation, even the most carefully designed reform will struggle to produce results. This principle appeared to shape his understanding of the revival process.

He explained that employees are increasingly contributing suggestions regarding routes, schedules, operational efficiency and service improvements. Many of these suggestions emerge from practical experience rather than formal planning exercises. Drivers understand traffic patterns. Conductors understand passenger behaviour. Mechanical staff understand vehicle performance. Depot-level employees understand local operational realities.

According to him, revival becomes more sustainable when such practical knowledge is incorporated into organisational decision-making. At one point he remarked that some of the most useful suggestions received by the corporation have come from employees who spend their entire working lives on the ground rather than inside offices.

This observation appeared important to him. He believed that frontline employees possess valuable insights that cannot be obtained solely through reports or statistics. The challenge is creating mechanisms through which those insights can reach decision-makers. The discussion then moved towards workshop modernisation and vehicle maintenance. At first glance, this subject appeared unrelated to employee attitude.

As he continued speaking, however, the connection became clear. According to him, employees derive confidence from working within systems that function effectively. A mechanic who receives proper tools works differently from one who constantly struggles with shortages. A driver assigned a well-maintained vehicle approaches duty differently from one operating a bus with recurring mechanical problems. A conductor working within an efficient operational environment experience less frustration than one dealing with continuous disruptions.

He therefore viewed workshop modernisation not merely as a technical reform but also as an employee-centred intervention. Better systems improve operational reliability. Improved reliability reduces frustration. Reduced frustration contributes to positive attitudes. Positive attitudes influence service quality. The relationship, in his view, is both direct and significant.

He also spoke about training initiatives aimed at improving fuel efficiency and operational performance. According to him, these programmes are often misunderstood. People tend to assume that fuel-efficiency training focuses exclusively on reducing costs. While cost reduction is certainly one objective, he felt that the programmes also carry a behavioural dimension. Training communicates expectations. Training creates awareness. Training encourages professionalism. Most importantly, training signals that the organisation is investing in its workforce. Employees generally respond positively when they feel that management is willing to invest in their development. This, he believed, contributes to a stronger organisational culture.

The conversation then shifted towards monitoring mechanisms such as the CMD Squad. Public discussions frequently portray monitoring in negative terms. Employees sometimes perceive oversight as a form of surveillance. He acknowledged these concerns. At the same time, he argued that accountability and recognition must function together. According to him, the objective was not merely to identify shortcomings. The objective was also to recognise positive performance.

He felt strongly that organisations often spend too much time focusing on mistakes and too little time appreciating good work. Employees who consistently perform well deserve recognition. Employees who demonstrate commitment deserve recognition. Employees who contribute innovative ideas deserve recognition.

Such recognition, according to him, strengthens positive behaviour. The discussion eventually returned to the broader issue of organisational culture. Here he appeared particularly reflective. He observed that organisational culture is not transformed through a single policy decision. Culture changes gradually. Thousands of daily interactions contribute to its formation. Small improvements accumulate over time. Employees observe one another. Employees learn from one another. New expectations emerge. New norms develop.

According to him, KSRTC is presently experiencing such a cultural transition. The process remains incomplete. Challenges remain. Old habits have not disappeared entirely. Even so, he believed that the direction of change is positive.

One phrase surfaced repeatedly during this part of the interview: ownership. He seemed convinced that ownership lies at the heart of sustainable revival. Employees who view the organisation as somebody else's responsibility behave differently from employees who feel personally connected to its future. The revival process, according to him, has gradually

strengthened this sense of ownership. Workers increasingly discuss profitability. Workers increasingly discuss passenger satisfaction. Workers increasingly discuss service quality. Such conversations were less common during the years when survival itself appeared uncertain. He interpreted this change as evidence of attitudinal transformation.

Towards the end of this section, he reflected upon a reality that often receives little attention in public discussions. Many of the most important changes occurring within organisations are invisible. Revenue figures can be measured. Passenger numbers can be counted. New buses can be photographed. Attitudes are more difficult to observe. Yet he believed that employee attitude may ultimately be one of the most important indicators of revival.

According to him, when employees begin believing in the organisation again, they become willing to invest effort beyond what formal rules require. That extra effort cannot easily be quantified. Nevertheless, it often determines whether organisational reforms succeed or fail.

He then answered the most debated aspects of contemporary KSRTC: SWIFT, temporary employment, workforce restructuring and the challenge of balancing financial sustainability with employee expectations. On these issues, his views reflected the complex position occupied by management within a public sector organisation attempting to reform itself while preserving employee confidence.

As the discussion progressed towards the subject of KSRTC SWIFT, his tone became noticeably more careful. Unlike topics such as salary reforms, operational efficiency or revenue generation, this was an area where strong opinions existed both inside and outside the organisation. Employees had concerns. Trade unions had concerns. Management had its own compulsions. Political parties had their own narratives. Public discussions frequently portrayed the issue in simplistic terms, either as a brilliant reform or as a threat to the future of KSRTC. According to him, the reality was far more complicated.

He acknowledged from the outset that SWIFT remains one of the most misunderstood developments in recent years. According to him, much of the debate surrounding SWIFT takes place without fully appreciating the operational challenges that led to its creation. Public transport corporations across the country are increasingly confronted with rising costs, ageing workforces, recruitment constraints and growing service expectations. KSRTC was no exception.

He explained that the organisation was facing a peculiar situation. Passenger expectations were increasing. The need for fleet expansion remained significant. Financial resources, however, were limited. Permanent recruitment had virtually stopped for a long period. Retirements continued. Vacancies emerged. Service requirements remained unchanged.

In such a context, management was compelled to explore alternative operational models. According to him, SWIFT emerged from that search. He was careful not to describe it as a perfect solution. Nor did he dismiss the concerns raised by employees and trade unions. Instead, he appeared to view SWIFT as an attempt to address immediate operational realities while the larger structural issues of the corporation remained unresolved. One aspect that seemed particularly important to him was the distinction between ideological debate and operational necessity.

According to him, discussions regarding SWIFT often become highly emotional. Some view it as the beginning of privatisation. Others see it as a threat to traditional employment structures. Still others portray it as a management strategy to weaken trade unions. He acknowledged that such perceptions exist.

At the same time, he felt that management was primarily concerned with ensuring continuity of services. Passengers expect buses to operate. Schedules must be maintained. Routes cannot remain vacant indefinitely. Operational responsibilities continue regardless of broader ideological disagreements. This, according to him, is the reality that management faces every day.

As the conversation continued, he began discussing employee attitudes towards SWIFT. Interestingly, he did not portray employees as uniformly opposed. Neither did he suggest that they had fully accepted the system. According to him, employee reactions have evolved over time.

When SWIFT was initially introduced, uncertainty dominated the discussion. Employees feared that permanent recruitment would disappear entirely. There were concerns regarding wage structures. There were concerns regarding working conditions. There were concerns regarding the long-term identity of KSRTC. Many workers viewed the initiative through the lens of job security. Such reactions, according to him, were understandable.

In his view, it is natural that any major organisational change creates uncertainty. People naturally worry about how reforms will affect their future. He believed that management

sometimes underestimates the emotional dimensions of organisational change. Employees do not evaluate reforms solely through economic logic. They evaluate them through personal experience. They think about family responsibilities. They think about career prospects. They think about long-term security. Consequently, any discussion regarding workforce restructuring inevitably becomes emotional.

This observation appeared important to him because it connected once again to the broader theme of employee attitude. Throughout the interview, he consistently argued that attitudes are shaped by perceptions of fairness and security. Employees who feel uncertain about the future often become resistant to change. Employees who feel secure are generally more willing to cooperate. This principle, according to him, applies not only to SWIFT but to organisational reforms in general.

The discussion then moved towards the issue of temporary employment. Here his reflections became particularly nuanced. He acknowledged that temporary employees face challenges different from those experienced by permanent staff. The level of job security is different. The nature of organisational attachment is different. The opportunities for long-term career development are different. These realities influence attitudes.

According to him, organisations must recognise these differences rather than pretend they do not exist. At the same time, he stressed that temporary employees also contribute significantly to service delivery. Many perform demanding duties under difficult circumstances. Many demonstrate remarkable commitment. Many adapt quickly to operational requirements.

He appeared concerned that public debates sometimes reduce individuals to symbols within larger political arguments. According to him, the people working within SWIFT are employees trying to perform their duties. Their efforts deserve recognition irrespective of broader policy disagreements.

One particularly interesting aspect of the discussion concerned organisational loyalty. Throughout the interview, he repeatedly returned to the importance of cultivating a sense of belonging among employees. When discussing SWIFT, this theme resurfaced in a slightly different form.

According to him, one of the challenges facing management is ensuring that all categories of employees develop a meaningful connection with the organisation. Loyalty cannot be created through circulars. Commitment cannot be imposed through administrative orders. Employees

develop attachment when they feel valued. They develop attachment when they see a future for themselves within the institution. They develop attachment when their contributions are recognised. This principle applies equally to permanent and temporary staff. He believed that management must pay greater attention to this dimension in the years ahead.

The conversation then expanded into a broader discussion about workforce restructuring. According to him, public sector organisations often find themselves caught between competing expectations. On one side are demands for efficiency, financial discipline and modernisation. On the other side are expectations regarding employment security, welfare and social responsibility. Both expectations are legitimate. The difficulty lies in balancing them.

He felt that many public debates acknowledge only one side of the equation. Some focus exclusively on efficiency. Others focus exclusively on employee protection. The challenge for management is to pursue both simultaneously. This balancing act, according to him, defines much of contemporary public sector administration.

As he reflected on these issues, he repeatedly returned to the idea that organisational revival ultimately depends upon people. Technology can assist. Infrastructure can improve. Financial reforms can create stability. Yet none of these measures will succeed if employees become disengaged.

According to him, this is one of the most important lessons learned during the revival journey. Organisations recover when employees participate in recovery. Employees participate when they believe their efforts matter. This belief, he argued, must be nurtured continuously. The discussion then shifted towards another issue frequently associated with organisational change: resistance.

He did not view resistance as inherently negative. In fact, he argued that resistance often provides valuable information. Employees resist when they perceive risks. Employees resist when communication is inadequate. Employees resist when they feel excluded from decision-making. Understanding these concerns can actually strengthen reform processes.

According to him, successful organisational change requires dialogue rather than mere instruction. Management must explain. Employees must respond. Trade unions must participate. Only then can reforms achieve legitimacy.

This perspective revealed a management approach that appeared more consultative than authoritarian. He acknowledged that disagreements would always exist. In an organisation as

large as KSRTC, complete consensus is unrealistic. The objective, according to him, is not eliminating disagreement. The objective is managing disagreement constructively.

This observation would later connect strongly with his views regarding trade unions and collective bargaining. Before moving to that topic, however, he offered a reflection that seemed to summarise much of his thinking regarding employee attitude. According to him, the most significant change visible within KSRTC today is not technological, financial or administrative. It is psychological. Employees increasingly believe that improvement is possible. They increasingly believe that the organisation has a future. They increasingly see themselves as participants in that future.

This shift, in his opinion, may ultimately prove more important than any individual reform initiative. Because once attitudes begin changing, behaviour follows. When behaviour changes, organisational culture changes. When organisational culture changes, revival becomes sustainable.

As the conversation progressed further, he began discussing trade unions, collective bargaining and the often-misunderstood relationship between management and organised labour. His observations in this area revealed both appreciation and frustration, reflecting the complex realities of managing one of the most unionised public sector organisations in Kerala.

As the discussion moved towards trade unions, he paused briefly before answering. Throughout the interview, he had spoken extensively about finances, operational reforms, employee morale and organisational revival. The subject of trade unions, however, appeared to require a more careful balance. He was speaking as a senior manager of an organisation where trade unions are not merely stakeholders but an integral part of everyday organisational life.

According to him, it is impossible to understand KSRTC without understanding trade unions.

Many outsiders, he felt, tend to view trade unions only through the lens of strikes, protests and political conflicts. This perception is understandable because such activities receive considerable media attention. Yet it captures only a small part of the reality. Inside the organisation, unions are involved in numerous aspects of day-to-day functioning. They influence employee morale, communication channels, dispute resolution, policy acceptance and organisational culture.

He admitted that the relationship between management and trade unions has not always been easy. There have been disagreements. There have been confrontations. There have been periods

of mistrust. There have been occasions when management and unions viewed the same issue from completely different perspectives. At the same time, he felt that reducing the relationship to conflict alone would be inaccurate.

According to him, much of the revival process would have been impossible without some degree of cooperation between management and organised labour. This observation was particularly significant because it contrasted with popular narratives that often portray unions as obstacles to reform. He did not deny that resistance exists. In fact, he openly acknowledged it.

According to him, any organisation attempting significant changes will inevitably encounter resistance. Employees naturally worry about how reforms may affect them. Trade unions exist precisely because employees require collective representation when such concerns arise.

From his perspective, resistance itself is not necessarily a problem. The real issue is how that resistance is managed. He explained that management sometimes interprets resistance as opposition. Employees sometimes interpret change as threat. Neither interpretation is always correct. In many cases, disagreement simply reflects different viewpoints regarding the same issue. The challenge is creating a space where those viewpoints can be discussed constructively.

Throughout the conversation, he repeatedly returned to the importance of dialogue. According to him, one of the most valuable functions performed by trade unions is communication. Large organisations often suffer from information gaps. Policies developed at higher levels may be understood differently at the operational level. Employee concerns may not always reach decision-makers directly. Trade unions frequently act as intermediaries within this process. They communicate management decisions to employees. They communicate employee concerns to management. Without such channels, misunderstandings can grow rapidly.

He acknowledged that the process is not always smooth. Messages sometimes become distorted. Emotions sometimes complicate discussions. Political affiliations sometimes influence organisational conversations. Even so, he believed that structured communication remains preferable to silence.

One of the more revealing aspects of his response concerned the changing nature of trade unionism within KSRTC. According to him, the trade union culture of today is significantly different from that of previous decades. He was careful not to romanticise the past. Nor did he condemn it entirely. That seemed interesting.

Rather, he viewed the change as a reflection of broader transformations taking place within society. Employees are different. Public expectations are different. Technology is different. Organisations are different. Trade unions have evolved alongside these changes.

In his view, contemporary trade union leaders increasingly recognise that organisational survival must remain a priority. The old assumption that employee interests and organisational interests are separate has become increasingly difficult to sustain. If the organisation declines, employees suffer. If the organisation improves, employees benefit. This relationship appears obvious.

According to him, however, it has become much more widely accepted during recent years. The crisis itself contributed to this realisation. When financial pressures intensified, everyone associated with the organisation was forced to confront the same question: How can KSRTC survive?

This question created a degree of common purpose that may not have existed previously. Management wanted survival. Employees wanted survival. Trade unions wanted survival. The methods proposed by each group often differed. The objective, however, was increasingly shared. He felt that this represented one of the most important cultural changes within the organisation.

The discussion then shifted towards collective bargaining. Here his response revealed a practical managerial perspective. According to him, collective bargaining is often misunderstood by the public. Many people assume that it consists merely of demands and concessions. In reality, it involves continuous negotiation between competing realities. Employees seek security, welfare and fair treatment. Management seeks sustainability, efficiency and operational flexibility. Neither side can completely ignore the concerns of the other. Successful bargaining therefore requires compromise.

He reflected on several instances where management proposals initially faced resistance but later gained acceptance through discussion. Similarly, there were occasions when employee concerns initially appeared difficult to accommodate but were eventually addressed through negotiation. According to him, these outcomes are possible only when both sides remain willing to engage with each other.

He repeatedly emphasised the importance of trust. Without trust, every proposal becomes suspicious. Without trust, every reform becomes controversial. Without trust, even beneficial initiatives encounter resistance.

The respondent believed that rebuilding trust has been one of the less visible achievements of the revival period. He did not claim that trust is complete. Nor did he suggest that disagreements have disappeared. What he observed was a gradual improvement in the quality of engagement between management and employees. This improvement, according to him, has had a direct impact on employee attitude. Employees who feel heard behave differently from employees who feel ignored. Employees who believe management is acting in good faith respond differently from employees who believe decisions are arbitrary. Consequently, labour relations and employee attitude cannot be separated. One influences the other continuously.

At this point in the discussion, he reflected upon a criticism often directed at trade unions. Some commentators argue that unions slow down reform. Others claim that they protect inefficiency. He acknowledged that such perceptions exist. At the same time, he felt that the reality is far more nuanced. Trade unions occasionally raise concerns that later prove valid. Employees often identify practical challenges that planners overlook. Questions raised by organised labour can sometimes improve policy implementation.

From his perspective, the objective should not be eliminating criticism. The objective should be using criticism constructively. This observation was consistent with a broader theme running throughout the interview. He repeatedly emphasised participation over imposition.

Whether discussing employee attitude, organisational culture or labour relations, he appeared convinced that sustainable change emerges through involvement rather than enforcement. The discussion then moved towards employee commitment. According to him, one of the most encouraging developments during recent years has been the growing willingness of employees to look beyond narrow organisational boundaries. Workers increasingly discuss issues such as passenger satisfaction, route profitability and service quality. These topics were once viewed primarily as management concerns.

Today, according to him, employees engage with them more actively. This shift is important because it reflects a change in perspective. Employees are beginning to think not only as workers but also as stakeholders. He believed that trade unions have contributed to this transition. While disagreements continue, many union leaders now recognise that protecting employee interests requires protecting the institution itself. This does not eliminate conflict. It

does, however, change the nature of conflict. Disputes become more focused on finding workable solutions rather than simply opposing management initiatives. According to him, this transformation remains incomplete but clearly visible.

Towards the end of this section, he returned once again to the central theme of the research: employee attitude. He argued that attitudes do not change because management instructs people to behave differently. He expressed: “see, attitudes change when people experience different realities. Timely salary payment changes attitudes. Improved communication changes attitudes. Participation in decision-making changes attitudes. Recognition changes attitudes. A sense of organisational purpose changes attitudes. Trade unions, management and employees all play a role in creating these conditions.”

For this reason, he viewed employee attitude not as an isolated characteristic of individuals but as a reflection of the organisational environment itself.

As the interview moved towards its concluding phase, the discussion gradually shifted from the story of revival to the question of sustainability. He appeared less interested in celebrating achievements than in examining whether the present momentum could be maintained in the years ahead. According to him, organisational revival is often misunderstood as a destination. In reality, it is a continuous process. Reaching a better position is one challenge. Remaining there is often an even greater challenge.

He explained that KSRTC has experienced several periods in its history when optimism was visible. New buses were introduced. Financial assistance was provided. Administrative reforms were attempted. Public confidence improved temporarily. Yet many of those gains eventually weakened because the underlying systems were not strengthened sufficiently.

According to him, the present phase must be different. The organisation cannot afford to repeat old cycles. Temporary improvement is not enough. What is required is a culture capable of sustaining improvement. Throughout this discussion, he repeatedly returned to one factor that he considered essential for long-term sustainability: employee attitude.

In his view, buses can be purchased. Technology can be upgraded. Infrastructure can be modernised. Administrative reforms can be introduced. None of these measures will produce lasting results unless employees continue supporting the process.

He reflected on the fact that every organisational initiative ultimately reaches the public through employees. Passengers do not interact with policy documents. Passengers do not

interact with financial statements. Passengers interact with drivers. Passengers interact with conductors. Passengers interact with station staff. Consequently, the success or failure of revival is often determined at the frontline level. According to him, this reality makes employee attitude one of the most important assets possessed by the organisation. The discussion then turned towards public trust.

Here his observations were particularly interesting. According to him, KSRTC enjoys a unique position within Kerala society. Few public institutions evoke the same level of emotional attachment. Generations have travelled in KSRTC buses. Students have depended upon them. Workers have depended upon them. Patients have depended upon them. Entire communities have remained connected because KSRTC continued operating services where commercial viability alone would never justify operations.

This historical relationship, according to him, creates both an advantage and a responsibility. The advantage lies in public affection. Even during periods of severe crisis, people continued caring about KSRTC. The responsibility lies in meeting the expectations that accompany such affection.

He believed that public trust is closely connected to employee behaviour. Passengers form opinions about the organisation through their everyday experiences. A courteous interaction strengthens confidence. A helpful gesture strengthens confidence. Reliable service strengthens confidence.

Similarly, negative experiences can quickly damage public perception. For this reason, he felt that improving employee attitude is not merely an internal management objective. It is also a public relations strategy. Every positive interaction contributes to rebuilding trust. Every satisfied passenger becomes an ambassador for the organisation. This connection between employee behaviour and public confidence appeared central to his understanding of revival.

At one stage of the discussion, he reflected upon the increasing visibility of employee conduct in the digital era. According to him, social media has fundamentally changed the relationship between organisations and the public. Earlier, passenger experiences remained largely personal. Today, a single interaction can reach thousands of people within minutes. Positive experiences are shared. Negative experiences are shared. Employees therefore operate within an environment of constant visibility.

He viewed this development as both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is obvious. Mistakes become public quickly. The opportunity, however, is equally significant. Good work can also become visible. Acts of kindness can be recognised. Professional behaviour can be appreciated.

According to him, many employees have become increasingly aware of this reality. This awareness itself has contributed to attitudinal change. Employees understand that every interaction influences the image of the organisation.

He then spoke about leadership. Interestingly, he did not restrict leadership to senior officers. According to him, leadership exists at multiple levels within the organisation. A driver can display leadership. A conductor can display leadership. A station master can display leadership. A depot manager can display leadership. Whenever an employee takes responsibility beyond the minimum required level, leadership is being demonstrated.

He felt that the future of KSRTC depends upon encouraging this broader understanding of leadership. Organisations become stronger when responsibility is distributed. Employees should not wait for instructions regarding every issue. They should feel empowered to solve problems, assist passengers and contribute ideas.

This approach, according to him, strengthens organisational ownership. Ownership, once again, emerged as a recurring theme. Throughout the interview, he consistently associated positive employee attitude with a sense of ownership. Workers who view themselves merely as wage earners behave differently from workers who feel personally invested in organisational success. The revival process, according to him, has gradually strengthened this sense of investment. Employees increasingly discuss organisational performance. Employees increasingly monitor public reactions. Employees increasingly participate in discussions regarding improvement. He interpreted these developments as evidence that organisational ownership is becoming part of the culture.

The conversation then moved towards future challenges. Although he remained optimistic, he did not suggest that all problems had been solved. Financial pressures continue. Fleet modernisation remains necessary. Recruitment challenges remain unresolved. Infrastructure improvements remain incomplete. Passenger expectations continue rising. Competition remains intense. According to him, these realities require continuous adaptation.

One particularly revealing observation concerned the next generation of employees. He felt that the future workforce would be different from previous generations. Technology will play a larger role. Passenger expectations will be more demanding. Service standards will continue evolving. Consequently, employee development will become increasingly important.

Training, according to him, must extend beyond technical competence. Behavioural development is equally important. Communication skills are important. Customer relations are important. Professional conduct is important. The future success of KSRTC, he believed, will depend upon investing in these areas.

At this point, he reflected on an issue that had surfaced repeatedly throughout the interview: organisational pride. According to him, employees perform best when they feel proud of the institution they represent. The revival process has gradually restored some of that pride.

Employees now see examples of progress. They see revenue initiatives succeeding. They see salary stability improving. They see public appreciation increasing. These developments create confidence. Confidence strengthens organisational identity. The respondent believed that maintaining this positive cycle should remain a priority.

Towards the end of the interview, he was asked whether he believed KSRTC could fully recover from its long history of crisis. His response reflected cautious optimism. He did not predict miracles. He did not claim that revival was complete. Instead, he argued that the organisation is moving in the right direction.

The most important change, in his view, is that people have started believing again. Management believes improvement is possible. Employees believe improvement is possible. Passengers increasingly believe improvement is possible. According to him, this collective belief is itself a powerful resource. Organisations often decline when hope disappears. They begin recovering when hope returns.

Throughout the interview, he repeatedly linked hope to employee attitude. Hope encourages participation. Participation encourages ownership. Ownership improves behaviour. Improved behaviour strengthens public trust. Public trust supports organisational growth. This cycle, according to him, explains much of what is presently happening within KSRTC.

He then offered a reflection that seemed to capture the essence of his perspective. The story of KSRTC, he felt, should not be viewed merely as a story of financial crisis or administrative reform. It is also a story about people. Employees, passengers, trade unions, managers and

policymakers have all played a role in shaping the organisation's journey. The future of the corporation will depend not only on policies and resources but also on the attitudes, commitment and collective efforts of those who continue to believe in its relevance.

From his perspective, revival is therefore not simply an organisational outcome. It is a human process. The most enduring reforms are those that change the way people think about the institution they serve. In KSRTC, he believed that such a change has already begun. The challenge now is to nurture it, strengthen it and ensure that it becomes a permanent part of the organisational culture.

According to him, people often discuss revival in terms of buses, finances and infrastructure. These aspects are certainly important and cannot be ignored. However, he felt that organisations are ultimately shaped by people rather than machines. Buses can be purchased. Buildings can be constructed. Software systems can be installed. Yet the effectiveness of all these investments depends upon the people who operate them. For this reason, he repeatedly returned to the idea that human resource development must occupy a central place in the future strategy of KSRTC.

He believed that one of the lessons learned from the crisis period is that employee welfare and organisational welfare cannot be treated as separate matters. During difficult years, the corporation understandably focused on survival. Much of the administrative energy was devoted towards ensuring continuity of services, managing liabilities and maintaining operational stability. While such priorities were necessary, they also meant that several aspects of human resource development did not receive the attention they deserved.

According to him, the future phase of revival should focus not only on financial recovery but also on investing in people. His words were: “*janatthe viswaasatthil edukkanam*”

He reflected on the fact that many KSRTC employees enter service with considerable technical competence. Drivers are trained to operate vehicles safely. Conductors understand ticketing procedures and passenger management. Mechanical employees possess specialised technical skills. Yet the demands placed upon public transport employees have changed significantly over time.

Passengers today expect more than transportation. They expect communication. They expect information. They expect professionalism. They expect empathy. They expect assistance. Meeting these expectations requires skills that extend beyond technical competence. He

therefore believed that behavioural training should become an integral part of employee development within KSRTC.

Throughout the discussion, he repeatedly referred to the importance of communication. According to him, a large percentage of passenger complaints do not arise because of major operational failures. They arise because of poor communication. A delay may be unavoidable. A route diversion may be unavoidable. A mechanical issue may be unavoidable. What passengers often find difficult to accept is a lack of information or an unfriendly response.

In his view, employees who communicate respectfully and clearly are often able to prevent minor inconveniences from becoming major complaints. For this reason, he felt that future training programmes should place greater emphasis on passenger relations, conflict management, communication skills and service orientation.

He was also of the opinion that training should not be treated as a one-time event. Organisations evolve. Technology evolves. Passenger expectations evolve. Consequently, employees require continuous opportunities for learning and development.

According to him, refresher programmes should become more common. Employees should be exposed to best practices from other transport corporations. They should have opportunities to learn from successful public transport systems operating elsewhere in India. The organisation should also strengthen partnerships with educational institutions and management schools so that contemporary ideas can be integrated into operational practice.

The conversation then moved towards one of the most interesting topics of the interview: women employees in KSRTC. According to him, the increasing participation of women represents one of the most significant organisational developments of recent decades.

In his own words: *“ippo otthiri pennungalokke jolikk varunnund. Appo ee chadikkadikkal okke kuranju...”*

He recalled that public transport was once widely perceived as a predominantly male domain. Drivers, conductors, inspectors and operational staff were overwhelmingly men. Over time, however, this situation began to change. Women entered the organisation in greater numbers. Women assumed operational responsibilities. Women entered supervisory and administrative positions. Women became visible in areas that had previously been considered inaccessible.

According to him, this transformation has had effects extending far beyond numerical representation. He believed that the presence of women employees has contributed positively to organisational culture. Workplace interactions have become more professional. Standards of behaviour have improved. Communication has become more respectful. The organisational environment has become more inclusive. These developments, according to him, benefit both employees and passengers.

He also noted that many passengers respond positively to women employees. He said: “Women conductors often receive appreciation for their communication skills and patience while interacting with passengers.”

Women officers have demonstrated strong leadership abilities in administrative roles. The growing visibility of women within KSRTC has helped challenge traditional assumptions regarding gender roles in public transport employment.

There were no questions on it, but he carried forward the aspect of social media and its influence. According to him, social media has become a powerful force influencing both organisational image and employee morale. Negative incidents receive immediate attention. Videos circulate rapidly. Public criticism spreads quickly. This creates challenges. At the same time, social media also provides opportunities. Positive stories can be highlighted. Employee achievements can be recognised. Passenger appreciation can be amplified.

According to him, many KSRTC employees derive considerable encouragement from seeing positive feedback shared online. Pages dedicated to KSRTC, enthusiast groups and public appreciation posts often create a sense of pride among employees. He believed that management should make greater use of such platforms to celebrate positive contributions and strengthen organisational identity.

Towards the conclusion of the discussion, he reflected on the future workforce of KSRTC. According to him, the organisation must eventually address the issue of recruitment more aggressively. A new generation of employees will be required to sustain long-term growth. Fresh recruitment brings new energy, new skills and new perspectives.

At the same time, institutional knowledge possessed by senior employees must be preserved and transmitted. The challenge lies in combining experience with innovation. He believed that mentoring systems could play an important role in achieving this balance.

According to him, the future of KSRTC will depend not only on policy decisions but also on the attitudes with which employees approach their responsibilities. Employees who believe in the organisation behave differently from employees who do not. Employees who feel valued contribute differently from employees who feel neglected. Employees who view themselves as stakeholders respond differently from employees who view themselves merely as workers.

For this reason, he believed that the revival of KSRTC should ultimately be understood as both an organisational and a human process. Financial reforms may initiate change. Administrative reforms may support change. Yet lasting transformation occurs only when people themselves embrace the process.

In his view, the most encouraging sign visible today is that many employees have already begun doing exactly that. The revival of KSRTC, therefore, is not merely reflected in improved financial indicators or new operational initiatives. It is reflected in a growing sense of ownership, commitment and belief among the people who continue to keep the organisation moving every day.

4.9 Field Observation Narrative 1 - KSRTC Fast Passenger – RSC 298 (Kattakkada Depot)

As part of the fieldwork for this study on employee attitudes in the revival of KSRTC, an observational exercise was conducted by travelling on a Fast Passenger service (RSC 298) operated by the Kattakkada depot. The journey began from Thampanoor bus stand and continued up to Kattakkada. The purpose of the observation was to understand the everyday behaviour, interactions and attitudes of frontline KSRTC employees, particularly the driver and conductor, during routine service operations.

Before departure, a group of passengers approached the bus asking about the timing of the service. The conductor, a woman employee, informed them that an ordinary service would depart shortly and that the fare for that service would be lower compared to the Fast Passenger bus. She explained this voluntarily, even though the passengers were already near her bus.

This interaction was noteworthy because it reflected service transparency and passenger-oriented behaviour. Instead of prioritizing ticket collection for her own bus, the conductor guided passengers toward an option that might be economically better for them. Such behaviour indicates an attitude of public service responsibility, which contradicts the stereotype that KSRTC employees are indifferent to passenger concerns.

During the waiting time at the bus stand, the driver was also actively responding to passenger queries. Several passengers asked him about routes and connecting buses. In particular, a group of tourists inquired about how to travel to Ponmudi, a hill station located outside the main city route network. The driver patiently explained the travel route, suggesting which buses they should board and where they would need to change buses.

The driver's willingness to respond to queries, despite these questions not being directly related to his scheduled route, reflected a helpful and approachable attitude. This interaction suggested that frontline employees often act as informal information providers within the public transport system.

At approximately 10:46 AM, another KSRTC Fast Passenger bound for Vellarada through Kattakkada departed from the bus stand. Observing this, the driver turned to the conductor and suggested waiting for approximately five minutes before departing. He reasoned that if their bus left immediately behind the Vellarada service, they would likely receive fewer passengers.

This small operational decision reflects an awareness of passenger flow and revenue considerations. Rather than mechanically following departure schedules, the driver appeared to be making a situational judgement to ensure better passenger occupancy. Such behaviour demonstrates a sense of operational commitment and practical understanding of service dynamics.

During the journey, the bus began producing a noticeable shivering sound. The driver immediately called the conductor and pointed out the issue, asking her to report it to the mechanic once the bus reached the depot. This exchange was brief but important.

It indicated the driver's attentiveness to vehicle condition and safety, as well as his awareness of maintenance procedures. Instead of ignoring the issue or postponing responsibility, he proactively instructed the conductor to ensure that the problem would be addressed at the depot.

At Peyad bus stop, an elderly woman attempted to board the bus slowly. The driver and conductor both waited patiently without showing signs of impatience. After she boarded, the conductor ensured that the passenger was seated properly before signalling the driver to resume the journey.

This incident illustrated a human-centered service approach. The brief pause ensured passenger safety and comfort, demonstrating attentiveness to vulnerable passengers. Such actions reflect an employee attitude that values care and patience in public service delivery.

I seated at seat number 51, right opposite to the driver, during the journey and I could briefly interact with the driver and raised some informal questions related to employee wellbeing and work experience, drawing inspiration from the semi-structured interview guide prepared for this research.

When asked what contributes most to employee wellbeing, the driver responded that receiving salary on time is the most important factor for employee happiness. According to him, irregular salary payments in the past had created stress and dissatisfaction among employees. He suggested that timely payment of wages significantly improves morale and motivation among workers.

This response indicates that economic stability plays a central role in shaping employee attitudes within KSRTC. For many frontline employees, organizational commitment and job satisfaction appear to be closely tied to financial security.

During the journey, I also had a brief conversation with a co-passenger who travels frequently on KSRTC buses for daily commuting. When asked whether he had noticed any changes in the behaviour of KSRTC employees in recent years, he responded positively. According to him:

“Earlier people used to complain that KSRTC staff were rude or careless. But nowadays I feel they are more disciplined, but not everyone. The buses start on time more often and the staff behave more politely with passengers, comparatively.”

He also mentioned that public perception of KSRTC employees seems to be gradually improving. In his opinion, increased monitoring and financial pressure on the organization may have contributed to this behavioural change.

This conversation provided a passenger perspective on the perceived transformation in employee attitudes, complementing the observations made during the journey.

The observations from this journey highlight several behavioural indicators of employee attitudes within KSRTC. These include helpfulness toward passengers, attentiveness to operational efficiency, concern for vehicle maintenance and patience toward vulnerable passengers. The informal interaction with the driver further emphasized the importance of salary stability in shaping employee morale.

Together, these observations suggest that frontline employees play a significant role in shaping the everyday functioning and public perception of KSRTC services. Even small interactions

between employees and passengers contribute to the broader narrative of organizational renewal.

4.10 Field Observation Narrative 2 - Thambanoor Bus Stand

The non participant observation was conducted during the evening operational peak at the central bus terminal of KSRTC in Thiruvananthapuram. The station was busy with passengers traveling to multiple districts including Kottayam, Ernakulam, Palakkad, Kozhikode, Kannur and inter-state destinations such as Madurai, Mysuru and Bengaluru.

The bus station functioned as a dynamic environment where employees - drivers, conductors, mechanics and station officials - interacted continuously with passengers. The setting provided an opportunity to observe employee behaviour, accountability, communication with passengers and informal interactions among the workforce.

The observations were particularly useful in understanding how employee attitudes manifest in everyday operational settings, which directly relates to the research question on the role of employee attitudes in KSRTC's transition from crisis toward organizational renewal.

The bus stand maintained a high level of movement during the observation period. Several long-distance buses were preparing for departure. The public announcement system frequently informed passengers about scheduled departures, platform changes and arrivals.

The enquiry counters and station master's office were also actively handling passenger queries, complaints and travel clarifications. The paid AC waiting hall seemed to have attracted many commuters as it was fully occupied. This must have attracted a good number of train travellers to KSRTC.

Despite the crowd and operational pressures, many staff members demonstrated calmness and patience while interacting with passengers, indicating a possible shift toward service-oriented behaviour.

During the observation period, a Minnal service bus scheduled to travel to Mananthavady was parked at the platform preparing for departure. The driver and conductor were seen calling out destinations loudly:

“Kottayam... Kottayam... Fast service till Kottayam... seats available!”

Their calls were directed toward passengers entering the fast passenger services towards Kottayam. After several announcements, the conductor briefly spoke to the driver. From their

conversation it was understood that several seats remained vacant up to Kottayam, even though the bus would continue beyond that destination. The conductor remarked that if passengers could be boarded until Kottayam, it would increase occupancy. They then actively invited passengers heading toward Kottayam and Kottarakkara.

This behaviour indicated an economic awareness among the crew regarding route profitability and seat utilization. Rather than passively waiting for passengers, the crew demonstrated initiative to maximize operational efficiency.

This observation suggests a shift in work attitude toward productivity and revenue consciousness, which may be linked to organizational pressures for financial sustainability during KSRTC's revival phase.

At a point, a passenger approached the station master's office visibly concerned. He explained that he had an online reservation for a bus, but the bus had already departed before he arrived at the terminal. He stated that he had a confirmed ticket and expected the conductor to call him before departure, but did not receive any phone call. To support his claim, the passenger showed the call history on his mobile phone, indicating that he had not received any calls.

The station master calmly listened and then contacted the bus conductor through phone. The conductor responded that he had attempted to call the passenger multiple times, but the calls were not reachable. A brief discussion followed between the station master and the conductor. The station master carefully examined the situation and asked the passenger about his destination and details of travel. After assessing the situation, he arranged for the passenger to board another bus heading toward the same destination.

The station master handled the situation with professional patience and fairness, balancing both the employee's explanation and the passenger's complaint.

This incident highlighted the importance of accountability in customer service, the role of supervisory staff in resolving disputes and efforts to maintain organizational reputation and passenger satisfaction. Such behaviour reflects institutional attempts to improve service quality, which may be linked to the broader revival efforts of KSRTC.

The public announcement system was observed to be active throughout the two-hour period. Announcements were made regularly informing passengers about bus departures, platform changes, arrival of long-distance services especially Deluxe and Minnal services and special

night services. The announcements were clear and repeated several times to ensure passengers could hear them across the busy terminal.

At one point, a group of passengers appeared confused regarding the platform of a bus to Kozhikode. The announcer repeated the platform information twice after receiving a request from the enquiry counter. Passengers were seen approaching the enquiry counter, where the staff patiently explained routes and schedules. In one case, an elderly passenger asked multiple questions regarding buses to Thrissur. The staff member calmly explained the available services and waiting time.

The functioning of the announcement and enquiry system suggested organizational effort to improve passenger guidance and communication, which plays a role in rebuilding public confidence in KSRTC.

Not all interactions reflected positive behaviour. A middle-aged passenger approached a conductor standing near a parked bus and asked:

“Where can I get the bus to Madurai?”

Instead of explaining, the conductor responded briefly:

“Ask at the enquiry counter.”

The passenger appeared confused and moved away.

However, another crew member standing nearby noticed the situation and intervened. He explained to the passenger that there is no straight bus to Madurai and a Thenkashi bound bus would depart from a different platform from where he can get a Madurai bus and directed him accordingly.

This interaction revealed variation in employee attitudes within the same organization. While some staff demonstrated helpfulness, others appeared less responsive. Such contrasts highlight the complex nature of attitudinal transformation in large public organizations.

Another observation involved a Deluxe bus preparing to depart toward Thalassery. The conductor was checking passenger tickets while the driver inspected the vehicle. At the same time, a mechanic approached the bus to inspect a minor lighting issue reported earlier. The crew and mechanic cooperated quickly to address the issue before departure.

This collaborative behaviour demonstrated coordination between operational staff, indicating a functioning system of informal teamwork.

Several broader behavioural patterns were noticed during the observation period. Many employees appeared focused on maintaining schedule discipline. Crew members frequently communicated with passengers regarding routes and boarding. Supervisory staff such as the station master were involved in conflict resolution and passenger assistance. Some employees demonstrated economic awareness, such as attempting to fill vacant seats. However, a small number of interactions showed remnants of bureaucratic or indifferent attitudes.

The observation provided preliminary insights related to some of the research questions. Employees demonstrated initiative and revenue consciousness, indicating potential attitudinal shifts. Supervisory staff played an important role in maintaining service quality and accountability. Employee attitudes were not uniform, suggesting ongoing cultural transition within the organization. Passenger interactions reflected the importance of public perception in shaping organizational reputation.

The field observation at Thambanoor Bus Stand revealed a complex mix of behaviours among employees of Kerala State Road Transport Corporation. While some employees demonstrated service orientation, cooperation and productivity awareness, others showed more traditional bureaucratic attitudes. The coexistence of these behaviours suggests that KSRTC may currently be undergoing a gradual cultural transition in employee attitudes. These observations support the broader research inquiry into how employee attitudes influence the organizational revival of KSRTC during its transition from crisis to renewal.

4.11 Document Analysis

The qualitative document analysis undertaken in this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the crisis and revival trajectory of the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC). By examining policy documents, media narratives, trade union communications and institutional records, the study situates employee attitudes within a broader structural and socio-political context. This triangulated approach allows for a deeper evaluation of how organizational revival is not merely a managerial outcome but a product of interacting forces involving policy direction, employee behaviour and stakeholder engagement.

4.11.1 The Nature of Crisis: Insights from the Khanna Report

The Sushil Khanna Committee Report (2019) presents a detailed diagnosis of KSRTC's systemic crisis. The report identifies the crisis as fundamentally financial, structural and managerial in nature. KSRTC is described as being in a "grave financial crisis," marked by recurring losses, increasing debt burdens and an inability to meet essential operational expenses such as salaries and fuel costs.

The financial data presented in the report indicates a steady escalation of losses over the years, reflecting not a temporary downturn but a deeply entrenched structural problem. However, the report does not attribute the crisis solely to financial mismanagement. Instead, it points toward a combination of factors, including weak operational planning, inefficient human resource practices and the absence of a professional governance structure.

A critical observation in the report is the lack of a professional board and weak management systems, which limited strategic direction and accountability. This aligns with interview findings where employees expressed concerns regarding the disconnect between policy-level decisions and ground-level realities.

4.11.2 Policy Recommendations: A Blueprint for Revival

The Khanna Report proposes a comprehensive turnaround strategy encompassing financial restructuring, operational efficiency and human resource reform. Key recommendations include: route rationalization based on revenue potential, implementation of single-duty systems, improvement in asset utilization and workshop efficiency, strengthening of management information systems, professionalization of governance through an expert board.

The report also emphasizes the need for holistic cultural transformation, suggesting that operational efficiency cannot be achieved without changes in work culture and employee engagement.

This is particularly significant for the present study, as it directly connects with the research question concerning employee attitudes and their role in organizational revival.

4.11.3 Extent of Implementation: Partial and Uneven Progress

A comparative analysis of policy recommendations and subsequent developments indicates that several reforms suggested by the Khanna Committee have been partially implemented.

The report itself notes that certain measures - such as the introduction of single-duty patterns, reduction of multiple duty schedules and improvements in workshop management—were initiated and yielded measurable improvements in operational efficiency and daily revenue collection.

However, these efforts are described as “half-hearted and uncoordinated”, lacking a cohesive long-term strategy. The absence of continuity in leadership, frequent changes in top management and weak institutional mechanisms limited the effectiveness of these reforms.

This finding resonates strongly with interview narratives, where employees acknowledged improvements in work culture but simultaneously pointed out inconsistencies in implementation and lack of strategic clarity.

4.11.4 Gaps Between Policy and Practice

One of the most significant findings of the document analysis is the persistent gap between policy recommendations and ground-level execution.

While the Khanna Report provides a clear roadmap for restructuring, several critical recommendations remain either partially implemented or entirely unaddressed. These include: Establishment of a professional and autonomous governance structure, comprehensive HR reforms and modernization, integration of data-driven decision-making systems and strengthening of managerial accountability.

The reasons for these gaps are multifaceted. Administrative inertia, financial constraints and institutional resistance have all contributed to the slow pace of reform. Moreover, the public sector nature of KSRTC introduces additional complexities, including political interventions and social obligations, which often conflict with efficiency-driven reforms.

4.11.5 Role of Trade Unions: From Resistance to Cooperation

Trade union newsletters and bulletins provide valuable insights into the evolving role of unions in KSRTC’s transformation. Historically, trade unions in KSRTC have been associated with militant forms of activism, including strikes and resistance to management decisions.

However, recent documents and narratives indicate a significant shift in union attitudes. There is growing recognition among unions that the survival of the organization is a prerequisite for the protection of employee interests. This has led to increased cooperation among unions and a willingness to engage constructively with management.

At the same time, unions continue to play a critical role in mediating reforms. Certain policy measures, particularly those related to duty restructuring and labor practices, have encountered resistance due to concerns over job security and working conditions. This dual role - both as facilitators and constraints - highlights the complex influence of trade unions in the revival process.

4.11.6 Media Discourse: Public Perception and Accountability

The analysis of newspaper reports over the past five years reveals a dynamic shift in public discourse surrounding KSRTC. Earlier narratives largely focused on inefficiency, financial losses and employee-related issues, often attributing the crisis to trade unions and workforce behaviour.

However, more recent media coverage reflects a more nuanced understanding. There is increasing recognition of government financial support, structural challenges faced by the organization and positive changes in employee behaviour and service delivery.

At the same time, media reports continue to highlight issues such as service delays, operational inefficiencies and policy controversies. This dual narrative creates a context in which employees are both scrutinized and appreciated, influencing their attitudes and performance.

4.11.7 Digital Media Discourses and Public Engagement

The emergence of social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Instagram, has created a dynamic digital space where narratives surrounding the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) are continuously constructed, contested and circulated. Unlike traditional media, which operates through formal editorial structures, social media enables real-time, user-generated engagement. Having read and being part of the several large Facebook groups and Instagram pages dedicated to KSRTC - often managed by enthusiasts, employees and supporters – I can say that they actively share updates, news reports, photographs and videos related to the organization. These platforms function as informal information networks where developments concerning KSRTC's crisis, reforms and daily operations are disseminated rapidly among a wide audience.

A notable feature of these digital communities is their role in curating and amplifying newspaper content. Administrators and members frequently post scanned copies or summaries of news articles from leading Malayalam and English newspapers, making information accessible to a broader audience. This practice effectively transforms social media groups into

secondary archives of media discourse. At the same time, these posts are accompanied by user comments, discussions and debates, which provide insights into public sentiment. Through such interactions, social media extends the life and impact of traditional media narratives, allowing them to be interpreted, challenged, or reinforced by the public.

Importantly, these platforms also influence employee attitudes and behaviour within KSRTC. Employees are increasingly aware that their actions - both positive and negative - can be captured, shared and widely discussed online. Instances of commendable service, such as helping passengers in distress or demonstrating courteous behaviour, often receive significant appreciation on social media, contributing to a positive public image of KSRTC staff. Conversely, negative incidents can quickly attract criticism and scrutiny. This heightened visibility creates a form of informal accountability, encouraging employees to adopt more responsible and service-oriented attitudes. In this sense, social media acts as a regulatory force that complements formal organizational mechanisms.

At a broader level, social media discourse contributes to shaping the narrative of KSRTC's revival. While earlier public perception often attributed the organization's crisis to employees and trade unions, contemporary digital discussions reflect a more nuanced understanding of structural and policy-related challenges. At the same time, these platforms foster a sense of collective ownership among supporters, who actively defend, promote and engage with KSRTC as a public institution. Thus, social media not only reflects public opinion but actively participates in constructing it, playing a significant role in the evolving relationship between the organization, its employees and the society it serves.

4.11.8 Management Efforts and Institutional Constraints

KSRTC's annual reports and institutional documents provide evidence of ongoing efforts by management to implement reforms and improve operational efficiency. Initiatives such as fleet modernization, introduction of new services and attempts at financial restructuring indicate a commitment to organizational revival.

However, these efforts are often constrained by high debt burdens and financial liabilities, limited autonomy in decision-making, frequent leadership change and weak integration between policy and practice.

The Khanna Report itself highlights that even when reforms are initiated, the lack of continuity and coordination undermines their long-term impact.

4.11.9 Employee Attitude and Organizational Revival: A Converging Insight

A key insight emerging from the document analysis is the growing alignment between policy intent and employee behaviour. While policy documents emphasize structural reforms, both media narratives and union communications indicate a noticeable shift in employee attitudes.

Employees are increasingly taking initiative in improving service delivery, adapting to operational changes and demonstrating a sense of responsibility toward organizational survival. This attitudinal shift is not solely a result of policy interventions but is also influenced by factors such as financial stability (timely salary), union guidance and changing public expectations.

The document analysis clearly indicates that the revival of KSRTC is not the result of a single intervention but a multi-dimensional process involving policy reforms, managerial efforts, trade union dynamics and employee attitudes.

While the Khanna Committee Report provides a comprehensive framework for transformation, its implementation remains partial and uneven. The gap between policy and practice continues to be shaped by institutional constraints and stakeholder negotiations.

Social media platforms have emerged as a powerful informal space shaping public narratives around KSRTC, extending and reinterpreting traditional media discourse. They contribute to greater transparency and accountability by influencing both public perception and employee behaviour through continuous visibility and engagement. As such, digital media plays a significant role in supporting the broader process of organizational revival by fostering awareness, participation and collective ownership.

However, the most significant development is the shift in employee and union attitudes, which has created a conducive environment for revival. This transformation, when combined with sustained policy implementation and effective management, holds the potential to move KSRTC from crisis toward renewal.

CHAPTER 5:
ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data collected for the study Employee Attitudes and Organisational Change in Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC). The analysis is based on data obtained through semi-structured interviews with employees, trade union representatives, management personnel, retired employees, passengers and supporters of KSRTC, supplemented by observation and documentary evidence. While the previous chapter presented the narratives and experiences of the participants, the present chapter seeks to identify patterns, meanings and relationships emerging from the data.

The analysis was carried out using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework. Interview transcripts, observation notes and documentary materials were read repeatedly to achieve familiarity with the data. Significant statements and recurring ideas were coded and grouped into categories, which were subsequently organised into sub-themes and broader themes. Through an iterative process of review and refinement, six major themes were developed that explain the relationship between employee attitudes and organisational change within KSRTC.

The study also employed Robert K. Yin's case study approach, particularly the technique of pattern matching. Findings emerging from interviews were compared with observations and documentary evidence to identify converging and diverging perspectives. This process of triangulation enhanced the credibility of the findings and enabled a deeper understanding of how employee attitudes interact with organisational culture, leadership interventions, labour-management relations, service orientation and organisational change.

The thematic analysis resulted in six major themes that collectively explain how employee attitudes have influenced organisational change in KSRTC. These themes are discussed in detail in the following sections.

5.2 Development of Themes from Initial Codes

The initial coding process generated several recurring codes relating to employee behaviour, organisational commitment, financial security, labour relations, passenger service orientation, leadership interventions and organisational culture. These codes were grouped into sub-themes and subsequently developed into broader themes.

5.2.1 Developed Themes

following table shows how themes are developed from initial codes.

Initial Codes	Sub-Themes	Major Themes
Organisational loyalty, ownership mentality, commitment beyond duty, employee initiative, revenue consciousness	Organisational ownership, employee responsibility, commitment to institutional survival	Employee Attitudes as a Driver of Organisational Change
Timely salary payment, financial security, reduced stress, confidence restoration, morale improvement	Psychological security, employee confidence, improved morale	Financial Stability and Employee Confidence
Responsible unionism, cooperation with management, organisational survival consciousness, collective responsibility	Collaborative labour relations, organisational partnership, shared responsibility	Transformation of Labour - Management Relations
Passenger-oriented behaviour, service commitment, improved communication, public image consciousness	Passenger service orientation, public trust, service culture	Passenger-Centred Service Culture and Public Trust
Leadership interventions, monitoring systems, revenue diversification, operational reforms, accountability mechanisms	Strategic leadership, organisational renewal, reform implementation	Leadership, Management Reforms and Organisational Change
Women employee participation, professionalisation, cultural transformation, future workforce development	Gender inclusion, organisational culture, future sustainability	Organisational Culture, Gender Inclusion and the Future of KSRTC

The themes identified above emerged consistently across interviews, observations and documentary evidence. Together they explain the complex relationship between employee attitude and organisational revival within KSRTC.

5.3 Theme One: Employee Attitudes as a Driver of Organisational Change

The most dominant finding emerging from the study is that employee attitude is not merely an outcome of organisational revival but one of its principal drivers. Across interviews conducted with employees, trade union representatives, retired personnel, management representatives, passengers and KSRTC supporters, there was a remarkable degree of agreement that changes in employee attitudes have played a significant role in the corporation's recent improvements.

A recurring pattern observed across the narratives was the emergence of a stronger sense of organisational ownership among employees. Several respondents indicated that workers increasingly view the survival and growth of KSRTC as a personal responsibility rather than a matter exclusively concerning the management. This shift was reflected across different respondent groups and reflects a deeper emotional attachment to the organisation.

One respondent captured this sense of organisational ownership in a particularly powerful manner: “*Annam tharunna sthapanathodulla kooru undakanam. KSRTC nannayal nammalum nannakum.*” The statement reflects the belief that employees and the organisation share a mutually dependent relationship. The respondent viewed organisational well-being not as a separate managerial concern but as something directly connected to the welfare of employees themselves. Such expressions illustrate the emergence of organisational ownership and emotional commitment among employees.

Employees described instances where workers voluntarily undertook responsibilities beyond their formal duties. Examples included assisting passengers, protecting revenue, identifying operational improvements, suggesting route modifications and ensuring service continuity even under difficult circumstances. Such actions indicate a movement from a compliance-based attitude towards a commitment-based attitude. The findings suggest that employees are increasingly motivated by organisational success rather than merely individual job obligations.

The management perspective also reinforced this finding. According to the management respondents, employees have become more conscious of route profitability, passenger satisfaction and service quality. Suggestions for improving operations increasingly originate from frontline staff who possess practical knowledge of routes, passengers and local conditions. Such participation reflects a higher degree of engagement and organisational commitment.

Observational data provided further support for these findings. During field observations, employees were seen actively interacting with passengers, providing information, assisting vulnerable travellers and displaying greater responsiveness than what is commonly associated with traditional bureaucratic service delivery. These observations correspond closely with the narratives provided by both employees and passengers, thereby strengthening the credibility of the finding.

Documentary evidence also supported the emergence of employee ownership. Several reports, media narratives and organisational communications highlighted employee participation in revival initiatives, revenue generation efforts and service improvement measures. The convergence of interview data, observational findings and documentary evidence indicates that organisational ownership has become an important characteristic of the contemporary KSRTC work culture.

The findings suggest that employee attitude functions as a foundational element in the revival process. Organisational reforms can create opportunities for improvement, but their success ultimately depends upon the willingness of employees to support and implement change. In the case of KSRTC, employees increasingly appear to view themselves as active participants in organisational recovery rather than passive recipients of management decisions.

This finding is consistent with organisational behaviour literature which emphasises the importance of employee commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour and psychological ownership in promoting institutional effectiveness. Employees who identify strongly with organisational goals are more likely to contribute discretionary effort, cooperate with change initiatives and support long-term organisational objectives.

The evidence suggests that organisational change within KSRTC cannot be explained solely through financial reforms, administrative interventions or policy initiatives. The findings indicate that employee attitudes have played an important role in supporting and sustaining organisational change. Organisational ownership, commitment beyond formal duty and employee responsibility emerged as important behavioural dimensions influencing workplace practices and service delivery.

The findings are consistent with organisational behaviour literature which emphasises that employees who identify strongly with organisational goals are more likely to support change initiatives, contribute discretionary effort and participate actively in organisational improvement. Within KSRTC, positive employee attitudes appear to have functioned as an

important driver of organisational change by strengthening organisational commitment, service orientation and institutional responsibility.

5.4 Theme Two: Financial Stability and Employee Confidence

One of the strongest themes emerging from the study is the relationship between financial stability and employee attitude. Across almost all stakeholder groups, timely salary payment and improved financial security were repeatedly identified as important factors contributing to the revival of KSRTC. The recurrence of this issue across employees, trade union representatives, retired personnel and management respondents indicates that financial stability has played a significant role in shaping employee attitudes and behaviours during the revival process.

The data suggest that the years of severe financial crisis had a profound impact on employee morale. Delayed salary payments created uncertainty and anxiety among workers. Several respondents explained that employees found it difficult to maintain motivation when they were uncertain about their financial future. Concerns relating to household expenses, children's education, medical needs and loan repayments frequently influenced their psychological well-being. As a result, financial stress often extended beyond personal life and affected workplace attitudes.

The findings indicate that salary delays became symbolic of a larger organisational crisis. Employees did not merely interpret delayed payments as an administrative problem. Instead, many viewed them as evidence of institutional instability. This perception gradually weakened confidence in the organisation and contributed to feelings of insecurity. Several respondents observed that when employees lose confidence in the institution they serve, their enthusiasm, commitment and emotional attachment to the organisation begin to decline.

One employee explained the psychological impact of timely salary payments in simple but powerful terms: “*salary samayatthu kittiyaal thanne oralude pakuthi tension maarum. pinne nannayi duty nokkaallo...*” The statement demonstrates the close relationship between financial security and employee attitudes. The respondent suggests that when financial uncertainty is removed, employees are better able to focus on their responsibilities and perform their duties effectively. The finding indicates that employee confidence and workplace commitment are closely linked to perceptions of economic stability within the organisation.

A major turning point identified throughout the dataset was the introduction of more regular salary payments. Employees consistently described timely salary disbursement as one of the most visible indicators of organisational improvement. Trade union representatives, employees and management respondents all acknowledged the positive psychological impact of salary stability. The findings suggest that regular payment restored a sense of predictability to employees' lives and contributed significantly to rebuilding confidence in the organisation.

The relationship between financial stability and employee attitude was evident in multiple narratives. Employees reported feeling more secure and optimistic about the future. They were able to focus more effectively on their responsibilities without being distracted by immediate financial concerns. According to several respondents, this change contributed to improvements in punctuality, workplace behaviour and overall morale. The findings therefore indicate that financial security created conditions conducive to positive attitudinal change.

Management respondents also highlighted the importance of salary stability in the revival process. According to them, organisational reforms could not have succeeded without first addressing employee confidence. They argued that employees who are uncertain about basic financial security are unlikely to fully support organisational transformation initiatives. Consequently, ensuring regular salary payment became an important strategy not only for employee welfare but also for organisational renewal.

Observation data further support these findings. During field visits, employees generally displayed confidence and engagement while interacting with passengers and colleagues. While such observations cannot be attributed solely to salary stability, they are consistent with interview findings suggesting improved morale and reduced workplace anxiety. The convergence between interview data and observational evidence strengthens the validity of the theme.

Documentary evidence similarly supports this interpretation. Reports and public discussions relating to KSRTC's revival frequently emphasised salary reform and financial restructuring as important milestones in the recovery process. Organisational communications often presented timely salary payment as evidence of administrative improvement and financial discipline. Such documentary findings correspond closely with employee perceptions and management narratives.

An important finding emerging from the analysis is that financial stability influenced employee attitude not merely through economic benefits but also through psychological mechanisms.

Regular salary payments created a sense of trust between employees and the organisation. Trust, in turn, strengthened organisational commitment. Employees who believed that the organisation was capable of meeting its obligations were more willing to support revival initiatives and contribute positively to organisational goals.

The findings also suggest that financial security contributed to the development of organisational ownership. Employees who previously viewed the organisation through a lens of uncertainty increasingly began seeing it as a stable institution with a viable future. This shift in perception appears to have encouraged greater participation in organisational improvement efforts. Workers became more willing to contribute suggestions, support reforms and engage with broader organisational objectives.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings support arguments within organisational behaviour literature that employee attitudes are closely influenced by perceptions of fairness, security and organisational support. Financial stability can function as a foundational condition upon which higher levels of commitment, motivation and organisational citizenship behaviour are built. Employees who feel economically secure are more likely to develop positive attitudes towards their organisation and exhibit behaviours that support institutional effectiveness.

The findings indicate that financial stability plays an important role in shaping employee attitudes and workplace behaviour. Regular salary payments, reduced financial uncertainty and improved economic security contributed to higher levels of confidence, motivation and organisational commitment among employees. Rather than functioning merely as an economic issue, financial stability emerged as an important psychological factor influencing employee morale and work attitudes.

The findings support organisational behaviour theories which emphasise the relationship between employee security and organisational effectiveness. Employees who experience reduced financial stress are more likely to demonstrate commitment, responsibility and positive workplace behaviour. Within KSRTC, financial stability appears to have created conditions that enabled employees to engage more positively with organisational changes and service responsibilities.

Pattern matching across interviews, observations and documentary evidence demonstrates strong consistency regarding the importance of financial security. Different stakeholder groups may have emphasised different aspects of the issue, yet all recognised the role played by salary stability in restoring confidence within the workforce. This convergence suggests that financial

stability represents one of the key mechanisms through which employee attitudes were transformed during the revival process.

The analysis therefore concludes that timely salary payment and financial security served as catalysts for attitudinal change within KSRTC. By reducing uncertainty, strengthening trust and improving morale, financial stability contributed significantly to creating a workforce that was more confident, engaged and supportive of organisational revival initiatives.

5.5 Theme Three: Transformation of Labour - Management Relations

Another significant theme emerging from the analysis is the transformation of labour - management relations within KSRTC. The findings suggest that changes in the relationship between trade unions, employees and management have played an important role in supporting the revival process. While labour - management relations within KSRTC have historically been characterised by conflict, negotiation and competing interests, the data indicate the emergence of a more collaborative approach centred on organisational survival and institutional sustainability.

The interview narratives reveal that respondents from different stakeholder groups recognised the important role played by trade unions in the history of KSRTC. Employees and trade union representatives frequently emphasised that unions had contributed significantly to protecting employee rights, ensuring welfare measures and safeguarding public sector values within the organisation. At the same time, several respondents acknowledged that earlier periods were often characterised by frequent confrontations, adversarial negotiations and ideological conflicts between management and organised labour.

A notable finding emerging from the data is the perception that trade union culture has undergone gradual transformation in recent years. Several respondents observed that contemporary labour relations increasingly reflect a pragmatic approach rather than a purely confrontational one. Trade union leaders themselves acknowledged that the severe financial crisis faced by KSRTC compelled all stakeholders to reconsider traditional approaches towards organisational issues.

A trade union representative explained the importance of organisational survival as a precondition for employee welfare: “*chubarundenkile chithram varakkaanavoo...*” Although brief, the statement conveys a significant organisational reality. The respondent emphasised that employee interests and organisational interests cannot be viewed as separate concerns.

Sustainable employee welfare depends upon the continued functioning and stability of the organisation. The quotation reflects a growing recognition among some stakeholders that labour relations should be guided by partnership and collective responsibility rather than confrontation alone. This phrase emerged repeatedly across trade union narratives, though expressed in different terms and wordings, and reflects a growing recognition that employee welfare and organisational survival are closely interconnected.

The narratives suggest that labour - management relations within KSRTC have gradually shifted from a predominantly adversarial model towards a more collaborative approach. While disagreements and conflicts continue to exist, respondents repeatedly emphasised dialogue, organisational responsibility and shared accountability. Employees, trade union representatives and management personnel increasingly recognised that organisational challenges require collective responses rather than isolated institutional positions.

The findings suggest that this shift in thinking has contributed significantly to changes in labour - management relations. Rather than viewing management and labour as opposing entities, many respondents increasingly described both groups as stakeholders sharing a common interest in ensuring the survival of KSRTC. While disagreements and negotiations continue to occur, the underlying objective of organisational continuity appears to have become a shared concern.

Employees also reflected upon this transformation. Several respondents indicated that workers today demonstrate greater awareness of the financial realities facing the organisation. Discussions relating to route profitability, revenue generation, passenger retention and operational efficiency are no longer viewed solely as management concerns. Employees increasingly recognise that organisational performance has direct implications for their own future security and welfare.

Management respondents similarly acknowledged the changing nature of labour relations. According to them, successful implementation of revival measures required continuous dialogue with employees and trade unions. Rather than relying exclusively on administrative authority, management increasingly engaged in communication, consultation and negotiation. This approach appears to have contributed to greater acceptance of organisational reforms among employees.

Pattern matching across respondent categories reveals remarkable consistency regarding this issue. Trade union leaders emphasised organisational survival. Employees acknowledged the

importance of cooperation. Management respondents highlighted dialogue and consultation. Even retired employees observed that attitudes towards organisational sustainability have become more visible within contemporary labour relations. Such convergence across diverse stakeholders suggests that the transformation is not merely perceived by a single group but reflects a broader organisational reality.

Observational evidence further supports these findings. During field observations, interactions between employees and supervisory personnel generally reflected professional engagement rather than overt hostility. While observations alone cannot fully capture labour relations, they provide supporting evidence for the collaborative atmosphere described by respondents. The absence of visible antagonism and the presence of routine cooperation reinforce the narratives emerging from the interviews.

Documentary evidence also contributes to understanding this theme. Various organisational communications, policy discussions and public statements increasingly emphasise cooperation, institutional survival and collective responsibility. Documentary records relating to revival initiatives frequently highlight employee participation and stakeholder engagement rather than purely managerial directives. Such evidence supports the interpretation that labour–management relations have evolved towards a more collaborative framework.

An important dimension of this transformation concerns the development of organisational trust. The findings indicate that trust plays a central role in shaping employee attitudes towards reform. Employees are more likely to support organisational initiatives when they believe that management is acting in good faith. Similarly, management is more likely to engage constructively with employees when communication channels remain open and functional.

Several respondents noted that timely salary payment, increased transparency and improved communication contributed to rebuilding trust between employees and management. This trust appears to have reduced resistance to certain reforms and encouraged greater willingness to participate in organisational change initiatives. The findings therefore suggest that labour–management relations influence employee attitude through mechanisms of trust, communication and mutual understanding.

Another important finding relates to the changing role of trade unions themselves. Rather than functioning solely as instruments of resistance, unions increasingly appear to act as mediators, communicators and organisational stakeholders. While they continue to advocate for employee interests, many respondents observed that contemporary trade union discourse places greater

emphasis on balancing employee welfare with organisational sustainability. This represents a significant departure from traditional perceptions that often portray labour and management as permanently opposing forces.

The findings are consistent with contemporary theories of industrial relations which argue that cooperative labour–management partnerships can contribute positively to organisational performance. Collaborative approaches encourage information sharing, reduce conflict and facilitate the implementation of change initiatives. Within the context of KSRTC, such cooperation appears to have strengthened the effectiveness of revival measures and contributed to a more positive organisational climate.

The findings demonstrate that labour-management relations constitute an important dimension of organisational change within KSRTC. The evidence suggests that constructive engagement between employees, trade unions and management has contributed to greater organisational stability and improved workplace relationships. Rather than functioning solely as mechanisms of collective bargaining, trade unions increasingly appear to participate in discussions relating to organisational sustainability and institutional effectiveness.

These findings are consistent with industrial relations literature which argues that collaborative labour–management relationships can enhance organisational adaptability, reduce workplace conflict and support organisational change. Within KSRTC, the transformation of labour - management relations appears to have strengthened trust, encouraged dialogue and created a more supportive environment for organisational change initiatives.

5.6 Theme Four: Passenger-Centred Service Culture and Public Trust

The analysis reveals that the revival of KSRTC is not confined to internal organisational changes but is also reflected in the evolving relationship between employees and passengers. A recurring finding across interviews, observations and documentary evidence is the emergence of a more passenger-centred service culture. This shift appears to have strengthened public trust in the organisation and contributed significantly to its revival. The findings suggest that changes in employee attitudes have become visible through everyday interactions between employees and passengers, thereby influencing public perceptions of the corporation.

Passenger narratives provided some of the clearest evidence supporting this theme. Several passengers observed noticeable improvements in employee behaviour when compared to earlier periods. Respondents described instances where employees demonstrated patience,

courtesy and a willingness to assist passengers. Such experiences were frequently contrasted with older perceptions that public transport employees were often indifferent or unapproachable. While respondents acknowledged that isolated negative incidents still occur, the overall perception was that service attitudes have improved considerably in recent years.

One of the most frequently cited examples involved employees making conscious efforts to assist passengers beyond their formal responsibilities. Passengers described situations where conductors helped elderly travellers, guided first-time passengers, provided route information and ensured that vulnerable individuals received necessary assistance. Such actions indicate a service-oriented attitude that extends beyond basic operational duties.

A respondent highlighted a noticeable shift in employee responsiveness towards passenger needs: *“rathri service okke eideyum nirthikkodukkan thudangi. Super class servicilokke yathrakkaran chodhichal ippo mullan okke nirthikkodukkum...”* The statement reflects a practical change in service orientation. The respondent observed that employees are increasingly willing to accommodate passenger needs and demonstrate flexibility in service delivery. Such behavioural changes suggest a growing recognition that passenger satisfaction and public trust are important components of organisational effectiveness.

Several respondents described improvements not only in operational performance but also in the quality of interactions between employees and passengers. Courtesy, responsiveness and willingness to assist passengers were repeatedly identified as indicators of changing workplace attitudes. These behavioural changes contribute to a more passenger-centred service culture and influence public perceptions of the organisation.

Employees themselves acknowledged this transformation. Several respondents explained that passengers are increasingly viewed as stakeholders whose support is essential for the survival and growth of KSRTC. The findings suggest that employees have become more aware of the relationship between passenger satisfaction and organisational sustainability. As a result, many workers consciously attempt to create positive travel experiences in order to attract and retain passengers.

A particularly significant finding emerging from the data is the increasing awareness of competition. Employees recognised that passengers today possess multiple transportation options, including private buses, private vehicles, taxis and app-based mobility services. This competitive environment appears to have influenced employee attitudes towards service

delivery. Several respondents noted that attracting passengers requires more than merely operating buses; it also requires positive interaction, reliability and professionalism.

The findings reveal numerous examples of employees adapting their behaviour in response to these realities. Passengers and employees alike described instances where conductors contacted reserved passengers, drivers waited briefly for approaching passengers and staff made efforts to provide clear information regarding services. While such actions may appear minor in isolation, their cumulative effect contributes significantly to public perception and passenger satisfaction.

Observation data strongly support these findings. During field visits, employees were observed interacting with passengers in a generally courteous and professional manner. Conductors frequently provided travel information, assisted passengers in locating buses and responded to queries with patience. Drivers displayed concern for passenger safety during boarding and alighting. Such observations correspond closely with interview narratives and provide direct evidence of service-oriented behaviour.

The documentary analysis further reinforces this theme. Organisational communications, media reports and public discussions increasingly highlight examples of employee commitment, passenger assistance and service excellence. Several public narratives celebrate employees who have gone beyond their formal responsibilities to assist passengers during emergencies, medical situations and difficult travel conditions. These examples contribute positively to the public image of KSRTC and reinforce perceptions of organisational improvement.

An important aspect of this theme is the relationship between service behaviour and public trust. Trust is a critical resource for any public service institution. Passengers are more likely to choose KSRTC when they perceive the organisation as reliable, safe and responsive. The findings indicate that employee behaviour plays a central role in shaping these perceptions. Positive interactions strengthen trust while negative experiences can quickly undermine public confidence.

The analysis suggests that employee attitudes influence public trust through several mechanisms. Courteous behaviour enhances passenger satisfaction. Helpful interactions create positive emotional experiences. Consistent service delivery strengthens reliability. Together, these factors contribute to a favourable organisational image and encourage continued public support for the corporation.

Several respondents also linked improved passenger relations to organisational pride. Employees who receive appreciation from passengers often experience increased motivation and job satisfaction. Positive feedback reinforces desirable behaviours and encourages employees to maintain high service standards. This creates a mutually reinforcing cycle in which improved employee attitudes lead to better passenger experiences, which in turn strengthen employee morale and organisational commitment.

The management perspective provides additional insight into this relationship. Management respondents emphasised that public trust is essential for the long-term sustainability of KSRTC. According to them, infrastructure improvements and operational reforms alone are insufficient if passengers do not perceive meaningful improvements in service quality. Consequently, employee behaviour becomes a critical factor in determining whether organisational reforms translate into public confidence.

The findings are consistent with service management literature, which highlights the importance of frontline employee behaviour in shaping customer satisfaction and organisational reputation. Public service organisations, in particular, rely heavily on employee interactions to create positive user experiences. Within KSRTC, employees function as the primary interface between the organisation and the public. Their attitudes therefore exert significant influence on public perceptions of the corporation.

Another noteworthy finding relates to the symbolic value of employee behaviour. Passengers often evaluate the entire organisation based on individual interactions with drivers, conductors and station staff. A single positive encounter can enhance perceptions of KSRTC as a whole. Conversely, a negative interaction may create broader doubts regarding service quality. This places considerable importance on employee attitudes within the context of organisational revival.

Pattern matching across interviews, observations and documentary evidence demonstrates strong consistency regarding the emergence of a more passenger-centred service culture. Different stakeholder groups may emphasise different aspects of service behaviour, yet they generally agree that employee attitudes towards passengers have improved. This convergence strengthens confidence in the validity of the finding.

The findings indicate that employee attitudes significantly influence passenger experiences and public trust. Improvements in service behaviour, responsiveness and customer orientation emerged as important indicators of organisational change within KSRTC. Respondents

frequently associated positive employee behaviour with increased public confidence and improved perceptions of the corporation.

The findings support service management literature which emphasises that frontline employees serve as the primary interface between organisations and customers. Within KSRTC, passenger-centred behaviour appears to contribute not only to service quality but also to broader organisational legitimacy and public trust. Employee attitudes therefore play an important role in shaping how organisational change is experienced and perceived by the travelling public.

5.7 Theme Five: Leadership, Management Reforms and Organisational Change

The findings of the study indicate that leadership and management interventions have played a significant role in creating the conditions necessary for the revival of KSRTC. While employee attitudes emerged as a central factor throughout the analysis, the data also suggest that attitudinal transformation did not occur in isolation. Rather, it developed within an organisational environment shaped by leadership decisions, policy interventions and strategic reforms. Interviews, observations and documentary evidence consistently point towards the importance of management initiatives in restoring confidence, improving organisational performance and facilitating positive behavioural change among employees.

A recurring pattern across the dataset is the recognition that organisational revival required visible and credible leadership. Respondents frequently referred to the importance of administrative direction during periods of crisis. Employees, trade union representatives and management respondents alike acknowledged that the revival process required difficult decisions, continuous monitoring and a willingness to introduce reforms despite resistance and uncertainty.

One respondent described the symbolic importance of visible leadership during periods of organisational change: “*manthri, CMD okke munnal ninna paniedukkaan irangi. Ath oru tharangamaayi...*” The respondent perceived leadership not merely as administrative authority but as active participation and visible commitment. Such actions were viewed as motivating employees and creating confidence in organisational initiatives. The statement highlights the role of leadership behaviour in influencing employee attitudes and organisational culture.

Respondents frequently referred to the visibility of senior leadership as an important factor influencing employee morale and organisational commitment. Leadership actions were

interpreted not only as policy decisions but also as symbolic demonstrations of accountability and responsibility. These perceptions appear to have strengthened employee confidence in organisational change initiatives.

One of the most significant management interventions identified throughout the data relates to salary reform and financial stabilisation. As discussed in the previous theme, timely salary payment emerged as a major contributor to employee confidence. However, the findings also indicate that employees interpreted salary stability as evidence of effective leadership. Regular payment demonstrated that management was actively attempting to address long-standing organisational problems. Consequently, salary reform functioned not only as a financial measure but also as a leadership intervention that strengthened trust in the organisation.

The data further suggest that leadership contributed to revival by creating a sense of direction during a period of uncertainty. Several respondents observed that employees became more willing to support organisational initiatives when they perceived a clear strategy for the future. Leadership therefore appears to have influenced employee attitudes through the development of organisational confidence and optimism.

Another important finding concerns the diversification of revenue sources. Management respondents highlighted the need to move beyond traditional dependence on passenger revenue and explore alternative income streams. Documentary evidence similarly emphasised initiatives such as budget tourism, logistics services, advertising activities, commercial utilisation of assets and fuel-related ventures. These initiatives emerged repeatedly throughout the dataset as examples of organisational innovation.

The significance of these initiatives extends beyond their direct financial contributions. The findings indicate that employees interpreted revenue diversification as evidence that the organisation was actively seeking solutions rather than merely reacting to crises. Such initiatives generated optimism and strengthened perceptions that KSRTC remained capable of adapting to changing economic conditions. Employees increasingly viewed the corporation as an organisation willing to innovate and pursue growth opportunities.

The Budget Tourism Cell represents a particularly important example. Several respondents identified budget tourism as one of the most visible success stories associated with the revival period. The programme not only generated revenue but also enhanced the public image of KSRTC. Employees expressed pride in the success of tourism operations and frequently referred to them as evidence that the corporation could successfully compete in new service

areas. This suggests that successful organisational initiatives can positively influence employee morale and organisational identity.

Similarly, logistics and parcel services emerged as important components of the revival strategy. Respondents noted that these services demonstrated a willingness to utilise existing infrastructure more effectively. Rather than relying exclusively on conventional passenger transport, the corporation explored additional opportunities for revenue generation. Employees often interpreted such initiatives as signs of organisational resilience and adaptability.

The findings also reveal the importance of monitoring and accountability mechanisms. Management respondents referred to systems designed to evaluate performance, improve efficiency and strengthen organisational discipline. While monitoring is sometimes perceived negatively within organisations, the data suggest a more nuanced picture. Several respondents argued that accountability measures contributed to professionalisation and helped establish clearer performance expectations.

Importantly, the findings indicate that monitoring was most effective when combined with recognition and support. Employees were more likely to respond positively when accountability mechanisms were perceived as fair and constructive rather than punitive. This observation highlights the importance of balancing performance management with employee engagement.

The issue of KSRTC SWIFT also emerged as a significant aspect of organisational reform. Respondents expressed differing opinions regarding the initiative. Some viewed it as a necessary response to operational challenges while others raised concerns regarding employment structures and workforce implications. Despite these differing perspectives, the data suggest that SWIFT represents a broader attempt to address structural challenges within the organisation.

The significance of SWIFT within this study lies less in the specific operational model and more in what it represents regarding organisational change. The initiative illustrates management's willingness to explore alternative approaches in response to evolving circumstances. Such willingness to experiment with new models reflects a broader culture of reform and adaptation that characterises the revival period.

Pattern matching across stakeholder groups reveals considerable agreement regarding the importance of leadership and reform initiatives. Employees, management representatives and

trade union leaders may differ in their assessments of specific policies, yet they generally acknowledge that organisational revival required active intervention rather than passive continuation of existing practices. This convergence suggests that leadership played a central role in shaping the organisational environment within which attitudinal transformation occurred.

Observation data further support this interpretation. The operational environment observed during field visits reflected many of the changes described by respondents. Employees demonstrated awareness of organisational performance, passenger expectations and service quality. Such behaviours are consistent with an organisational culture influenced by leadership emphasis on accountability, service delivery and institutional improvement.

Documentary evidence also provides substantial support for this theme. Reports, policy documents and organisational communications consistently emphasise reform, innovation and organisational renewal. These documents portray revival as a multidimensional process involving financial restructuring, operational improvements, revenue diversification and employee participation. The documentary findings therefore correspond closely with interview narratives and observational evidence.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings align with organisational change literature, which emphasises the role of leadership in creating conditions conducive to transformation. Effective leaders establish vision, communicate objectives, build trust and create environments that encourage employee participation. The evidence suggests that leadership within KSRTC contributed to revival by performing many of these functions.

A particularly important finding emerging from the analysis is that leadership influenced employee attitudes indirectly as well as directly. Administrative reforms improved organisational performance. Improved performance strengthened employee confidence. Increased confidence encouraged greater commitment and organisational ownership. Thus, leadership interventions often produced behavioural outcomes through intermediate psychological processes.

The findings suggest that leadership and management interventions have played a significant role in shaping employee attitudes and organisational change within KSRTC. Respondents frequently associated visible leadership, accountability mechanisms, operational reforms and strategic decision-making with improvements in employee confidence and workplace commitment.

These findings are consistent with organisational change literature which emphasises the importance of leadership in creating direction, communicating change and influencing employee attitudes. Within KSRTC, leadership appears to function as both a structural and symbolic force that encourages employee participation and supports broader organisational transformation.

5.8 Theme Six: Organisational Culture, Gender Inclusion and the Future of KSRTC

The final theme emerging from the analysis relates to the transformation of organisational culture and its implications for the future sustainability of KSRTC. While previous themes examined specific aspects of employee attitude, financial stability, labour relations, passenger service and leadership interventions, this theme focuses on the broader cultural changes occurring within the organisation. The findings suggest that revival is not merely reflected in improved financial performance or operational efficiency but also in the gradual emergence of a more professional, inclusive and future-oriented organisational culture.

A recurring observation across the dataset is that KSRTC appears to be undergoing a process of cultural transformation. Respondents frequently referred to changes in employee attitudes, workplace interactions and organisational priorities. These changes were often described not as isolated developments but as part of a larger shift in the way employees perceive the organisation and their role within it.

Several respondents observed that contemporary employees demonstrate greater awareness of organisational objectives than in previous periods. Discussions relating to passenger satisfaction, revenue generation, service quality and organisational sustainability have become increasingly common. This suggests that employees are beginning to view themselves not merely as workers performing assigned duties but as stakeholders contributing to the future of the institution.

An important dimension of this cultural transformation is the growing emphasis on professionalism. The findings indicate that employees increasingly recognise the importance of discipline, accountability and service quality. Respondents frequently referred to improvements in communication, workplace conduct and operational responsibility. Such developments reflect the emergence of a more professional organisational environment that supports the broader objectives of revival.

The role of women employees emerged as a particularly significant aspect of this transformation. Across the interviews, respondents acknowledged the increasing visibility and participation of women within KSRTC. Women are now present in operational, supervisory and administrative roles that were historically dominated by men. Their participation represents not only a change in workforce composition but also a broader transformation in organisational culture.

A respondent observed the influence of increasing female participation on workplace behaviour: *“ippo otthiri pennungalokke jolikk varunnund. Appo ee chadikkadikkal okke kuranju...”* The statement reflects perceptions of cultural change within the organisation. The respondent associated greater participation of women employees with improvements in workplace conduct and interpersonal relationships. While expressed informally, the observation points towards broader shifts in organisational culture and professional behaviour.

The increasing presence of women employees was frequently interpreted as an indicator of organisational modernisation and cultural transformation. Respondents suggested that gender diversity contributes to more professional workplace interactions, greater sensitivity in employee behaviour and a gradual shift away from traditional workplace norms. These perceptions highlight the relationship between workforce diversity and organisational culture.

The findings suggest that women employees have contributed positively to workplace professionalism and service orientation. Several respondents observed that the presence of women has encouraged more respectful workplace interactions and strengthened expectations regarding professional conduct. Women employees were also frequently associated with effective communication, patience and passenger-friendly behaviour. These qualities were perceived as contributing positively to the public image of the corporation.

Passengers similarly expressed appreciation for the increasing presence of women employees. According to some respondents, women conductors and officers often demonstrate strong interpersonal skills and create positive travel experiences for passengers. Such perceptions contribute to a more favourable image of KSRTC and reinforce broader efforts aimed at organisational renewal.

At the same time, the findings indicate that women employees continue to face specific challenges within the organisation. Respondents highlighted issues relating to shift work, night duties, infrastructure limitations and workplace safety. Facilities such as rest rooms, changing areas and accommodation arrangements were identified as areas requiring continuous

improvement. The data suggest that strengthening gender-sensitive policies will be important for ensuring that women employees can participate fully and effectively within the organisation.

The findings further indicate that increasing gender inclusion carries significance beyond employee welfare. Greater participation of women expands the talent pool available to the organisation, strengthens diversity and contributes to a more balanced organisational culture. The evidence therefore suggests that gender inclusion should be viewed as both a social objective and a strategic organisational objective.

Another important aspect of cultural transformation relates to the growing influence of technology and digitalisation. Respondents frequently referred to the increasing use of electronic ticketing systems, online reservation platforms and digital communication tools. These developments have altered both operational processes and employee responsibilities. The findings indicate that employees are gradually adapting to these technological changes and increasingly recognise their importance for organisational efficiency.

Management respondents argued that technological adaptation represents an important component of future sustainability. Employees who are willing to learn and utilise new technologies contribute to organisational flexibility and innovation. The willingness of employees to adapt to changing technological environments therefore emerges as another indicator of positive attitudinal transformation.

The influence of social media also emerged as a noteworthy finding. Respondents observed that employee behaviour is now subject to greater public visibility than ever before. Positive actions are frequently shared and appreciated online while negative incidents can quickly attract public criticism. This environment appears to have increased employee awareness regarding public perception and organisational image.

Interestingly, the findings suggest that social media has also become a source of organisational pride. Positive stories involving KSRTC employees often receive significant public attention and appreciation. Such recognition contributes to employee motivation and reinforces positive behaviours. Consequently, social media functions both as a mechanism of accountability and as a platform for organisational recognition.

The data additionally point towards the emergence of a future-oriented mindset among many employees. Rather than focusing exclusively on immediate operational concerns, respondents

increasingly discussed issues relating to sustainability, workforce development and organisational growth. Such perspectives suggest that employees are beginning to engage more actively with long-term organisational objectives.

Several respondents emphasised the importance of attracting and developing the next generation of employees. They argued that future recruitment should focus not only on technical competence but also on communication skills, service orientation and adaptability. The findings indicate that the future success of KSRTC will depend significantly on its ability to cultivate a workforce capable of responding to changing social and technological environments.

Pattern matching across interviews, observations and documentary evidence demonstrates substantial consistency regarding these developments. Different stakeholder groups may emphasise different aspects of cultural change, yet they generally agree that KSRTC is evolving towards a more professional and inclusive organisational culture. This convergence strengthens confidence in the validity of the theme.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings align with organisational culture literature, which emphasises the importance of shared values, behavioural norms and collective identity in shaping organisational performance. Sustainable change occurs when reforms become embedded within organisational culture rather than remaining isolated interventions. The evidence suggests that many revival initiatives within KSRTC are increasingly becoming integrated into everyday organisational practices and attitudes.

The findings indicate that organisational culture within KSRTC is undergoing gradual transformation. Employee attitudes, gender inclusion, professionalisation and changing workplace expectations emerged as important elements shaping the future direction of the organisation. Respondents frequently associated cultural change with improved professionalism, stronger organisational commitment and more constructive workplace relationships.

The findings are consistent with organisational culture literature which emphasises that sustainable organisational change involves not only structural reforms but also changes in values, norms and workplace behaviour. Within KSRTC, cultural transformation appears to be closely linked to employee attitudes and may influence the long-term sustainability of organisational change initiatives.

5.9 Integrated Discussion

The thematic analysis demonstrates that employee attitudes occupy a central position in understanding organisational change within KSRTC. While organisational changes have often been discussed in terms of financial reforms, operational improvements and administrative interventions, the findings of this study suggest that these factors alone cannot fully explain the changes experienced within the organisation. Rather, employee attitudes emerged as an important link connecting organisational policies, leadership initiatives, labour relations and service delivery outcomes.

The first theme revealed that positive employee attitudes, reflected through organisational ownership, commitment and responsibility, have contributed to changes in workplace behaviour and organisational functioning. Employees increasingly viewed themselves not merely as workers performing assigned duties but as stakeholders in the future of the organisation. This finding supports the arguments of Robbins and Judge (2017), who emphasise that employee attitudes significantly influence organisational commitment, workplace behaviour and organisational effectiveness.

The second theme highlighted the relationship between financial stability and employee confidence. Regular salary payments and reduced financial uncertainty contributed to improvements in employee morale and workplace motivation. The findings indicate that financial security functions not only as an economic factor but also as a psychological condition influencing employee attitudes and behaviour. Employees who experience stability are more likely to demonstrate commitment, responsibility and positive engagement with organisational objectives.

The third theme demonstrated the importance of labour–management relations in shaping organisational change. The findings suggest that relationships between employees, trade unions and management have become increasingly collaborative. While differences of opinion continue to exist, respondents frequently emphasised dialogue, organisational responsibility and collective accountability. This finding is consistent with the work of Verma and Mookherjee (1996) and Chhabra (2007), who argue that constructive industrial relations contribute to organisational stability and long-term effectiveness.

The fourth theme focused on passenger-centred service culture and public trust. Respondents repeatedly associated positive employee behaviour with improvements in passenger experiences and public perception. Employees who demonstrated courtesy, responsiveness and

service commitment were viewed as contributing to stronger public confidence in the organisation. The findings support the view of Schneider et al. (1998) that employee attitudes significantly influence service quality and customer satisfaction in service-oriented organisations.

The fifth theme highlighted the role of leadership and management reforms in influencing employee attitudes. Respondents frequently referred to visible leadership, accountability mechanisms and management initiatives as factors encouraging organisational commitment and workplace discipline. Leadership emerged not only as an administrative function but also as a symbolic force capable of influencing employee perceptions and shaping organisational culture. This finding is consistent with organisational change literature, which emphasises the importance of leadership in facilitating change and influencing employee behaviour.

The sixth theme revealed the significance of organisational culture and gender inclusion in shaping the future direction of KSRTC. Respondents perceived increasing professionalism, greater participation of women employees and changing workplace norms as indicators of cultural transformation. The findings suggest that organisational change extends beyond structural reforms and involves gradual shifts in values, attitudes and behavioural expectations. This observation supports Schein's (2010) argument that sustainable organisational change requires transformation at the cultural level.

Taken together, the six themes demonstrate that organisational change within KSRTC is best understood as a multidimensional process involving structural, behavioural and cultural factors. Financial reforms, leadership interventions and operational improvements provide an important foundation for change; however, the effectiveness of these initiatives depends largely upon employee attitudes and workplace behaviour. The findings therefore indicate that employee attitudes function as both a consequence of organisational change and a driver of further organisational transformation within KSRTC.

CHAPTER 6:
FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the major findings, policy suggestions, implications, limitations and concluding observations of the study on Employee Attitudes and Organisational Change in Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC). The findings emerge from the thematic analysis of interview narratives, observations and documentary evidence presented in the previous chapter. The study explored how employee attitudes are shaped by organisational factors such as financial stability, labour–management relations, leadership interventions, service culture and organisational environment, and how these attitudes influence organisational change within KSRTC.

The chapter begins by presenting the major findings derived from the six themes identified during the analysis. These findings are followed by policy suggestions and recommendations that emerge directly from the empirical evidence. The chapter then discusses the theoretical and practical implications of the study, outlines its limitations and identifies areas for future research. Finally, the chapter concludes by summarising the contribution of the study to understanding employee attitudes and organisational change within a public sector transport organisation.

6.2 Major Findings of the Study

The findings of the study emerged from the thematic analysis of interview narratives, observations and documentary analysis. They are presented according to the codes, subthemes and the six major themes identified during the analysis.

I. Employee Attitudes as a Driver of Organisational Change

- i. Employees demonstrated a stronger sense of organisational ownership and viewed the progress of KSRTC as a shared responsibility rather than solely the responsibility of management.
- ii. Employee commitment extended beyond assigned duties, with many respondents reporting voluntary efforts to assist passengers, protect organisational resources, suggest operational improvements and ensure service continuity.
- iii. Frontline employees increasingly showed greater concern for passenger satisfaction, route efficiency and service quality, indicating a shift from compliance-oriented behaviour to commitment-oriented behaviour.

II. Financial Stability and Employee Confidence

- i. Regular salary payments significantly improved employee morale, confidence and psychological well-being.
- ii. Financial security reduced workplace anxiety and enabled employees to concentrate more effectively on their responsibilities.
- iii. Employees perceived timely salary payment not merely as a financial benefit but as an indicator of organisational stability and management credibility.
- iv. Improved financial confidence encouraged greater organisational commitment, positive workplace behaviour and willingness to participate in organisational change initiatives.

III. Transformation of Labour-Management Relations

- i. Labour–management relations have gradually shifted from confrontation towards greater cooperation and shared organisational responsibility.
- ii. Trade unions increasingly recognised the importance of balancing employee welfare with organisational sustainability.
- iii. Improved communication, dialogue and transparency strengthened trust between employees and management and reduced resistance towards organisational reforms.
- iv. Employees, trade union representatives and management demonstrated a common understanding that organisational survival requires collective effort and mutual cooperation.

IV. Passenger-centred Service Culture and Public Trust

- i. Positive changes in employee behaviour were reflected in more courteous, respectful and passenger-oriented service.
- ii. Employees increasingly demonstrated willingness to assist passengers during travel, contributing to improved passenger experiences.
- iii. Improved employee behaviour enhanced public confidence in KSRTC and strengthened the organisation's public image.
- iv. Passenger satisfaction emerged as an important outcome of positive employee attitudes and service commitment.

V. Leadership, Management Reforms and Organisational Change

- i. Visible leadership and active management involvement positively influenced employee confidence and organisational commitment.
- ii. Leadership initiatives such as regular salary disbursement, operational reforms and improved communication encouraged employees to support organisational changes.
- iii. Management reforms created an organisational environment that enabled employees to participate more actively in organisational improvement.

VI. Organisational Culture, Gender Inclusion and the Future of KSRTC

- i. KSRTC is experiencing a gradual transformation towards a more professional and service-oriented organisational culture.
- ii. Increased participation of women employees was perceived as contributing positively to workplace discipline, professionalism and organisational behaviour.
- iii. Employees increasingly demonstrated greater awareness of organisational values, accountability and public service responsibilities.
- iv. Respondents viewed organisational change as a continuous process requiring sustained employee commitment, supportive leadership and an adaptive organisational culture.

6.3 Policy Suggestions and Recommendations

The following policy suggestions emerge directly from the findings of the study. Since employee attitudes were found to be closely associated with organisational change, service quality, labour-management relations and organisational culture, the recommendations primarily focus on strengthening human resource practices, employee development and organisational effectiveness within KSRTC.

6.3.1 Institutionalisation of Employee Behavioural and Passenger-Service Training

The most significant recommendation emerging from the study is the need for systematic behavioural and passenger-service training for employees. Respondents repeatedly highlighted the positive impact of courteous employee behaviour on passenger satisfaction and public trust. At the same time, several participants observed that such positive behaviour often depends upon individual initiative rather than structured organisational training.

KSRTC may therefore establish a dedicated behavioural and passenger-service training programme for drivers, conductors and frontline employees. Training modules may include customer service, passenger psychology, communication skills, emotional intelligence, conflict management, stress management, gender-sensitive interaction and public service ethics.

Particular attention may be given to service practices commonly observed in neighbouring state transport corporations such as Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, where employees are often seen assisting passengers with luggage, responding respectfully to passenger queries, helping elderly travellers and demonstrating greater service orientation during journeys. Such practices can significantly improve passenger experience and strengthen public confidence in KSRTC.

Behavioural training should not be viewed merely as a disciplinary exercise but as an investment in employee development, organisational culture and public service excellence. Periodic refresher programmes and recognition for exemplary passenger service may further reinforce positive workplace behaviour.

6.3.2 Sustaining Financial Stability and Employee Security

The findings demonstrate that timely salary payments and financial stability positively influence employee confidence, morale and workplace commitment. KSRTC should therefore continue prioritising financial discipline and regular salary disbursement. Transparent communication regarding financial matters can further strengthen employee trust and reduce workplace uncertainty. Sustained financial stability will contribute not only to operational effectiveness but also to positive employee attitudes and organisational commitment.

6.3.3 Institutionalised Labour–Management Dialogue Mechanisms

The study found that collaborative labour–management relations have positively influenced organisational change within KSRTC. To sustain this progress, regular labour–management dialogue forums should be institutionalised at depot, regional and corporate levels. Such forums may facilitate discussion on operational challenges, employee concerns, organisational reforms and workplace improvement initiatives. Constructive dialogue can strengthen mutual trust, reduce conflict and encourage shared organisational responsibility.

6.3.4 Leadership Visibility and Employee Communication Systems

Respondents frequently associated positive organisational change with visible leadership and management engagement. KSRTC should therefore encourage regular interaction between

senior management and frontline employees through depot visits, employee meetings and communication platforms. Visible leadership enhances employee confidence, improves transparency and strengthens organisational commitment. Effective communication regarding organisational changes and policy decisions can further improve employee participation and acceptance of change initiatives.

6.3.5 Employee Recognition and Appreciation Programmes

The study revealed that employees value recognition for positive contributions and exemplary service. KSRTC may introduce structured recognition programmes that acknowledge employees demonstrating excellence in passenger service, punctuality, safety, innovation and organisational commitment. Recognition may take the form of certificates, commendation letters, public appreciation and institutional awards. Such initiatives can strengthen motivation, reinforce desirable behaviour and contribute to a culture of organisational ownership.

6.3.6 Employee Mental Health and Well-being Support Systems

The nature of work in KSRTC often involves long working hours, traffic congestion, passenger pressure and operational stress. The organisation should therefore develop employee well-being initiatives including counselling support, stress management programmes, wellness workshops and psychological assistance mechanisms. Supporting employee mental health can improve workplace satisfaction, service quality and organisational commitment.

6.3.7 Promoting Organisational Culture and Gender Inclusion

The findings indicate that organisational culture within KSRTC is undergoing gradual transformation. To strengthen this process, KSRTC should promote professionalism, inclusivity and organisational ownership through continuous cultural development initiatives. Greater participation of women employees, gender-sensitisation programmes and values-based organisational development activities can contribute to healthier workplace relationships and a more progressive organisational culture. Such measures will support the long-term sustainability of organisational change within the corporation.

6.4 Scope for Future Research

Future research may explore employee attitudes and organisational change in other public sector organisations and compare the findings with the experience of KSRTC. Comparative studies involving state transport corporations in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and other states may

provide deeper insights into how organisational culture, employee training and leadership practices influence service quality and organisational effectiveness, especially in the current context of free travel for women.

Future studies may also examine specific dimensions such as employee engagement, organisational commitment, workplace culture, trade union dynamics, gender inclusion and leadership effectiveness within public transport organisations. Given the growing emphasis on service quality, further research may investigate the relationship between employee behaviour and passenger satisfaction using both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Longitudinal studies may be undertaken to examine how employee attitudes evolve over time and how such changes influence organisational performance and institutional sustainability. Quantitative studies involving larger samples of employees and passengers may also be conducted to validate and extend the findings of the present research.

6.5 Conclusion

The study examined the relationship between employee attitudes and organisational change within the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC). Through a qualitative case study approach, the research explored the perspectives of employees, trade union representatives, management personnel, passengers and other stakeholders to understand how employee attitudes influence organisational processes and workplace transformation.

The findings demonstrate that organisational change within KSRTC is shaped not only by financial reforms and administrative interventions but also by human and cultural factors. Employee attitudes emerged as an important driver of organisational change, influencing workplace behaviour, service orientation, labour–management relations and organisational commitment. Financial stability, visible leadership, collaborative industrial relations and evolving organisational culture were identified as significant factors shaping employee attitudes and organisational outcomes.

The study further highlights that organisational change is a multidimensional process involving structural, behavioural and cultural transformation. While reforms and policy interventions provide the framework for change, their effectiveness ultimately depends on the willingness of employees to accept, support and sustain organisational initiatives. Employee attitudes therefore function both as an outcome of organisational experiences and as a catalyst for further organisational change.

In conclusion, the experience of KSRTC demonstrates that sustainable organisational change within public sector institutions requires more than financial support and administrative reform. It requires employee commitment, constructive labour–management relations, effective leadership and a culture that encourages responsibility, professionalism and public service. The study thus contributes to a deeper understanding of the human dimensions of organisational change and offers insights that may be relevant to public sector organisations undergoing transformation in similar contexts.

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Appendix 1

Interview Guide: Driver / Conductor (Frontline Employees)

Section A: Understanding the Crisis

1. How would you describe the crisis period in KSRTC from your personal experience?
2. What changes did you observe in working conditions during that time?
3. How did salary delays, job insecurity, or operational issues affect you personally?
4. How did the public treat KSRTC employees during the crisis period?

Section B: Employee Attitudes During Crisis

1. How did you feel about working in KSRTC during the peak crisis?
2. Did you ever feel demotivated, frustrated, or blamed unfairly?
3. How did the public perception that “employees and unions caused the crisis” affect your work life?

Section C: Attitudinal Change & Revival Phase

1. Do you think employee attitudes have changed in recent years? In what ways?
2. What factors contributed to this change? (Leadership? HR reforms? Fear of privatization? Public scrutiny?)
3. How do you personally see your role in the revival process?

Section D: HR Policies & Organizational Change

1. What HR policy changes have you experienced recently?
2. Have performance monitoring, accountability systems, or discipline mechanisms changed?
3. How have these policies affected employee motivation and attitude?
4. Do you feel these changes were supportive or punitive?

Section E: Trade Unions & Industrial Relations

1. How has the role of trade unions changed over time?
2. Do you think militant trade unionism has reduced? Why?
3. Do unions support revival efforts, or resist reforms?

Section F: SWIFT & Contract System

1. What is your perception of the SWIFT contract system?
2. Do you see it as necessary reform or exploitation?
3. Has the contract system created fear among permanent employees?
4. How has it affected morale and solidarity?

Section G: Closing and Suggestions

1. What suggestions do you have for the further revival of KSRTC?

Appendix 2

Interview Guide: Trade Union Leaders

Section A: Understanding the Crisis

1. From your perspective, what caused the crisis in KSRTC?
2. What is your response to the public narrative that employees and unions caused the crisis?

Section B: Union Role During Crisis

1. What role did trade unions play during the crisis?
2. Were unions defensive, confrontational, or cooperative?
3. Has militant trade unionism declined? Why?

Section C: Attitudinal Change Among Workers

1. Have you observed a shift in employee attitudes?
2. What factors contributed to this shift? (Government pressure? Financial crisis? Public image?)
3. How do you view the 140 km policy, driver cum conductor policy etc?

Section D: HR Reforms & Government Intervention

1. How do you evaluate recent HR reforms?
2. Do you think HR interventions were participatory or imposed?
3. Has performance-based monitoring changed worker psychology?
4. How was the referendum and collective bargaining?

Section E: SWIFT & Contract Labour

1. What is your stand on KSRTC SWIFT? Has it weakened trade union bargaining power?
2. Do you consider the contract system exploitative?
3. How does lower wage payment under contract affect worker dignity?
4. What challenges do the new labour codes bring forth?

Section F: Revival & Accountability

1. Do you believe employee attitude was a key factor in revival?
2. What balance should exist between discipline and worker rights?
3. What role should unions play in sustaining renewal?

Appendix 3

Interview Guide: HR Official of KSRTC

Section A: Crisis Diagnosis

1. From an HR perspective, what defined the crisis in KSRTC?
2. How did employee behavior contribute (if at all)?

Section B: HR Interventions

1. What HR reforms were introduced during revival?
2. Were there changes in recruitment, monitoring, attendance, or discipline?
3. Was performance management strengthened?

Section C: Attitude Transformation

1. Did you observe measurable attitudinal change?
2. What strategies were used to influence employee mindset?
3. Was change driven by fear, incentives, leadership communication, or accountability?

Section D: SWIFT & Contract Strategy

1. What was the rationale behind SWIFT?
2. Was cost reduction the primary goal?
3. How do you respond to allegations of exploitation?
4. Has contract employment improved efficiency?

Section E: Trade Unions

1. How has union behavior evolved?
2. Were unions cooperative in the revival process?
3. Has industrial conflict reduced?
4. How do you see the trade unions and collective bargaining?
5. Are employees forced to join trade unions? Is there a blind following from the employee side?

Appendix 4

Interview Guide: Transport Minister or Top-Level Official

Section A: Policy View of Crisis

1. How did the government define the KSRTC crisis?
2. What structural problems were identified?

Section B: Reform Strategy

1. What was the broader revival vision?
2. Was employee attitude seen as a core issue?
3. What policy-level interventions were introduced?

Section C: HR & Structural Reform

1. Why was SWIFT introduced?
2. How do you justify the contract system?
3. Was it a long-term restructuring strategy?

Section D: Trade Unions & Governance

1. How did the government manage union resistance?
2. Has the nature of trade unionism changed?
3. Was political negotiation involved?

Section E: Accountability & Public Narrative

1. Do you believe employee attitude contributed to crisis?
2. How did you address public perception?