

# The Public image of Zambia Railways

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Communication for Development offered by the Department of Mass Communication, The University of Zambia.

I declare that this Practical Attachment Report has not been submitted for a Degree in this or any other University

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To my husband Mubanga Gilbert, our daughters: Chimwemwe, Mukuma, my sisters  
Molly and Barbara

## Abstract

This report, based on a practical attachment with Zambia Railways, the author discusses the company's poor image within the historical and current context. Beginning with a background of the company, the author gives the terms of reference, methodology and literature review on railways in general, in the context image-building. The author then discusses the conceptual framework highlighting various relevant communication theories within the context of communication for development. The report is concerned with definitions of the basic concepts which the author has used throughout the report. A section follows this on the author's personal experience during the attachment. This is done with a view of putting the reader of the report into context. The main the problems and constraints of ZR, and what management perceives as possible solutions are also discussed. The author's personal input during the attachment included the focus group discussions, interviews, and the meetings which are discussed in a separate chapter. Before the concluding chapter, the author discusses the findings of the attachment in the light of communication theories as presented in the conceptual framework. The last chapter gives a generic conclusion on how Zambia Railways requires knowledge of the market, industry and available technology to survive and make profit. She has recommended good communication with their major customers. This can easily change the perceived bad image of Zambia Railways. Recommendations were also made following the various discussions and views presented in the report. The public Image of Zambia Railways was worth looking at because the corporate image of any progressive company is inevitable for its growth.

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CCMB

The University of Zambia

## Abbreviations

ACIS	Advanced Cargo Information
ADB	African Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome
BBR	Beitbridge Bulawayo Railways
BMR	Bulawayo masonaland Railways
BOT	Build Operate and Transfer
BSA	British South Africa
CAZ	companies act of zambia
COMESA	Common Market for East and Southern Africa
CFTA	Competition and Fair trade Act
CRZ	Company Railways of Zambia
CTC	Cebtralised Traffic System
CTS	Consolidated Tyre Service
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DSB	DanishState Railways
DSO	Drop sided Open
FGDs	Focus Group Discussion
FRN	Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland
FRP	Fourth Railway Project
GE	General Electric
GM	General Motors
HAB	Higher Authority Board
HFA	Heavy oil Furnace
HIFAB	HIFAB International AB of Sweden, in Association with DE-Consult of Germany

HSO	High-Side Open
IA	Investement Act
ICASA	International conference on AIDS and STDs in Africa
IRRN	Interconnected Regional Rail Network
JIT	Just In Time
KIFCO	Kabwe Industrial Fabric Company
Km	Kilometre
MCD	Master of communication for Development
MCL	Maamba Collieries Limited
MD	Managing Director
MPA	Manager public Affairs
MMD	Movement for multiparty Democracy
NB	National Breweries
NCZ	Nitrogen Chemicals of Zambia
NR	Northern Rhodesia
NRZ	National Railways of Zimbabwe
PA	Practical Attachment
PAR	Practical Attachment Report
PAO	Public Affairs officer
QR	Quick Renspose
RAMCOZ	Roan Antelope Mining Corporation of Zambia
RR	Rhodesia Railways
RRP	Railways Restructuring Project

RUWZ	Railways Workers Union of Zambia
SARA	Southern African Railways
SARN	Southern African Railways Network
SATCC	Southern African Transport and Communication Committee
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SPAO	Senior public Affairs Officer
SNCC	Societe' Nationale Des Chemins De Fer Du Congo
SR	Southern Rhodesia
STDs	Sexually Transmitted diseases
TAZARA	Tanzania Zambia Railways Authority
TL	Transitional Leave
UAR	Union African Railways
UBZ	United Buses of Zambia
UNIP	United National Independence Party
UNZA	University of Zambia
WB	World Bank
ZA	Zambia Airways
ZB	Zambian Breweries
ZAMTEL	Zambia Telecommunication Company
ZCCM	Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines
ZESCO	Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation
ZIMCO	Zambia Industry and Mining Corporation
ZPA	Zambia Privatisation Agency
ZR	Zambia Railways
ZRA	Zambia Railways Act

ZRAWU	Zambia Almagamated Workers Union
ZRB	Zambia Railways Board
ZRL	Zambia railways Limited

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# Chapter 1

## Background

### 1.0 Country's Profile

This has been divided into six components. Namely: locational, physical, political, social, economical, and religious components.

#### 1.0.1 Locational

Zambia is a landlocked country in central southern Africa, stretching between 8° and 18°. It lies within the tropical belt on a fairly high plateau, averaging 1 300 metres above sea level. This gives Zambia a tropical climate with a distinct hot dry season and a warm wet season with little humidity. It is bordered by Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the north, Malawi and Mozambique in the east, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia in the south, and Angola in the west. The sharing of borders with eight other countries offers the advantage of easy access to expanding markets in all directions.

Zambia has a total area of 752.618 square kilometre. The largest city is Lusaka which is also the national capital. The other cities are Ndola and Kitwe and Livingstone.

#### 1.0.2 Physical features

Zambia lies on a fairly high plateau averaging 1,300 metres above sea level.

The country is made up of the hills of Zambezi-Zaire watershed and the Luangwa-lake Malawi watershed lying over 1200m, the middle veld is an area of undulating land between 900-1200 metres, covering the largest part of the country.

Although landlocked and dotted with vast grassy plains, the country boasts many rivers and lakes. These are the Zambezi, Kafue, Luangwa and Chambeshi-Luapula rivers.

The Zambezi is southern Africa's longest river and has also given the country its name. Major lakes are Tanganyika, Bangweulu, Mweru and Kariba. Lake Kariba is one of the largest dams in the world.

### 1.0.3 Political

Zambia is a republic, with a president elected for a five-year term and a legislative body of 150 members. The current head of state (1999) is President Frederick Chiluba. The 1991 constitution provides for a multiparty system and limited presidential powers. Zambia became independent from Britain on October 24, 1964. The official language is English and the main Zambian Languages are Bemba, Tonga, Nyanja, Lozi, Kaonde, Luvale, and Lunda.

### 1.0.4 Population

The overall population of the country is 9.7 million according to the 1990 census. The average growth rate of population per year is 3.1 %. The urban population is estimated at 56% and rural at 44% (*Africa*, 2000). The population density is 13 for every square kilometre. Life expectancy for males and female is 43 years. Adult illiteracy is at 17% for male and 33% for female.

### 1.0.5 Economical

Zambian's currency is the Kwacha. The Gross National Product (GNP) is at US\$ 3.2 billion and GNP per capita is US\$330. The External debt is US\$ 6.758 millions. Debt Service/export stands at 19.9%. The percentage of military expenditure of GNP is 2.8%. Over the 25 years, Zambia's GDP per capita income dropped from one of a middle-income country to one of the lowest (*Africa*, 2000).

The main economic activities are agriculture, livestock, industry and mining.

- a) Agriculture: Both commercial and peasant farmers grow maize, wheat, cassava, sugar cane, coffee, sweet potatoes, sunflower seed, cotton, peanuts.

- b) Livestock: the livestock kept by most farmers includes cattle, goats, pigs and poultry.
- c) Industry: The main industries in Zambia are chemicals, cement, textiles, include the manufacturing and processing of food and beverages.
- d) Mining: Zambia's economy largely depends on minerals, especially copper. Other minerals mined in the mining towns are zinc, cobalt, and lead.

#### 1.0.6 Religion

The main religion in the whole country is Christianity. The main religious denominations are the Catholics 29%, Protestants 14%, Moslems 0.3%, while traditional religion and others combined stand at 56.7% (*Africa*, 2000).

#### **1.1 Company profile**

In 1991, the United National Independence Party (UNIP) ceded power to the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD). The change in government brought with it changes in economic policies as well. The economy, which was largely state controlled prior to 1991 under the one party rule, has largely been liberalised under the MMD government.

The coming of liberalisation has brought about an enabling environment for both individuals and private institutions to do any kind of business. The transport sector has also benefited. Just before 1991, there was a crisis in the transport sector due to the non-availability of enough buses to meet the ever-increasing number of travellers. It became particularly difficult to access the remote parts of the country. The United Bus Company of Zambia (UBZ) and Zambia Airways (ZA) both state controlled companies, monopolised the road and air transport sectors respectively. These companies, however, were not making profit. When the MMD government came to power both the UBZ and ZA were liquidated and a tax rebate was declared on the importation of buses. The result was a large fleet of privately owned buses.

Since then, the situation in the transport sector has improved tremendously as a result of this incentive for bus operators.

The changes in the road sector have affected railway transport greatly. Whereas during the UNIP era the use of the passenger train as a mode of transport was almost mandatory because of lack of enough road transport to cater for the travelling public, the picture has become different now since travellers have an option to go by train or by bus. It is, therefore, obvious that the liberalisation of transport has affected Zambia Railways (ZR) as a railway transporter.

The privatisation process currently sweeping across Zambia has not left any parastatal company untouched. ZR has to compete reasonably with the road transporters, therefore, the government has seen the need to privatise ZR in a few years to come. It awarded a contract to a Swedish firm whose acronym is HIFAB for two and half years. This was signed in 1997. The management's main objective is to restructure ZR for two and half years under the direction of the Board of Directors of the Railway. The HIFAB management team took office in March 1998.

The aim of this Practical Attachment (PA) to the company, therefore, was to investigate and experience what bearing the changes has had on the company's operations. In this regard, the attachment has sought to find out the image of the company in the eyes of the travelling public as well as its employees. The attachee also set out to experience, by being a participant observer, what the working culture at ZR is and whether or not it contributes to the building of a good public image. The Department of Public Affairs comprises five members of staff, that is, the manager, Senior Public Affairs Officer (SPAO), two Public Officers (PO), and the secretary. The main duties and accountabilities are:

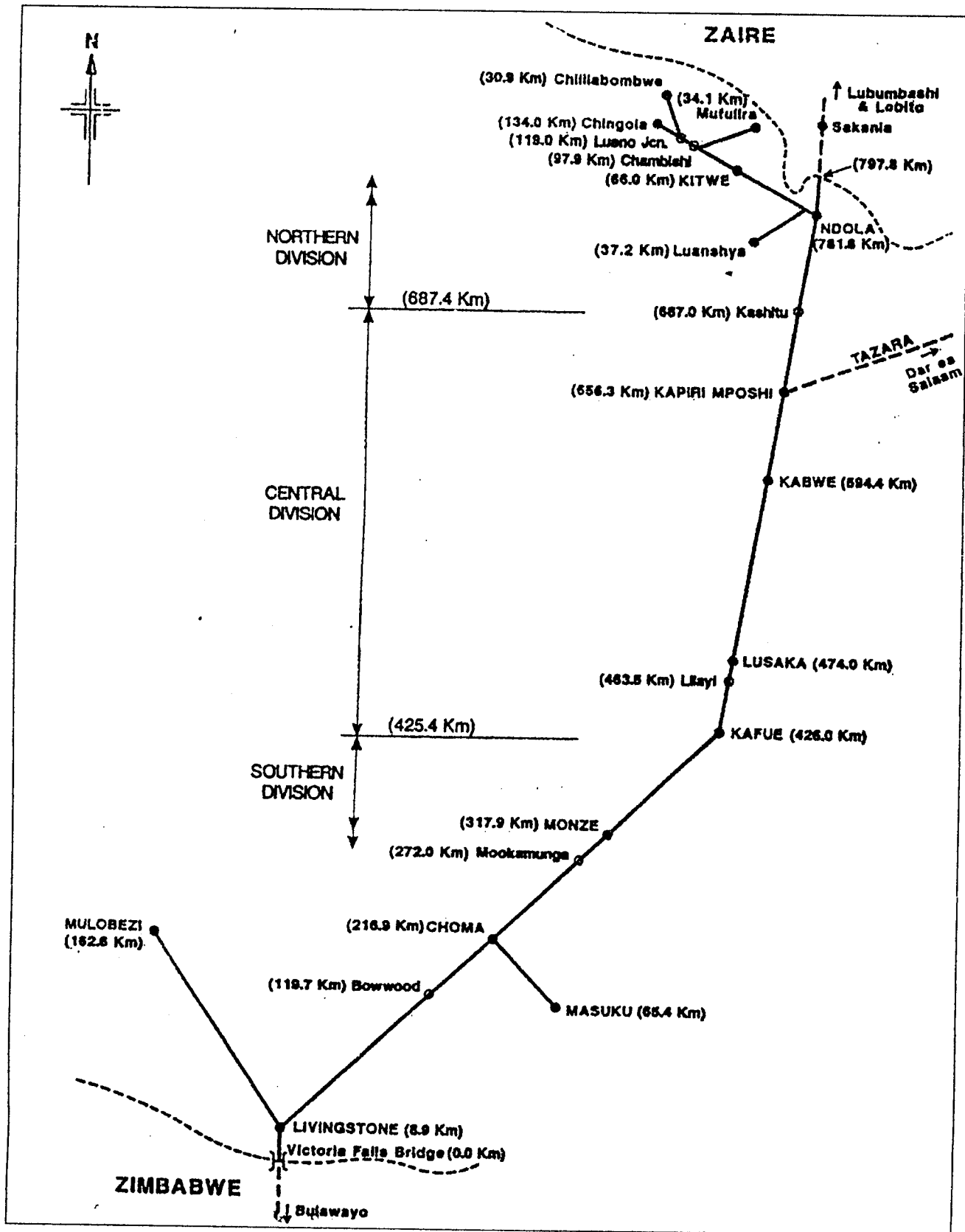
- a) Plans and conducts public relations programmes and elaborate requirements and necessities of the same.

- b) Writes or compiles news and press releases on approved events taking place in the company in order to keep the public informed about the activities of the company.
- c) takes, processes, prints and arranges photographic or other illustrative materials for publication in the in-house journal (magazine, company brochures, annual reports) and the media.
- d) Prepares company documentaries (slides, video tapes etc.) for in-house training/awareness and use the electronic media.
- e) Researches and prepares information on company activities pertaining to print/electronic media, that is, press queries, radio, television and other publication media, in order to enhance good rapport and favourable working relationship to avoid misinformation or distortion of information
- f) Scrutinises and revises material submitted by contributing writers, photographers, illustrators for Railnews Magazine.
- g) Coordinates and conducts tour programme for guests (e.g. political/ civic leaders, and ZR business associates). They take guests to the company installations and the main workshops to enable them get acquainted to the company and services offered.
- h) Prepares speeches for official functions on behalf of management, for example, conferences, seminar, launching of new services, signing ceremonies, etc.
- i) Translates business documents and advertising materials, including posters, billboards, banners, etc.

- j) Arranges and organises special exhibitions, competitions and social functions (i.e. shows, sponsored sporting events, luncheons/dinners) to enhance the corporate image of the company.
- k) Monitors day to day press issues and complaints by customers affecting the company and appropriately advises superiors for remedial action whenever necessary.
- l) makes business travel arrangements for employees travelling outside the country and arranges travel documents, i.e., passport and visa issuance in compliance with immigration requirements.
- m) Welcomes Company associates coming into the country at the Airport/Border Entry Points and facilitates their smooth departure to enable them meet their business schedules.
- n) Assists in convening conferences e.g. Union African Railways (UAR) Southern Africa Railways (SARA) and other meetings organised by ZR and ensures the delegates are catered for and proper itinerary/ programmes are drawn for meetings.
- o) Issues employees with corporate identity cards system wise.
- p) Arranges/co-ordinates all meetings in the Headquarters Boardroom to ensure orderliness.
- q) Performs any other related duties as may be assigned from time to time.

The PA started on the July 5 and ended on October 31 1999. The student was based in the company's Public Affairs Department.

Figure 1: Map of Zambia with ZR network.



Source: ZR 10-Year Development Plan. 1989

During this period, information was collected through participant observation, focus group discussions (FGDs) held with employees and spot interviews with some major customers and the travelling members of the public. A conducted tour of the railway system was also successfully undertaken. Most of the sidings in Figure 2 were visited by the attachee during the conducted tour.

## **1.2 Organisational structure and current status of the company**

There are several components under this title which are discussed below

### **1.2.1 Mission statement**

The mission statement of ZR is to provide an economic and efficient freight and passenger rail service operated on competitive commercial principles.

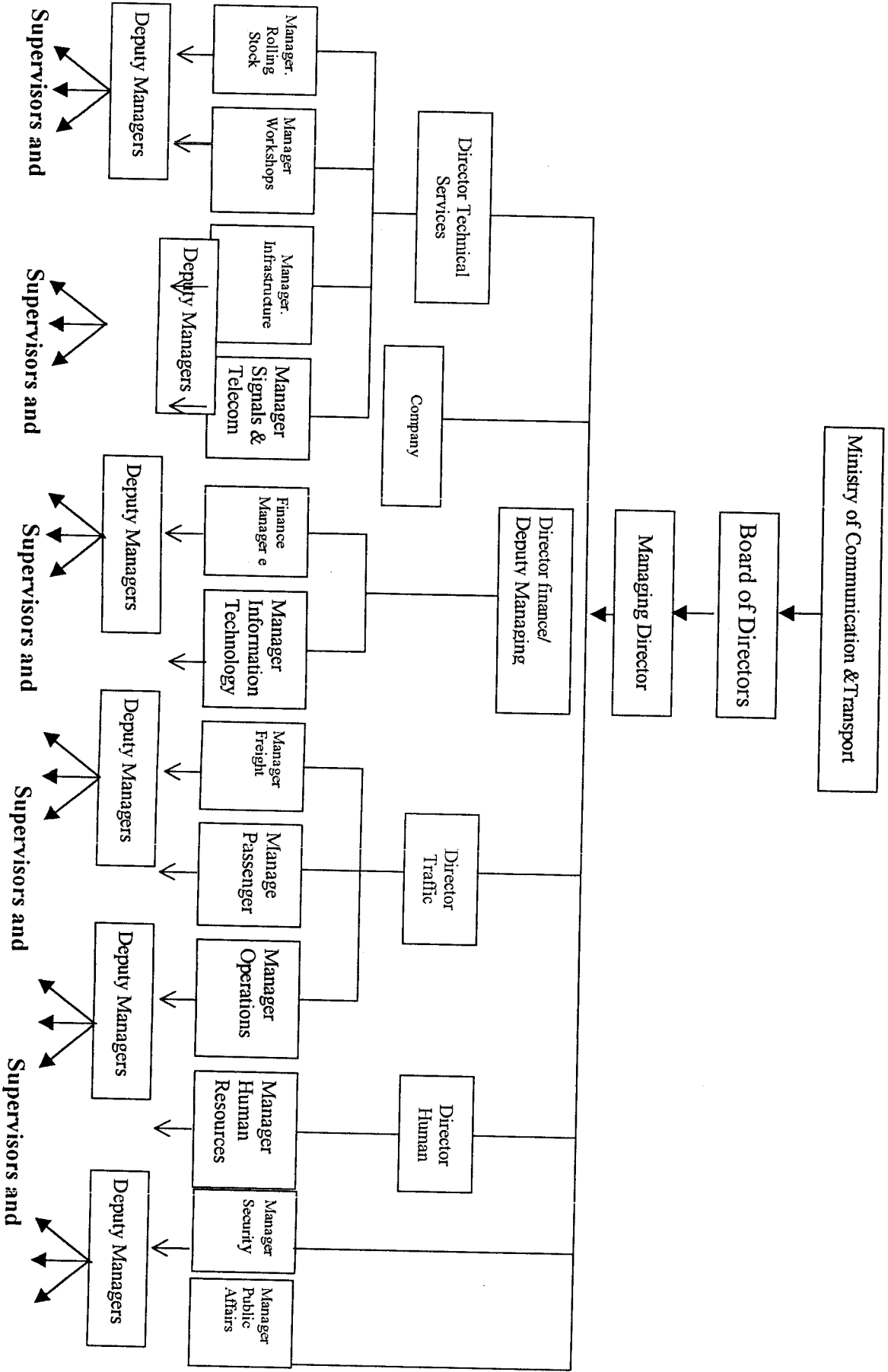
### **1.2.2 Slogan**

The new management changed the slogan from 'We are on the right truck' to 'the sleeping giant is awakening.' This has brought about a lot of arguments among employees some of whom strongly feel that they have not been sleeping. The company was in a deplorable state because of poor management by the old regime. According to those who have scrutinised the slogan, an awakening giant can achieve very little. Management has asked the employees to come up with a better motto. The person whose submission wins will be given K250.000.00.

### **1.2.3 Structure**

ZR operations are no longer decentralised though the system is demarcated into four parts, namely, Central, Northern, Southern districts and the Headquarters. The HIFAB team, which is preparing the company for privatization, appointed the Managing Director and five directors. The five directorates plus the Company Secretary do the corporate functions. The ZRB fills other senior positions falling vacant in ZR.

Figure 2: Organisation Chart



These are Finance and Information Technology, Traffic and Marketing, Technical Services, Human Resources, and Legal Counsel. The managers for Public Affairs and Security report to the Chief Executive. The New Workshops operate as a financial entity, with its own accounts. Manager Workshops reports to the Director Technical Services. The organisation chart shows how departments at ZR relate to one another.

#### 1.2.4 Condition of the track and rehabilitation programme

The track is in a poor state, the maximum line speed for freight trains on most parts of the network is not more than 25-40 km per hour. There have been a number of derailments because of the poor state of the infrastructure. For example, between April 1997 and March 1998 there were more than 310 derailments. The occurrence of derailments is frequent because 423 Km of the main line is still on old wooden sleepers. Most of these have outlived their service life since the majority is over 30 years old, as against an expected service life of about 15 years. The situation is no better at the sidings and yards. The company is working at reducing its own permanent workforce of track workers and making extensive use of small-scale contractors for the rehabilitation exercise. This programme aims at offering a major opportunity for poverty alleviation and job creation in the sub-contractor sector and those who are retrenched.

#### 1.2.5 Locomotive and rolling stock

The company owns a total fleet of 66 locomotives of these 46 are operational while 20 have been cannibalized and will be sold as scrap. These locomotives are from General Motors (GM) and General Electric (GE). Their average age is about 19 years but the GM locomotives of the GT36 type are only five years old. Availability of locomotives has improved since the new management took over. Poor maintenance and control of locomotives, coupled with lack of starting batteries have resulted in far higher fuel consumption than can be regarded as normal. In the Southern Africa Railways Network (SARN) region, ZR consumes 8 litres of diesel per km while other railway companies consume only 4 litres per km. The margin is too high. The locomotives meet the needs of the customers in terms of Block and System train working.

Some locomotives have been leased to Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM). The company's locomotive fleet comprises of:

General Motors GT36 CU-MP, 3,600 horse power. Date of purchase: 31.04.93

General Electric U20C, 2,150 Horsepower. Date of purchase: 1.04.71

General Electric U15C (shunt), 1,650 Horsepower. Date of purchase: 1.04.71

#### 1.2.6 Signalling

ZR has Centralised Traffic Control (CTC) type of signalling with the control room at Kabwe, plus remote stations and signalling cabins at main yards. The system is non-functional in most cases. Instead ZR uses a paper-based order system, transmitted via radio and telephone. The method is slow and cumbersome because not all locomotives have a radio. Most road crossings are equipped with flashing signals but many are dysfunctional because it is costly to maintain them.

#### 1.2.7 Human resources, housing and social aspects

At the time of the attachment, the company was grossly overstaffed, top heavy and organised in a way which responsibility and authority rarely corresponded. A number of workers were retrenched in 1998 with a view of downsizing the labour force further, from 5,200 to 2,400. Management has failed to pay those who were retrenched in 1998. It was originally envisaged that those who were retrenched would be paid by December 1999, but by the time of the attachment, management was still working out strategies of raising the money. The company sold off its housing stock to employees and sitting tenants. The employees have already signed the house-purchasing contracts and are yet to be given the title deeds.

The company operates a medical scheme consisting of seven medical clinics funded in part by employee contribution. The police duties and structure have drastically been altered to reduce overtime and increase efficiency. Using the savings thus generated, trial contracts have been let with three major international private security firms in Zambia.

### 1.2.8 Finance, purchasing and information technology

The failure of Roan Antelope Mine Corporation of Zambia (RAMCOZ) to meet their debt to ZR and non-support by the World Bank (WB) has put ZR in serious pressure of finance. Options of revolving credit agreements, loans and mortgages are being pursued.

### 1.2.9 Passenger and freight traffic and operations

It is expected that ZR will continue to import fuel for the nation throughout the year. The monthly target being 34000 tonnes. Some fertilizer and related transport is expected from Nitrogen Chemicals of Zambia (NCZ) who have been awarded a belated contract, although revenue benefit will be marginal.

### 1.2.10 Local and international network

ZR has a 1067 millimeters (MM) gauge throughout and the line is a stretch of 1, 266 kilometers (km) from Victoria Falls Bridge to the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in addition to the Copperbelt branch lines. At Choma, the line is linked to Maamba Collieries through the Masuku 65 Km branch line. Another branch line links Livingstone with Mulobezi, formerly the source of Mukwa Timber and building sand. The railway has 3 stations of interchange, 20 goods stations, 205 private sidings, and 6 marshaling yards. ZR serves an important role for both international and local transport and is also a vital transit route for other countries. There are several towns along the line of rail, but the headquarters is in the central part of Zambia at Kabwe with the offices situated at the corner of Chilufya Mulenga Road and Buntungwa Street. The locals call it Top office.

ZR caters for both passenger service and freight for the business community. It is linked to other railways that are linked to the international markets through the ports. Dar-Es-Salaam, a distance of 2, 035 Km, Maputo, a distance of 2, 020 Km, Durban 2, 770 Km, and East London 2, 870 Km. ZR is also linked to Congo in the north through Societé Nationale Des Chemins De Fer Du Congo (SNCC).

### **1.3.0. Brief Description of services offered to customers**

ZR offers its customers two types of service namely passengers and freight service. These services fall under the Directorate of Traffic and Marketing. ZR management attaches great importance to the safety of customers' goods whilst in transit. To provide this vital service they aim at providing the best value for money in the transport sector. There are many types of wagons designed to meet customers needs. These are general-purpose wagons, container carrying flat wagons, tank wagons, covered wagons and livestock wagons.

#### **1.3.1 General purpose wagons**

These are suitable for both bulk and packaged products. Dealers in bulk products such as maize, Soya beans, cotton, fertilizer, coal, concentrates, pyrites etc., are encouraged to utilise the general-purpose wagons. The advantage of customers having their products conveyed in these wagons are that Tarpaulins are covered on top and chained once loaded to avoid pilferage and other losses enroute.

#### **1.3.2. Container carrying flat wagons**

This is the quicker and safer way of conveying goods across international borders. Commodities ideal for containerization include cotton yarn, coffee, tea, carpets, machinery and spare parts, electrical appliances, etc. The container flat wagon has the capacity to convey 44-57 tonnes of containerized cargo.

#### **1.3.3 Tank wagons**

These wagons are for the conveyance of bulk liquids like petroleum, edible oils, diesel, kerosene, aviation fuel, acids, molasses and cement. The capacity of the available tank wagon fleet ranges from 28,000 litres to 49,000 litres (27-43 tonnes).

**Table 1****Table 1: The diagram indicating revenue-generating wagons as at September, 1999**

High-Sided Opens (HSO)	2,695	40-45 Tonnes
Drop-Sided Opens (DSO )	219	38-43 Tonnes
Hoppers	100	44 Tonnes
Covered (K)	495	36-52 Tonnes
Container Carriers	142	44-57 Tonnes
Livestock Carriers(L)	65	22-57 Tonnes
Petrol Tank (PT)	90	36400-49000 litres (27-43Tonnes)
heavy Furnace Oil (HFO) Tank	14	39000 litre (38 Tonnes)
Sulfuric Acid tank	71	23225 litres (42 Tonnes)
Mollasses/Tallow Tanks	24	38,800 litres (53 Tonnes)
*	43	14-40 Tonnes
Total In Stock	3,966	*

Source: ZRL Brief History, 1987:6

**Table 2****Table 2: Locomotives as at September 199**

Class	No. In service	Horse power
GT 36 CU-MP	13	3,600
U20C Diesel-Electric	34	2,150
U15C Diesel-Electric	12	1,650
CMI-shunters	2	1,100

Source: ZRL Brief History, 1987:6

#### 1.3.4 Livestock wagons

ZR has wagons ideal for the transportation of animals like goats, sheep, donkeys, pigs, and cattle.

#### 1.3.5 Status of freight services

All sensitive products are conveyed under the escort of the armed ZR police.

Customer goods are, therefore, protected throughout the journey. The company attaches great importance to the safety of customer's goods while on transit.

ZR operates a variety of train services tailored to meet particular requirements of customers. There are three different types of traffic system available for customers.

These are the System Train, Pick up Train, and Block Train.

#### 1.3.6. The System Train

The system train was designed to convey products between major stations in one region and stations in another region. All the goods in a system train will either be destined for one station or for redistribution to other stations. These trains ensure quick delivery.

#### 1.3.7 The Pick Up Train

This service was designed to serve customers within a region, picking up and delivering wagons, as the train moves from the origin to the destination. Farmers and other business clients situated along the stations in the region are well serviced by this train

#### 1.3.8 The Block Train

The block train is designed for customers with bulk consignments on a timetable deliberately set to suit their specific requirements. A block train ensures quick and safe delivery and quick turn around of equipment.

### 1.3.9 Tariff Structure

ZR offers a flexible pricing system, which is purely customer-oriented. The current rates are contractual rates negotiated between ZR and their customers are about 90 percent. ZR offers its customers various flexible payment modes for its services, such as cash payments, letter of credit, bank draft, and bank transfers. The goods are cleared at the final destinations unlike road transporters where one has to clear at the boarder. The new management has moved slightly from the company's traditional official tariff book, which was seen to be rigid and not to be responding to the market demand. This eliminates the inconvenience of the customer or clearing agent moving to and from border points.

### 1.3.10 Mode of Payments

ZR and the customer agree on a certain rate for a certain volume of goods and a specific period. Regular customers are given special rates for the goods of considerable tonnage. This is done between specific points. Back haul rates are given to customers moving export goods to and through the south using the home bound Zimbabwe and South African wagons.

There is also what is called negotiation international through rates. Negotiations are carried in two ways in order for a customer to get rebated rates. These are

- (i) The originating railway administration in one country should make negotiations with other railway administration in another country on behalf of the customer.
- (ii) The railway administrations coming together as one to meet the customer usually at a venue convenient to the customer.

### 1.3.11 Status of passenger train services

The company provides and receives passengers to and from Tanzania Zambia Railways Authority (TAZARA) and National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) at Kapiri Mposhi and Livingstone, respectively.

The company runs two types of passenger train services: the express train and the ordinary train. The express train, which runs three times in each direction per week is an overnight train. It operates between Livingstone and Lusaka. It departs Lusaka for Livingstone at 19:30 hours on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. It leaves Livingstone for Lusaka at 18:30 hours on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. The express train sleeper is very comfortable and dependable; it has dining facilities on board.

The company between mid-1996 and the end of 1997 used to have an express service train from Lusaka to the Copperbelt called the Kafubu Express which was discontinued due to lack of passengers. It used to leave Ndola for Lusaka every Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday. It used to depart from Lusaka for Ndola on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The departure time at both Ndola and Lusaka was 08:00 hours while arrival time was about 15:15 hours. The numerous fleet of minibuses between Lusaka and the Copperbelt made ZR to close the route, since many travellers preferred minibuses to the train.

The ordinary passenger train operates daily between Kitwe and Livingstone. It departs Livingstone every day at 09:00 hours. It leaves Kitwe for Livingstone at 20:00 hours.

The company provides three classes of passenger accommodation. These are Sleeper (1st class), Standard (2nd class), and Economy (3rd class). The passenger train provides a free luggage allowance of 50 Kg for Sleeper, 35 kg for Standard and 25 Kg for economy.

#### **1.4.0 Equipment**

The company has cranes and forklifts to facilitate the loading and off-loading of customer goods. This is done at major goods offices and sheds. There are sheds and goods offices at all stations. These serve the business community in the area of dispatching and receiving goods.

#### 1.4.1 Advanced Cargo Information Services (ACIS)

ZR has installed the Advanced Cargo Information Systems (ACIS) that monitor and keep track of all customers' goods. Arrangements are under way to install computer terminals at major customs premises/ office to enable customers trace or inquire on the movement of their cargo from their offices.

#### 1.4.2 Safety

Management ensures that the customer's safety is taken into consideration. There is always a police officer to escort the goods whilst in transit. They ensure that the wagons are clean and meet the standard, the fire fighting equipment is always on the train, employees handling goods have the basic knowledge and experience and speed limits are stipulated and adhered to.

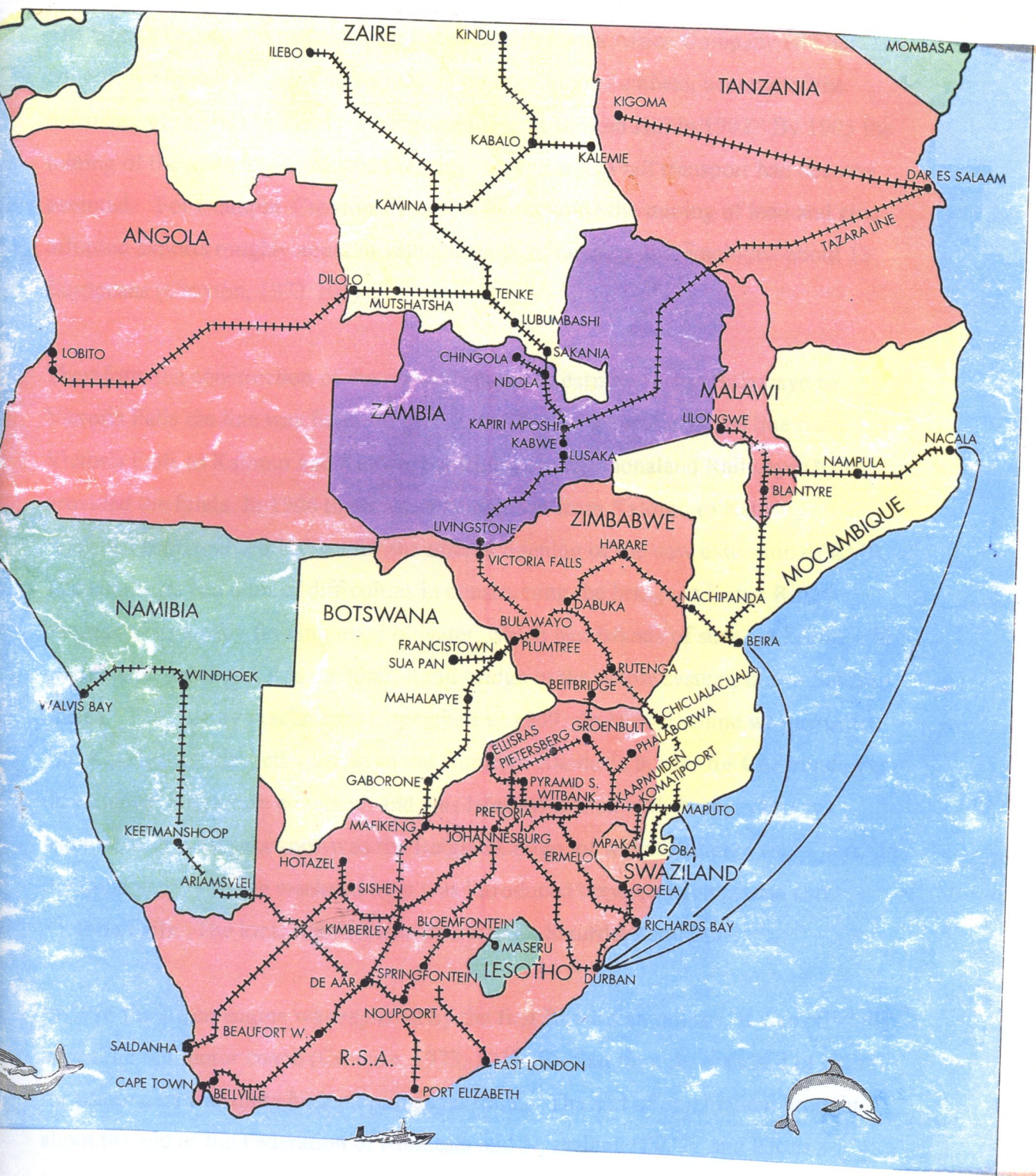
#### **1.5.0 Historical overview of the company**

In sub-Saharan Africa, railway transport cannot be replaced by any other mode of transport. This is because sub-Saharan Africa is a highly mineralized territory and the transportation of the bulky minerals can only be done cheaply by use of railway transport.

The railway line in Africa was built between 1800 and 1920. This period is considered to have been the greatest age of railway building in Africa. Figure 4 representing SARN is part of the dream Cecil John Rhodes had. He wanted to build a railway system from Cape to Cairo across Africa (South Africa to Egypt). Croxton wrote that the main objective of the straight line was to cut Africa through the center and the railway was to bring up trade along the route Croxton, 1973: 13).

The Rhodesia Railways (RR) opened up a great span of land-locked territories in the centre of the continent. Unfortunately Rhodes did not live to see part of his vision turn into reality. That is, he did not see the extension of railways into Northern Rhodesia

Figure 3: Map representing Southern Africa Railways Network



Source: Swaziland Railways, 20th

(NR) as Zambia was known then, and further up north into Congo. What is now ZR used to be part of RR, which was an extension of the SARN.

The British Crown granted a charter to the British South Africa Company (BSA). The condition was that the BSA constructs a line of rail into Zambezi, because of the discovery of the rich minerals like zinc and lead at Broken Hill in 1902. By 1905 the mining of the mineral deposits had reached a stage where rail transport had become essential. For example, Croxton states that by this time the mining of lead and zinc afforded exports roughly equal in value to those of farming and employed about 13 Europeans (Croxton, 1973:105).

Therefore, the construction of the railway started in earnest. From Bulawayo to Victoria Falls the line was financed by RR, but for the extension of the line from Victoria Falls to Kalomo and Kabwe, the Bulawayo Mashonaland Railways (BMR) provided the funds. In 1906 there was an extension from Kalomo to Kabwe. A special train reached Kabwe for the official opening of the new extension of BMR. The engineers had a lot of difficulties in constructing the bridge at Kafue River, because of its steady flowing mass of water, which had islands of suds. A bridge 470 metres long was built; it is the longest rail bridge in the whole system, in sub Saharan Africa. The railway reached the Copperbelt in 1909. In 1910, the line was extended into Katanga to Elisabethville, from the Northern Rhodesia border for Chemin de Fer du Katanga, a Belgium company, and was later associated with further railway extensions in what was known as the Belgian Congo, of which Katanga was a part. In the same year 1910 the weekend train was introduced between Livingstone and Victoria Falls. The local train service operated on Saturdays and Sundays.

In 1916 the steam engine was replaced by the first Rhodesian railcar. It was officially called the rail motor coach (Croxton, 1973: 101). By that time the standard of comfort for passengers was quite high on passenger trains. The end of colonialism brought about the end of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (FRN), and RR as a federal asset. Upon the dissolution of the federation the ownership and financial

responsibility for RR was passed to the government of Southern Rhodesia (SR) (now Zimbabwe) and Northern Rhodesia (NR) in equal shares from January 1, 1964.

However, RR continued as a unitary railway system under the control of a board of management responsible for the railways in both countries. The Higher Authority Board (HAB) was constituted with four members from each government.

When NR became the Republic of Zambia in October 1964, there was a feeling of antagonism and political tension towards Rhodesia. The problem was further magnified in 1965, when the SR white minority government announced the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), which Zambia was opposed to. In 1966 the Zambian ministers on the HAB advised the Railway Board of the country's inability to continue to function as members.

The Board of Management assessed the problem of division and consequently accepted that SR and Zambia should establish autonomous railways in their own countries from the midnight of June 3, 1967. Consequently the Zambia Railways Board (ZRB) was established on July 1, 1967. Prior to the split, ZR was called the northwestern region of RR with Kabwe serving as the regional headquarters during the period. The picture that Rhodes had, therefore, changed into more organised compact units on national basis.

#### **1.6.0 Effect of the split on the image of ZR**

After the split the railways system in Zambia went through difficulties. To begin with very few white people who had the expertise opted to remain with ZR. Most of them opted for SR. The government of Zambia had to recruit railway workers from the United Kingdom, East Africa, Sudan, and India. Some of the recruited staff were of very low calibre.

Shortage of experienced men had an adverse effect on the essential maintenance of track, locomotives, and rolling stock and to some degree in the manning of the trains.

In the first few months, service terribly reduced because of poor service and the transit time dropped drastically. There were severe delays in the movement of traffic and turn-round of wagons.

It was difficult for one to imagine the story of a pioneer line which turned to be a well equipped railway system deteriorate speedily in a short space of time.

Croxton lamented: In 1968, the standard of staff discipline was appalling and there were 269 derailments, 13 main line collisions and 53 severe siding accidents in the first year of local control (Croxtton, 1973: 240).

Many accidents were due to gross negligence, speed, lack of maintenance and drunkenness. In 1970, 9 diesel and steam locomotives had been written off due to accidents, while a further three diesel and several steam engines had been very badly damaged. One locomotive suffered a burst boiler through failure to maintain the water level.

From the time ZR became autonomous management has passed through several hands. An engineer from Sudan took over management in 1969, but left after two years. The Zambian Government on behalf of ZR signed an agreement with Canada for a team of Canadian senior personnel to administer the management and operations of ZR for five years. This was linked with financial aid to buy wagons and equipment from Canada and Japan. This team struggled with the problems of running the railway and training of the local staff.

The ZRB was established in 1967, when the government passed the Zambia Railway Act (ZRA). The Government transferred Zambia Railways to Zambia Industrial Mining Corporation (ZIMCO) a holding company, with effect from January 1979. This necessitated the incorporation of a new company. In 1982, the ZRA empowered all assets and liabilities of the ZRB to ZR, a company under the Companies Act of Zambia (CAZ). It became a limited company (ZRL) in 1984, registered and

incorporated under the CAZ. The company was granted autonomy to determine its own tariffs. Therefore, the ZRB was dissolved.

ZIMCO was dissolved in 1995. ZR was placed under the control of the Ministry of Transport and communication through a Board of Directors. The Minister of Transport and Communications appoints the Board.

The next chapter will look at the terms of reference, justification of the attachment, methodology used and literature review on the public image, from the other continents, Africa and Zambia.

# Chapter 2

## Context of the Practical Attachment

### 2.0 The general outline

Zambia's economy has a long way to go, despite progress in privatisation and budgetary reform. Inflation, while slowing down, somewhat continues to be a major concern to the MMD government. Zambia's copper mining sector, which accounts for over 80 percent of the nation's foreign currency intake, is struggling. Production rates of copper have gone down. Until perhaps a deal on the sale of the copper sector is concluded, the economic prospects will remain clouded.

The government responded to the new economic reforms emphasising liberalisation as well as privatisation. The government has put in place the Investment Act (IA) of 1993 and the Competition and Fair Trading Act (CFTA) of 1994. Subsequently, the government brought ZR a new management under HIFAB with a view of managing and restructuring the ZR system.

The focus before independence was mainly on the north-south rail and road corridors, which was built partly to exploit Zambia's mineral resources on the Copperbelt region and also to serve the administrative and strategic objectives to the colonial rulers. The focus changed after independence when the government shifted attention to provide alternative routes to the north due to political instability in South Africa and other neighbouring countries in southern Africa.

Unfortunately the country never paid attention to the development of its own internal transport network, which plays a major role in promoting economic growth. The government allowed the railway track infrastructure it had inherited from the colonial era to deteriorate due to lack of proper maintenance and replacement.

As a result the ZR's entire track infrastructure has reached a state of disrepair and requires attention to improve its operating performance to an acceptable level.

## **2.1 Framework of the practical attachment**

The PA was undertaken to look into and experience the combination of ills which dogged ZR including by vandalism. ZR has established a reputation of unreliable schedules and thefts of goods. Consequently the public has lost confidence in the company. With this in view, a major image building was undertaken between July and October 1999.

The attachee as a development communicator and change agent hoped to do something for the organisation in order to redress the situation by highlighting the problems to management, their major customers and travelling public. The PA was centred on the company's public image. The student was among other things, to assess at the current perception of the public image by both employees and customers. She wanted to identify the factors affecting the corporate image. Above all, the student wanted to make suggestions to ZR on how it could improve its public image.

## **2.2 Terms of reference**

The terms of reference, project deliverable, resourcing and time scale were set out in the Project Proposal (PP):

- a) help to bring about a good public image to ZR by suggesting ways and means of bringing about change
- b) Give suggestions on how communication can be improved between management and employees in order to create constant rapport
- c) Assist ZR in implementing their public image goals through effective communication by suggesting better ways of communicating to their major customers and business associates through staff in the Public Affairs Department.

**Table 3**

**Table 3 Place and Number of FGDs Conducted.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>No of FGDs</b>
20-23/08/99	Kabwe Headquarters	17
27/09/99	Northern: Ndola	2
28/09/99	Northern: Kitwe	1
28/09/99	Northern: Mufurila	1
29/09/99	Northern: Chambeshi	1
29/09/99	Northern: Chililabombwe	1
29/09/99	Northern: Chingola	1
30/09/99	Northern: Luanshya	1
06/10/99	Southern: Livingstone	2
08/10/99	Southern: Choma	1
27/10/99	Southern: Lusaka	1

*Source: Schedule made by the attachee for the conducted tour*

After the FGDs with the various employees at headquarters, northern, southern and central districts, the sentiments of the employees were presented verbally to the Managing Director, Director Finance, Director Technical Services, and Director Human Resource and their heads of department. This was done between 10th and 21st September 1999. Table 3 shows places where FGDs were conducted by the attachee.

### 2.3 Justification

The Master of Communication for Development (MCD) degree is a developmental programme. The main aim is to teach communication skills and strategies. The practical attachment is part of the MCD programme, which is done, in partial fulfillment of the MCD Programme with Mass Communication Department at The University of Zambia. Undertaking a practical attachment is a mandatory component of MCD. These strategies and skills are helpful in solving organisational problems. The attachment, therefore, focused on assessing the impact of the bad image of ZR on the customers, both freight and passengers and to examine how the new management is trying to change this image. There was need to find out how the new management was fairing in terms of image building. The data collection procedure included the participant observation approach, FGDs, in-depth, and spot interviews as well as performing certain daily chores with members of staff in the Public Affairs and other departments.

Furthermore, the attachee was involved in the re-building of the image by participating in the image building activities of the company.

Both the *Bi-lateral agreement* (1997) and the *Times of Zambia* reporters have identified the problems below, which support the perception that ZR has a poor public image. The *Bi-lateral agreement* states:

a strong leadership will be provided at the same time will be sensitive to the prevailing internal conditions within the organisation and to the

external social and political environment. A participative management style, which will be objective orientated, will underpin the successful attainment of the project objective. This is to restructure the company in order to make it an actor on the international financial scene so that it will qualify for additional financial support and investment. The intention of the new management team is to position ZR so as to rapidly achieve the long-term objective, that is, to establish an efficient sustainable railway to the extent that it qualifies for financial support for further infrastructure rehabilitation and development ( SIDA, 1997:passim )

The attachee also reviewed some articles in the newspapers which focused on identifying the need for restructuring. One *Times of Zambia*, the report said:

The rail firm which is undergoing restructuring was spending about K200 million per week on oil lubricants for locomotives, utility and personal-to -holder vehicles before the restrictive measures. Managing director, Robert Crawford, confirmed the control measures which he said were aimed at saving the firm from total collapse (*Times of Zambia*, August 31: 1999).

Furthermore, It was reported in the *Times of Zambia* that Crawford defended the control measures by saying:

They were not meant to punish anybody but were in the interest of the company which he wants to be operating profitably. These are measures, which could help us reduce on unnecessary costs, we are not allowing extra fuel allocation and are giving the exact required amount"(*Times of Zambia*, August 4: 1998).

The *Times of Zambia* further reported:

The new management would put 2,600 employees on transitional leave (forced leave). They aimed at downsizing in order to improve efficiency and reduce costs, as over the years traffic levels had dropped drastically without corresponding to manpower (*Times of Zambia*, August 4, 1998).

However, some managers were retrenched as well. On the outgoing managers, Crawford noted:

The management structure was top-heavy a situation which affected efficiency. The Director Technical Services, Mr. Hansjorg Ebercher, said the positions occupied by the laid off managers have since been declared irrelevant (*Times of Zambia*, August 2: 1998 ).

In addition to the above measures the company is also taking stringent measures to secure the line of rail. To this effect, a *Times of Zambia* report said:

ZR has tightened security on its 1,300-km rail track including all the vital installation so as to curb sabotage and vandalism. Managing Director, Mr. Robert Crawford, confirmed in Kabwe the serious financial issues the railway was facing.

The Managing Director, Crawford, confirmed in Kabwe about the serious financial issues the railway company was facing. A reporter in the *Railway Gazette* further highlighted this:

Crawford bemoans the inequity of road competition, especially the road fund duty on rail diesel fuel...Passenger numbers have continued to decline because of the poor reliability and abysmal time keeping resulting from the condition of track and locomotives, which are in a poor state (*Railway Gazette*, 1999:598).

**Table 4****Table 4: Customers who were visited by the attachee**

<b>Date</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Name</b>
28/10/99	Northern	Nkana-ZCCM
28/09/99	Northern	Consolidated Tyre Services
28/10/99	Northern	Northern Breweries (Kitwe)
28/10/99	Northern	Mufurila-ZCCM
28/10/99	Northern	Charalambous Transport
29/10/99	Northern	Chambeshil Metals
29/10/99	Northern	Chililabombwe
30/10/99	Northern	Ndola Lime
30/10/99	Northern	Chilanga cement-Ndola
08/10/99	Northern	Chingola-ZCCM
08/10/99	Southern	Amanita Premier oil
08/10/99	Southern	Chilanga cement
08/10/99	Southern	Maamba Colliers Limited
08/10/99	DRC	Cimekat
08/10/99	DRC	SNCC
27/10/99	Southern	Shaik Import & Export
27/10/99	Southern	Dimon Zambia (T D C L)
28/10/99	Southern	Nitrogen Chemicals Zambia

**Source: *Planned schedule for the Conducted tour***

## 2.4 Methodology

Data was collected using both primary and secondary sources. The methodology for data collection included participant observation, FGDs and spot interviews. The attachee also performed different chores with members of the different departments. Secondary data was obtained from books. The attachee used to report back to management at various levels from time to time to share findings and experiences.

It was also the purpose of this attachment to investigate the relationship between ZR and its major customers. The list of the departments and companies visited is in Table 4.

The following were the PA questions:

- a) Does the company have a deliberate policy for image building?
- b) What is the company image?
- c) How can it be improved?
- d) How do employees contribute to a deliberate policy for image building?
- e) What factors hinder them from performing well?
- f) How can they improve the human resources and their skills in order to boost the public image?
- g) What, according to the thinking of the employees had caused the bad image.
- h) Does the company meet the customer needs?
- i) What information would the customer need ZR to make available?

j) What obstacles/barriers were customers encountering in their dealings with ZR?

The above PA questions were asked to management, employees, passengers, and major customers. The questions listed above provided guidance for the attachee in determining whether the company was fairing well or not.

The railway staff were classified according to their socio-economic status and level of education. They were further stratified into unionised, middle management and new management team. The new management team consisted of Managing Director, Director Finance and Information Technology, Director Technical Services, Director Human Resources. The Director Traffic and Marketing and the Company Secretary were not available during the whole period of the attachment. The middle management incorporated managers, heads of departments, technicians and professional staff. The other group included unionised staff. These are junior members of staff such as craftsmen, clerks, drivers, messengers and cleaners who belong to the Railway Workers Union of Zambia (RUWZ).

The attachee met these groups department by department for FGDs and other relevant materials. Selection of people to be interviewed was done at departmental level because that is where the participants were found. Occasionally some were met in the boardroom. The Manager Public Affairs was of the view that gathering employees in one place would affect the normal operations of the company. He made appointments on behalf of the attachee to see the people individually or in small groups.

Spot interviews were done at various railway stations while the travelling public and major customers were met at their premises and stations respectively as indicated in Figure 7.

## **2.5 Limitations**

There were some problems encountered during the PA. For example, time was inadequate, in which the project was to be completed.

This created a lot of pressure on the attachee. The attachment was over a period of four months from 1st July to 31st October 1999. The attachee was not given much work to do at the beginning. The proposed timetable was not followed except towards the end of the attachment. Therefore, time was a major constraint in that many days were needed for data collection to ensure that as much information as possible was collected. This was not possible because the PA was scheduled for only four months, in which the work required in the PP was supposed to be collected. Therefore, there was not adequate time to visit all the designated stations in the southern and northern districts.

In the PP the attachee and the passenger department were supposed to put up posters in the ZR passenger train within the first three months of the attachment. The posters were, however, put up very late because of lack of expertise to produce the posters on the computer.

Some companies were not covered because managers who deal directly with ZR were not present at their places of work during the visit. The attachee was not allowed to help beyond a day in the preparation for the 73rd Lusaka Agricultural and Commercial Show. The ZR chairman for the Agricultural Show Committee stopped the attachee from participating in the organisation of the show. Reasons were not given.

## **2.6 Literature review**

Currently there is very limited literature on the corporate image of railways. The only literature available was in journals.

The citations below are from various authorities on railways. Different authors have presented views on what creates a good or bad image of a railway company and these views are summarised here.

### 2.6.1 Quality service, Just-In-Time concept, and customer care

Most authors have underscored the importance of quality service for a good corporate image. This corporate image strategy has been combined with Just in Time operations philosophy with technological innovation in order to increase operating profits in the railway industry. Numerous good success stories have appeared in literature.

However, most authors on public image have stressed the importance of a strong corporate face as a strong marketing tool.

Hart supports the above view. He maintains that the success or failure of the communication planning process will at the end of the day rest upon two key factors: the commitment and energy of top management, and the willingness of other individuals to share their experience and expertise towards a common interest.

Rutter said:

preparing Swedish State Railways (SJ) for a deregulated and competitive market meant changing from a product focus to a customer orientation in SJ workshops and depots. Two years on, project 2000 is meeting all its performance goals. (*International railway Journal*, 1999:10).

In trying to steer the SJ railways and its employees towards a more open framework in the next millennium, Johannesson said:

Swedish State Railways is still reorganising and rationalising as it tries to find its own level in an increasingly deregulated railway environment (*International railway Journal*, 1999:19).

being as one of the European countries that have gone furthest in deregulating their railways, Sweden has a lot to teach others.

The Traffic Director of Swaziland Railways (SR) Ngubane in Swaziland railways says:

After 30 years in railways transport Swaziland Railways is determined to remain a big player in the local and regional transport sector. It will continue to conduct business along commercial lines but most important, is to provide service tailored to requirements. Swaziland railways will remain the leader through a gradual process to new service development ( *Swaziland railways*, 1999:25).

In *Railways Gazette* it is report that the ZR Managing Director, Crawford believes:

Customer care will help. By reorganising and improving customer contacts, ZRL has reversed the decline and is budgeting for 1.8 million tonnes this year (*Railways Gazette*, 1999:598)

Most authors have insisted on the need to keep the union informed on all important matters of the railways to enhance the good image. Rutter argues:

the trade union attitude shifted from being passively resistant, to understanding the need for change and participating in the change process. This will bring about a work culture, which would develop the image of national railways positively. Everybody in the company will be searching for efficiency, quality, and excellence (*Railway Africa*, 1999:10)

The factors discussed above provide guidance for the government to determine whether it is worth investing in rail infrastructure. However, relatively little is known about railways being aggressive as their counterparts in road and air transport.

Johannesson of Nordic Railways has complained:

there are high charges on the railways in Germany. This makes rail uncompetitive because road traffic is subsidised. The sending of a freight train into another country attracts a fee that does not apply to road haulage. 'This punishes rail which is an environmental answer to freight transit' (*International Railway Journal*, 1999:19).

Nevertheless, he adds:

The road haulage is aggressive and its growth is rapid, because the government has favoured road transport than rail. Most railways companies in the world complain of unfavourable conditions imposed on them by their governments (*International Railway Journal*, 1999:19).

## 2.6.2 Government to play a big role in maintaining a good track infrastructure

The literature has revealed that some problems being faced by railways in developing countries are not peculiar to them only, but are faced by railways in the North

In the *International Railway Journal*, it is reported:

The Danish State Railways (DSB) became an independent public corporation in January 1999, but it has only a one-year contract with the government for a new investment project. The Danish government is dragging its heels on rail investment, and this is severely restricting Danish State Railways' freedom to act. We do not want to wait for the

slow process of decision making in government. We want to be more proactive than reactive (*International Railways Journal*, 1999:26)

Literature has revealed that the major problems facing railways in Africa in general and in the SADC region in particular are poor quality track and badly deferred maintenance. There is a lot of retrogression because most governments in Africa do not recognise the importance of track rehabilitation. For example, SARA estimates the extent of deferred track maintenance on the SADC railways at \$252m. In *Railway Gazette* it is written that Southern African Railways Association (SARA) was conceived as a strong voice in political circles for the regional railways. This was a result of unfair treatment they were receiving from their government in favour of road transport. It was SARA's primary and urgent purpose to lobby the governments on behalf of the railway companies.

However, a report in *Railways Africa* argues the point further:

...Inefficiencies and deferred expenditure, colonial and post-colonial planning, and the realities of the modern world in a competitive environment have a clear message to the railways of Africa. ...A recurring theme was poor track quality and rolling stock, badly deferred maintenance, inefficient services, overstaffing and poor manpower utilisation, budget deficits and inability of government to make good the shortfall" (*Railways Africa*, 1999: 13).

The literature therefore suggests that some countries in developing countries do not allocate any money for the rehabilitation of the railway infrastructure. Furthermore, in *Railway Africa*, Makumbe, the General Secretary of the Southern African Railway Association (SARA), highlighted, the severity of the problems by stating that the maintenance expenditure of US\$ 252 million was deferred over the last 10 years.

He wrote:

There is every indication that those railways which deferred the most were the ones who found themselves in the poorest position with regard to service levels. It is SARA's submission that SADC governments continue to subsidise road transport whilst subsidies have been withdrawn from railways. (*Railways Africa*, 1999: 13).

Notwithstanding this, it is imperative that African countries support the maintenance of their railway networks because most of them are producers and exporters of bulk raw materials which could only be transported cheaply by railway transport.

As already pointed out, the SADC region's major problem was the poor track.

A correspondent, in *Railway Gazette* reported:

The major problem facing railways in SADC region is poor track.

SARA estimates the extent of deferred track maintenance on the SADC railways at US\$252m. Worst affected are Zambia (US\$104m), Zimbabwe (US\$50.8m), Mozambique(US\$ 26m) and TAZARA(US\$19.9m).(*Railway Gazette*, 1999:597)

### 2.6.3 Railway needs to be restructured

Most railway companies need to adopt what is happening in the North where rail infrastructure is being separated from business. The governments in the developed countries are helping out with maintenance of the railway infrastructure. On the restructuring of the railway companies, Luka, has written:

Many African railways are looking at concession or some to reverse a disastrous decline in traffic, caused all too often by neglect and deferred maintenance (*Railway Africa*, 1999:596).

Restructuring of the state railway has produced a distinction between operating and infrastructure. For example, as pointed earlier in SARA's submission, Punugwe of Southern African Transport and Communication Committee (SATCC) echoed:

SADC continue to subsidise road transport whilst subsidies have been withdrawn from railways. It is estimated that the annual cost of transport overload control enforcement in South Africa is only R80 million while the cost of overloading damage is a staggering R800 million. The major concern to railway industry is the fact that railways continue to pay full levies towards road maintenance on diesel fuel for locomotives running on tracks. Railways continue to subsidise their competitors and are yet expected to 'sink or swim' by central governments notwithstanding such glaring inconsistencies echoed (*Railway Africa*, 1999: 13).

In *Railway Gazette* there is an international report on Southern Africa in particular Zambia. In a report they have said:

...In March 1998 a team from HIFAB international AB of Sweden, in association with DE-Consult of Germany, began a 30-month contract to manage and restructure Zambia Railways Limited on behalf of the Swedish international Development Agency. The management team found it was running a railway in a far worse condition than it had been led to believe. Infrastructure and rolling stock was in an appalling condition after many years of deferred maintenance. In the preceding 10 years, annual freight traffic had fallen from over 4 million tonnes to just 1.4 million. The main tasks identified were to:

- reverse the decline;
- improve accountability;
- cut staff from 5,800 to 2000

tackle the maintenance backlog;  
seek external funding for downsizing and strategic rehabilitation; and,  
operate a balance budget (*Railway Gazette*, 1999:598).

#### 2.6.4 Government's position

The current SARA president, Crawford, who is Managing Director of ZR, believes:

SARA's emphasis is now beginning to change: while the absence of a level playing field remains a major obstacle to the sustainability of Africa railway businesses, SADC governments are now committed to addressing the problem, and progress, albeit slow, is at last being made (*Railway Gazette*, 1999: 597).

Furthermore, a USAID-funded workshop report in *Railway Gazette* noted:

SARA's objectives concludes that lobbying is useless if the railways could not deliver an adequate service, and SARA should give more attention to this...recognising that there is an urgent need to improve service quality if railways are to increase their market share. SARA has helped develop a corridor-based approach to planning and management of the main international routes. Ten multi-disciplinary corridor Management Groups have been formed, each responsible for joint marketing initiatives and for improving operational performance. (*Railway Gazette*, 1999: 597).

#### 2.6.5 The role of trade unionist

The role of trade unionist in the rebuilding of the company image was also examined. Trade unionists are very influential, and should not be ignored in order to solve problems between workers and management.

### 2.6.6 Importance of Advertising

There is need for any company to set aside some money in the budget for advertising.

Knutton said:

that for any company to grow positively there is need for advertising  
The air line industry has been very good at perpetuating many of the  
myths surrounding the air travel. Seductive advertising extolling  
comfort, frequency, convenience and glamour should increase at odds  
with reality of travelling or transporting by rail. Therefore it is  
inevitable to advertise. But rail operators need to be more aggressive in  
their advertising to get their message across (*International Railway  
Journal*, 1999:1).

In conclusion, therefore, available literature points to the need for a company to satisfy its employees, customers and maintain the track infrastructure. However, it further revealed that a perfect track infrastructure will help the company have quality service, and a positive image will be portrayed. The railway company should take aggressive advertising seriously. The team from HIFAB international AB Sweden, in association with DE-Consult of Germany should work extremely hard to bring ZR to its past glory.

#### **In conclusion**

The next chapter explains the conceptual framework of the primary issues tackled by the attachee during the attachment. The concepts discussed will help the reader to understand the communication linkages at ZR.

# Chapter 3

## Conceptual framework

### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at the conceptual framework of the main issues tackled in the PAR. The theories discussed will help to interpret and illustrate the experiences of the attachment within the theoretical context of communication for development. The conceptual framework of this attachment is based on Organisational and Management communication.

Before the conceptual framework is discussed thoroughly, it would be better to define the term theory.

### 3.1 What is a theory?

A theory as propounded by Professor Francis P. Kasoma at his inaugural lecture as full professor of journalism and mass communication, is a set of inter-related propositions that suggest why events occur in the manner they do. A theory serves four functions:

- a) helping us to extend knowledge by making us go beyond what we see or the data given;
- b) stimulating and guiding us to do research on the issue;
- c) helping us to organise a wide variety of experience into relatively few propositions. In this respect, theories are like maps which serve as symbolic constructions in highlighting those aspects or features we want to pay attention to (Kasoma, 1999: 2).

The theories in this paper will enable the reader to understand the communication management and operations of ZR better.

The application of these theories to ZR or elsewhere may help the company to improve its public image.

The approach to communication has to be consistent. Companies must not only behave well but be seen to behave well. Their global reputations on how they do business and how their activities affect the environment is under intense scrutiny from the mass media. Their public relations profile can have a significant effect on their ability to sell their services, products, recruit staff and expand in new markets.

### **3.2 What is communication?**

Having looked at what a theory is we can now turn to look at communication.

Communication is a vital tool in human interaction and participatory methods. It is important because it helps people to create and maintain relationships. It helps people to interact with one another freely.

Various scholars have attempted to define communication. The well-known and widely respected researcher in diffusion Rogers in his book *Diffusion of Innovations* has defined communication as:

The process by which participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding. Diffusion, therefore, is an example of a particular type of communication in which the message content that is exchanged is concerned with a new idea.  
(Rogers, 1997:17).

Cronkhite (1986) defines communication as a symbolic process, which focuses on human symbolic activity. Earlier in 1976, Chronkhite wrote, "Human communication has occurred when a human being responds to a symbol."

Stevens (1997:8) defines communication as the discriminatory response of an organism to stimulus.

Berelson and Steven (1964) define communication as “the transmission of information, ideas, emotions, skills etc., by the use of symbols, words, pictures, figures, graphs, etc.”

Miller (1966) says “communication has as its central interest those behavioral situations in which a source transmits a message to a receiver (s) with conscious intent to affect the latter’s behaviors.”

Dance (1967) defines “communication as the eliciting of a response through verbal symbols.”

Moemeka (1989). defines it as “the application of the process of communication to the development process.” How this definition is taken depends upon how one construes the meaning of the process of Communication.

Infante et al (1997) says: “ communication occurs when humans manipulate symbols to stimulate meaning in other humans.”

Each definition describes communication in a different way, though similar in some aspects. The attachee has chosen Infante et al.’s definition for the purpose of this report, because it puts emphasis on both the sender and the receiver since communication is the process of transferring meaning from sender to receiver. This process involves a source, encoding a message, decoding by a receiver, and feedback ( Figure 5). There are other types of communication models by Shannon and Weaver,

Scramm and Berlo. Weaver’s mathematical theory has been analysed in detail.

Measurement in communication research, as well as in other social sciences is not accurate, because each person is entitled to a free choice and an active mind.

In the model given in Figure 5, Infante and his associates have pointed out that during the process of communication, the receiver can be sender and the sender can be the

receiver. Therefore, it is an ideal two-way communication, where receiver and sender are constantly interchanging roles.

The channel in Figure 4 refers to the way the message is conveyed from sender to receiver through mass media or interpersonal communication. Mass media transmission includes radio, television, leaflets, brochures, newspaper, and sometimes drums (especially in Africa). Interpersonal communication would be by word of mouth, or any of the five senses of perception. Feedback might be verbal or non-verbal, positive or negative. Lack of response could be feedback.

In verbal codes members of a non-dominant culture may develop their own set of symbols. They usually unify them against the dominant culture and reinforce their identity as members of the subculture. Therefore, communication can be traced to the core system of verbal communication as explained above.

Non-verbal codes refer to non-verbal communication where actions are used to initiate interaction. This can be direct conversation, turn taking, guide emotional expression and clarify relationships, or terminate relationships. For example, Africans and Japanese do not look in the eyes. It is impolite to look in the eyes of the elders when talking to them while it is impolite to talk to an American looking elsewhere. Therefore gestures which accompany words for emphasis also vary from place to place, because of differences in culture.

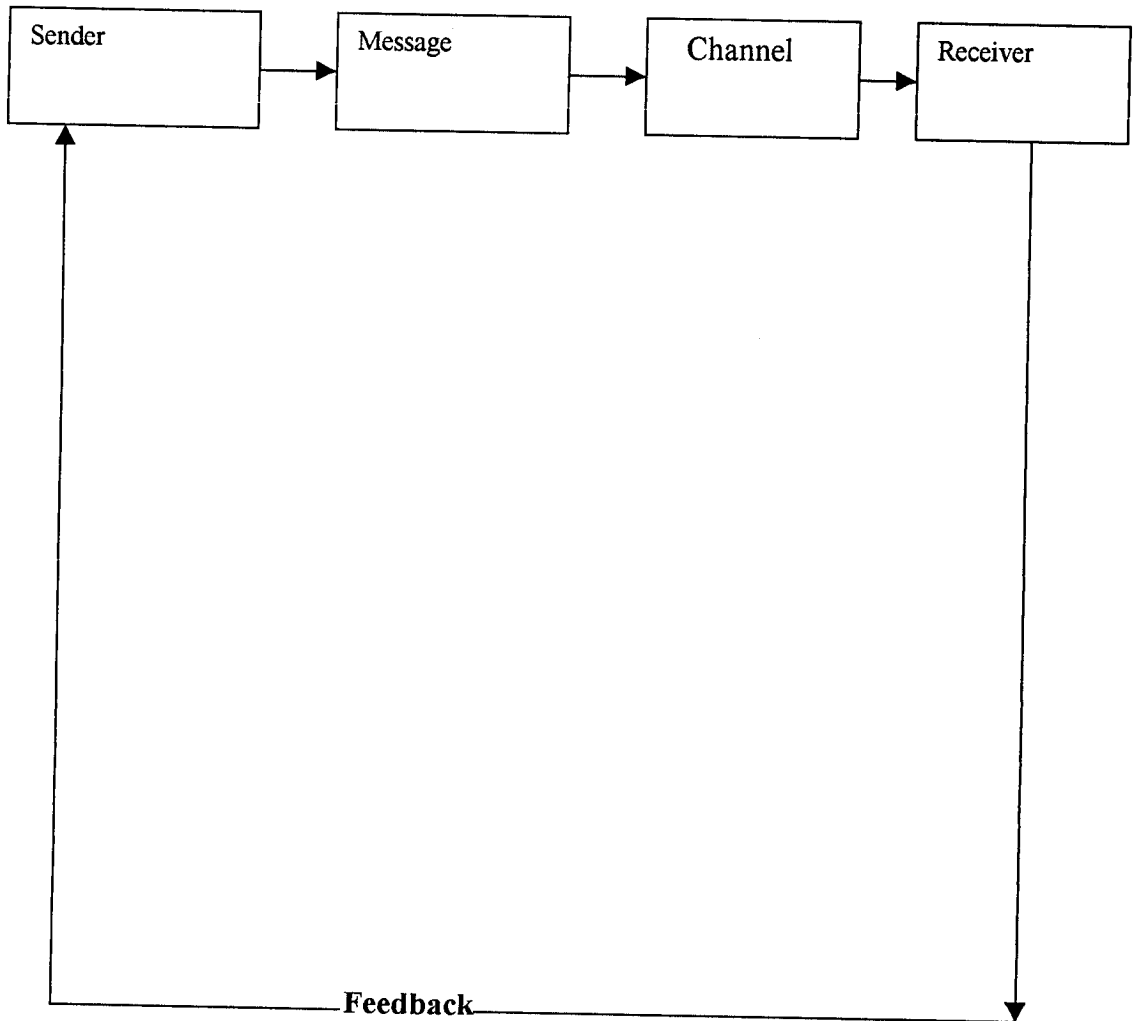
Some theorists have pointed out that none can predict human behaviour. Most theorists like Katz and his associates believe that they will never be able to make Predictions in communication because people disagree on definition and nature of communication.

### **3.3 Communication context**

Communication occurs in a context. The communication context is a type of situation in which communication occurs. Communication in one context can take different forms compared with communication in another context as shown in Figure 4

Figure 4

Figure 4: A model of communication process by Melkote.



Source: Melkote

Types of communication include intrapersonal, interpersonal, mass, group, organisational, public, family, health, and intercultural.

- a) Intrapersonal communication refers to the sharing of human experience or environment within oneself.
- b) Interpersonal communication involves face to face interaction between two or more people and is believed to be the most effective in achieving persuasion.
- c) Mass communication is the sharing of human experience or environment between a mass medium organisation and a scattered and undefined audience. Communication is not just between two people and the organisation which is communicating to the unknown audience without any immediate feedback. This normally is mediated by broadcast or print media.
- d) Organisational communication refers to the organisation as well as individuals within the organisation sharing human experience and environment. That is, communication within and between organisations.
- e) Group communication refers to sharing of human experience within a group. For example, women, professional bodies, and the church. Each group has its own way of communicating.
- f) Public communication refers to sharing of human experience and environment at such forums as meetings. It also involves video, audio equipment, theatre, slides and computer.
- g) Health communication involves health care providers and health care receivers
- h) Intercultural communication occurs between people of different cultures

- i) Family communication occurs between family members.
- j) Small group communication involves several people.

Since this report concentrates on management and organisational communication of ZR, the report will highlight this type of communication.

### 3.3.1 Interpersonal Communication Theory

This theory recognizes the impact of mediated technology on interpersonal communication and the influence of face-to-face interaction on media. According to Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955), Krugman, (1980), Servaes (1991) in Infante et al (1997), Interpersonal communication is the most persuasive form of communication. Despite interpersonal communication being the most powerful tool of communication, all other forms of communication must be looked into in order to ensure successful development in an organisation. The growth of a nation begins at interpersonal level. Rubin and McHugh (1987) said:

We communicate more to reduce the uncertainty we feel about how to behave. We are more comfortable when we have more information  
(Rubin et al 1987:279)

Interpersonal communication was investigated through a theory called independent mindedness in organisational communication.

### 3.3.2 Group communication concepts

According to Infante et al. (1987:294) certain communicative behaviour in groups, (such as using humour to get members to relax) are intended to accomplish certain goals (for example, releasing group tension). Someone enacting those behaviours can be described as playing or taking a given role. In 1948 Benne and Sheats provided an analysis of roles which has remained influential over the years. They said there are three main categories of roles enacted by group members. Group task roles pertain to

group discussions aimed at selecting, defining, and solving problems. The following roles are often performed by more than one person in a group. One person might perform several of the twelve tasks during the course of a discussion. In fact, a single incident of communication might involve several roles: a member offers an opinion, follows that with a question and then tries to energize the group so it will not “drag its heels.” The specific task roles identified by Benne and Sheats are:

- a) *initiator-contributor*—proposes new ideas, changes, and procedures.
- b) *Information Seeker*—asks questions about information and others’ suggestions.
- c) *Opinion seeker*—asks questions about the values guiding the group.
- d) *Information Giver*—presents evidence relevant to the group problem.
- e) *Opinion Giver*—states his or her position on issues.
- f) *Elaborator*—clarifies what is being considered, extends the analysis of an issue.
- g) *Coordinator*—gets people to function together, puts information together.
- h) *Orienter*—keeps group focused on goals, points out departures from goals.
- i) *Evaluators-Critic*—argues the evidence and reasoning pertaining to issues.
- j) *Energizer*—motivates group toward a quality decision.
- k) *Procedural Technician*—performs routine tasks, busywork.
- l) *Recorder*—writes group proceedings so a record exists (Infante et al 1987:294-295)

The other category of roles is called group building and maintenance. These roles are concerned with the socio-motional climate in the group, that is, the feelings that group members have for one another and the tasks are recognized as very important in terms of the group achieving its task goals. These roles are:

- a) *Encourager*—provides positive feedback to members, shows warmth.
- b) *Harmonizer*—reduces tension between members and mediates conflict.
- c) *Compromiser*—attempts to have each party in conflict gain something.
- d) *Gatekeeper*—promotes opens channels of communication and participation by everyone.

- e) *Standard setter*—suggests and uses standard to evaluate the group
- f) *Group commentator*—describes the process operating in the group to change or reinforce climate.
- g) *Follower*—conforms to group ideas, acts as a good listener. (Benne and Sheats in Infante et. Al, 1987:294-95).

These roles are concerned with the group achieving its purpose. However, not all behaviour in a group conforms to this selfless behaviour. Sometimes a person tries to satisfy individual needs which may be totally irrelevant to the group's task.

### **3.4 What is organisational communication**

Organisational communication is the vital link in the chain of events, that is, the process of managing a business. It is the single factor that makes an organisation viable, successful, effective, and enduring. Organisational communication involves the formal transfer of information throughout the hierarchy.

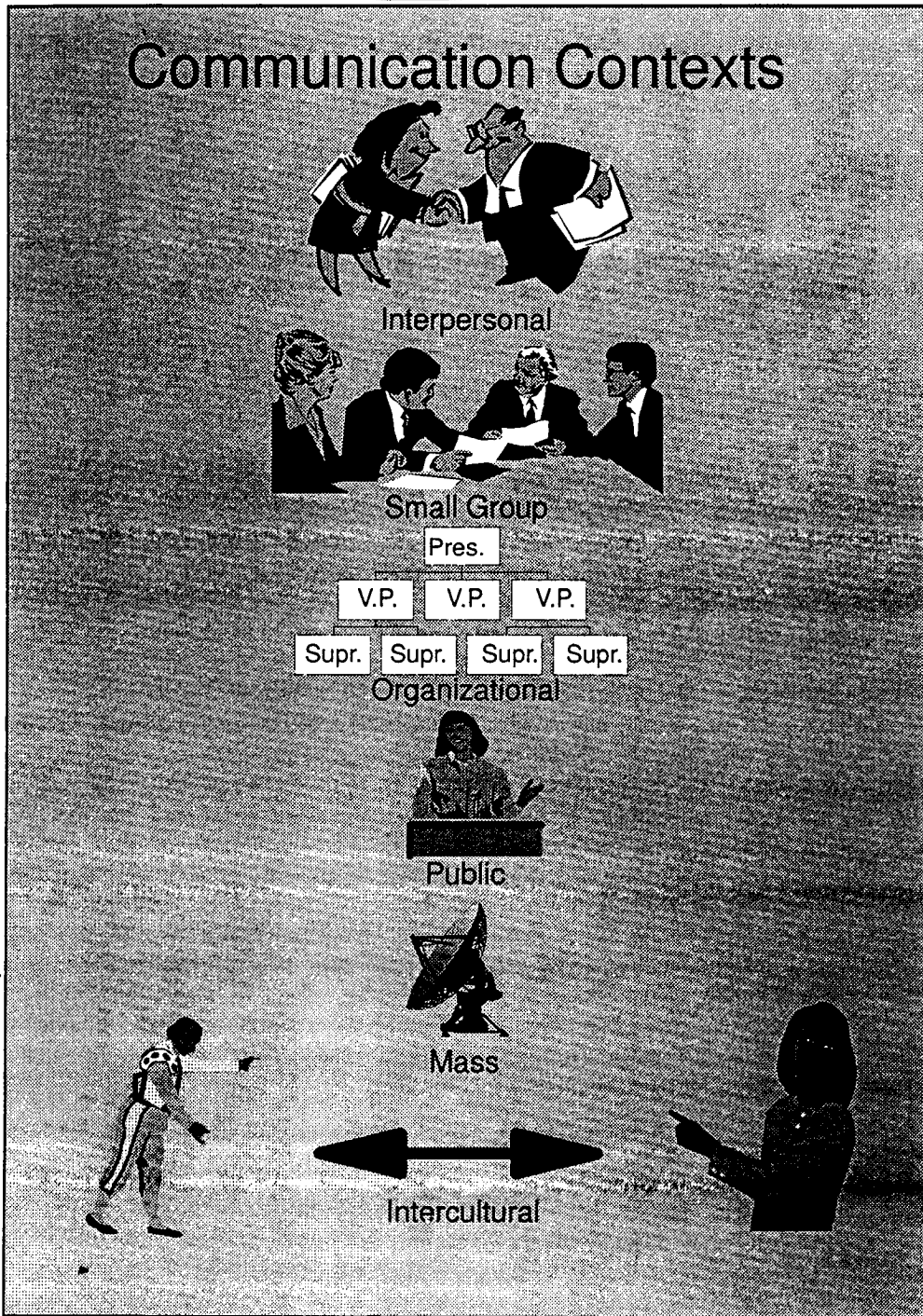
The definitions below give a variety of explanations of what organisational communication is. Those who have defined organisational communication include: Dissanayake, (1985:20), Scramm (1959), Lerner (1966), as well as Rogers (1995).

Rogers (1995) who introduced diffusion of information as a means of modernization defines organisational communication as:

...a stable system of individuals who work together to achieve common goals through a hierarchy of ranks and divisions of labour....Organisations are created to handle routine tasks through a pattern of regularized human relationship (Rogers, 1995: 375).

Figure 5

Figure 5: *Communication contexts*



Source: *Infante et al, 1987:1*

In Infante et al define it as an activity which involves:

exchanging messages to stimulate meaning within and between organisations and their environments. Organisational communication involves one to one communication (such communication between superiors and subordinates), small group communications (meetings, for example), public communication (including public speeches by a chief executive officer), and mass communication (press releases, company newsletters, new product announcements using teleconferencing, perhaps even internal corporate television programmes). Each of these forms of communication may occur between members of the same organisation, or between organisations to coordinate behaviour with each other or with their environment (customers, the government or competitors) (Infante et al, 1997: 323).

#### 3.4.1 An organisation as a system

Organisation is the process of ordering and co-ordinating functions, and the job holders fulfilling those functions, in an enterprise. The following authors have defined organisation:

Reuss & Silvis define organisation as:

- a) the exchange of information, ideas and feelings, or in a word exchange.

They stress the two primary responsibilities of:

- i. support organisational objectives, policies and programmes
- ii. to meet audience needs.

- b) The two responsibilities can be viewed as contradictory or mutually exclusive, but doing both jobs well or closing the gap between the two becomes the real and constant challenge to organisational

*communicators (Infante et al, 1997, passim)*

Fundamentally, Senger (1980) defines organisation as a group consciously put together to carry out some well-defined task. According to this definition.

Schools, political parties, the national football league, the Ford Motor Company, the communist party are all organisations. All of these have been put together to co-ordinate the activities of a large group of people in pursuit of a goal ( Senger, 1980: 11)

The key to gaining support for organisational objectives, policies and programmes is to serve the organisation audiences and to know what information they want and how they prefer to get it. Hodgetts and Kuratko (1991) define organisation as:

A series of interpersonal communiqués in which one person verbally conveys information to another, until the last person in the chain or network is informed. Yet when the process is examined in an organisational context, as opposed to an interpersonal one, its dynamics are much greater because both formal and informal communication networks are involved (Hodgetts & Kuratko, 1991:193).

Foster (1972) underscores this aspect:

an organisational structure allows a group of people to work more effectively together in achieving stated goals than they might otherwise do working alone. Like managers therefore, organisations must be goal-oriented (Foster, 1972:135).

Massie (1979) defines organisation as:

a structure and process by which a cooperative group of human beings allocates its tasks among its members, identifies relationships and integrates its activities towards common objectives (Massie, 1979: 67).

It will be observed that this definition involves the structure of tasks (organising), the placement of human beings in the structure (staffing), and the integration of the two functions into a human system of activities.

The conclusion can be made here that organisation and organisational communication work hand in hand in big parastatals.

Further, Rogers has pointed out:

in the past organisations were established for the purpose of achieving certain goals. It now covers the objectives of the organisation which to a certain extent determine the structure and function of the organisation (Rogers, 1995: passim).

Rogers further observes:

organisational structures are highly centralised, almost like a paramilitary unit. There is no equal authority. They are organised in a hierachical authority structure that specifies diffusion who is responsible to whom, and who can give orders to whom (Rogers, 1995:376)

### **3.5 The Growth of organisational communication**

Before the industrial revolution in England, the owners and the employees knew each other well. This was possible, because most businesses were small and operated as family enterprises. After the industrial revolution, manufacturing businesses grew much larger.

The expansion of the manufacturing businesses brought about the rise of a class of managers hired by the owner to make a business run smoothly. About the same time theories were developed to explain how managers could perform more efficiently and

effectively in their jobs. There were several theories which were established. They included the classical theory of organisations which was developed by various scholars outside the communication field:

Weber (1909-1948) wrote about the benefits of bureaucracy and Fayol (1916-1945) identified key principles of management such as division of work, centralization of power and the hierarchical chain of command. Another scholar was Taylor (1911) who developed the scientific management theory. This was meant to correct the unsystematic ways in which organisations operated at that time. To increase productivity, Taylor stressed scientific analysis of tasks and advocated for upward communication as well as a method of receiving feedback for managers but also as a means for managers to learn the rules-of-thumb for performing their jobs.

There are some theorists who have propounded other theories. These include Roethlisberger & Dickson, (1939) who conducted studies in the Electric Hawthorne Plant in Cicero, Illinois. The two stressed on change in perspectives on management. As a result of the Hawthorne studies, theorists began to consider the effect of communication and human relations on productivity. Managers were taught to consider informal as well as formal organisational communication systems and were further taught to listen to their employees and stimulate upward communication. The Hawthorne studies revealed that workers' social needs and desires for informal communication were important.

Argyris (1957) and Likert (1971) stressed the role of communication in helping organisation members adjust to other members and to the environment. They believed that the manner of communicating orders was extremely important. Likert emphasised on open communication and participative decision making as a means of increasing satisfaction and productivity. Argyris stressed that the incongruence between workers needs and the organisation's demands led to alienated workers.

Another scholar was Follet (1971) who stressed the role of communication in helping organisation members adjust to other members and to the environment. She believed that the manner of communicating orders was extremely important. Barnard (1938-1968) was a successful businessman as well as a theorist. He noted the core role of communication for the executive.

Katz & Kahn (1978) developed a system approach to organisations. Reacting against the assumptions of both scientific management and human relations that there is only one best way to manage all workers. Finally, Fiedler (1967) as well as Redding et al. (1972) developed contingency theories of group leadership. These theories stressed using different styles of leadership appropriate to the needs created by different organisational situations. They also identified the following components of the “ideal managerial climate”: supportiveness; participative decision making; trust, confidence, and credibility; openness and candor; and emphasis on high performance goals.

Besides the above theorists, two communication scholars greatly influenced the communication field. These were Thayer and Redding. Thayer (1961) wrote *Administration Communication*. This work was recognised as providing a theoretical foundation for the communication field. In 1968 Thayer stated the three basic principles of communication:

- a) the operational communication system concerns task related information.
- b) The regulatory communication system fulfils members’ needs for information about orders, rules, and instructions and regulates the organisation’s information-processing function.
- c) The maintenance and development communication system provides feedback on people and communication-network related to the organisation’s internal functioning or to the organisation’s

connections with its environment (public relations, employee relations, advertising, and training functions, for example). Thayer believes this communication system provides “prevention maintenance” for the organisation (Infante et al., 1997: 325).

The other scholar, Redding, (1972) in *Communication within an organisation*, gives a summary of theory and research on organisational communication which is based on a review of almost 600 works. The principles stressed in Redding’s book are found in most communication textbooks today. He emphasised:

...meaning is created in the mind of the receiver; “ the only message which a person can act on is the message which he receives (Redding, 1972:37).

He also considered topics such as listening, feedback, communication overload, and organisational climate. Based on his literature review, he identified ideal managerial climate; supportiveness; participative decision making; trust, confidence, and credibility; openness and candor; and emphasis on high performance goals.

### **3.6 How organisational and management communication theories can be linked to ZR**

The attachment topic was the public image of ZR. That is, how does the public perceive ZR passenger train and freight services? How does the business community perceive ZR? What about the employees?

For the corporate image to stand out there is need for the public affairs department to have dialogue with all the different corporate audiences. These include the media, shareholders, employees, the community, customers, suppliers and governments at various levels in countries in which they are operating.

ZR uses downward flow of information. The company generally provides information through the various print channels. Since employees and customers have been demanding more information from ZR management is using one-to-one programmes and feedback through customer care. They have recognised that these programmes are not a solution to the overall poor communication, but contribute to a healthy communication environment.

Management communication is a process that communicates public affairs, including its contribution to strategic planning and decision-making, options for management and budgeting, control and evaluation, marketing, internal communication and crisis management. The framework of managing relationships with the customers will be examined as well.

Several theories of communication have been put forward but only some have been discussed in this paper. For example, the persuasion theory and the functional theory. The persuasion theory states that there are two different models of human behaviour, namely, the rational model and the irrational model. The functional theory put forward by Katz et al (Infante, 1990:362), tries to bring together these two different models of human behaviour:

human beings are non thinking creatures whose beliefs are easily influenced by people around them and who even can have their perception of reality influenced by their own desires. The rational model suggests that the human beings are intelligent and critical thinkers who can make wise decisions when given ample information(Infante et al, 1990:362).

How can both be true? Katz and his associate further argued that the answer to this puzzle is that human beings are both rational and irrational, depending on the situation, the motivations operating at the time, and so forth. They further argued that

the tendency for people to operate with different ways of thinking has important implications for understanding attitude change.

Communication in an organisation like ZR can easily be achieved and made effective. This can be done by using an appropriate medium or channel suited to the institution. Mass communication, for example, can be used for spreading messages to the public about the changes brought by the new management. But interpersonal communication a powerful tool, should work side by side with mass communication in order to achieve the desired goal. This is because information should be kept two-way. That is from top management to the subordinates, and from the subordinates to the top management. Development would be possible only if there is viable communication.

It is not, however, the two-way flow which stands the test of time. One finds that the two-way flow model has evolved into a multi-step flow model, which is often used in diffusion research. This is very common in big organisations like ZR where new ideas and practices have been adopted in order to fit into the new ideas of new management. However, the interest of the customer and the worker also have to be considered so that people's rights are not trampled upon.

### 3.6.1 Agenda setting theory

According to Infante et al. (1987) Agenda setting is the function of mass media to influence the relative importance of our attitudes on issues. The perception of issues is related to the attention given to those issues by the media. The media has the ability to choose what is important. Issues become of great importance when placed before the media than before. For example, Lippman, W.(1922) said:

The media had the power to present images to the public. Since first hand experiences are limited, we depend on the media to describe important events we have not personally witnessed. The media provide information about 'the world outside'; we use that information to form 'pictures in our heads' (Lippman, 1922:passim).

This was emphasised by the scientist Bernard Cohen (1963). He said:

...the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its reader what to think about (Infante, 1997:366).

From the above quotations one can say that agenda setting argues that intense attention causes certain topics, issues, and individuals to become important to us. It is not enough to use Agenda setting. It is based on two way flow of information. The information can spread easily through multistep. Agenda setting is limited in its scope. It has the following three basic questions as the media tries to highlight issues to the masses.

### 3.6.2 Agenda building theory

Agenda building theory came up not to out do agenda setting but to compliment it. It was important for the attachee to suggest to new management to use agenda building as they rebuild the image of ZR. Agenda building describes as very powerful influence of the media. For example, the achievements which the new management has so far made, could be communicated to the public through the managing director's press statements and sometimes they can use the minister in the Ministry of Communication and Transport in a question answer session on television and radio. This should be encouraged because agenda building suggests that the way the media frames an issue and the code of words they use to describe something can have an impact. The use of a prominent person like the managing director, minister, or Swedish ambassador in disseminating the achievements and new strategies would be positive. This would help the public understand the transformation-taking place. Most probably new customers would be won over for both freight and Passenger train.

It is not enough to use agenda setting on its own in communication. Agenda setting is based on two-step flow model. This is a method where the researcher proposed that messages from the media first reach opinion leaders, who then pass on what they read or hear to associates or followers who look to them as influential. The information can spread easily through multistep. Many studies have shown that news is spread by mass media to a far greater extent than by personal sources. Agenda setting on its own is limited in its scope. It normally asks the questions if the media tries to highlight issues to the masses and as they try to influence masses.

### 3.6.3 Cultivation Theory

Another theory in media is called 'Cultivation Theory.' George Gerbner et al state:

Our perceptions of reality are 'cultivated' or encouraged to grow in a certain direction by what we read or see in the media (Gerbner, et al, and 1986:8).

Radio broadcasting, print media, Internet and television broadcasting have also been discussed. A theory that came from this hypothesis as stated by Priest was the assertion that the more violent television we watch, the more we would believe that the world is a violent place. This hypothesis was tested extensively by collecting data on television-viewing habits and beliefs and then looking for a relationship between the two.

Therefore, the cultivation Theory in general has been supported by investigations of this relationship. This can be used in ZR organisation for the promotion of a good image. The role of advertising in organisation and management communication could play an important role in changing the bad perception of ZR by its customers and the community at large.

A successful ZR on primetime television may be depicted as a unique and attractive passenger and bulk transport company accomplishing its goals through hardwork,

talent, discipline, and determination despite the poor infrastructure. Although a negative image of ZR is presented in news accounts, cultivation of relatively positive portrayals of ZR in an entertainment context may help as recorded by some empirical studies.

Although there has been dramatic expansion of media in organisational and management communication in recent years print media is still the most widely used. ZR has a print media. In addition to print, audio visuals and a variety of other media are available to ZR. For example the bulletin board by the side of the legal offices.

Media research is related to this topic. It helps to determine which advertising vehicles are the most efficient and what type of media schedule will have the greatest impact. Research in public relations involves monitoring relevant developments and trends. It also involves studying the public relations position of an organisation, examining the message produced by an organisation and measuring how well an organisation is living up to its social responsibilities. They evaluate public relations campaigns and determining what factors make it more likely for public relations materials to be published.

At ZR the company magazine (Railnews) remains a popular print medium. This type of internal publication is usually aimed at an organisation's employees and contains a variety of articles, ranging from those on company programmes and policies to others on the hobbies or life styles of employees or members. They usually seek to inform, recognize employees or member contributions to the organisation, motivate and show employees that their organisation is a good one to be associated with. Some internal publications like newsletters are also distributed to selected external audiences.

Railnews, for example is produced quarterly for employees and friends of ZR. It contains the national railway news, related articles and uses photographs liberally. The Manager Public Affairs, who is the editor, is convinced that this format best

reaches its diverse audience because a magazine can be viewed at leisure and shared with family members.

The editor uses the magazine format because he believes it is the best way to communicate about the company to its multiple readership in an interesting and exciting way and to emphasize the company's concern for quality products and service.

#### 3.6.4 Organisational and management communication in ZR

Organisational and management communication spreads information about the successful story of ZR as a stimulus to others. It keeps a dialogue open between business partners in development and helps the smooth implementation of the project.

Thus the importance of communication in both the information system of the enterprise, and in the personal career of the manager or employee, warrants careful attention. As already pointed out, communication is the process of conveying messages. In order that communication may occur, messages must be composed, transmitted and understood.

Therefore, the potential of communication as a management tool is so great that it is seldom recognised or appreciated. Organisational and management communication is also vital in dealing with customers and others outside ZR. Effectiveness in dealing with personnel employed by ZR, and presumably engaged in joint efforts to achieve its objectives is greatly dependent upon communication.

Successful communication for developmental programmes calls for a well-defined management strategy, specific goals and systematic planning. A communication plan at each management level for each unit must specify goals and types of information needed for planning and control. Formidable problems exist in this area, but communication research has thrown more light upon elements which bear upon

decisions. Careful design of information flow can largely shape and govern actual operations of ZR.

Organisational and management communication emphasises on many persons in the company playing a variety of roles, for the improvement efforts to be effective. For example, for communication for development programmes in a company like ZR to succeed, top management must be convinced of the merit of the improvement of the programmes with the government. They must initiate these programmes, and lead an active and continuing support. Therefore, enthusiasm by higher management when accompanied by good communication and understanding regarding purposes, will quickly find its way through lower levels. Indifference will work in the same way as systems specialists who have tried to bring programmes in through the back door have learned.

### 3.6.5 The Theory of Independent-Mindedness

In this chapter, the most adopted conceptual framework for communication theories regarding interpersonal communication inside organisations is based on independent-communication:

mindedness advocated for by Infante et al (1987). It involves the tendency of human beings having their own thoughts and opinions rather than passively accepting opinions of others to express and advocate their personal views.

ZR under new management is giving a lot of freedom of expression and responding to the suggestions made by the junior officers. This is benefiting the new management in a way. If this trend continues for the next two or three years it would help the subordinates to be more satisfied with their supervisors for encouraging them to contribute to topics related to their work and well being.

Achieving this goal requires creating conditions in which one can use his or her abilities, mental as well as physical, and in which one can see a close relationship between organisation success and his or her own personal success.

If an environment of this sort can be established at ZR, it is not unrealistic to expect a much higher degree of dedication or commitment by an employee to his work and the organisation.

The theory of Independent-Mindedness will accordingly result into self-development, high standard of performance, and a high measure of self-expression in one's work. Similarly, to be a good manager and good administrator an executive should avoid yielding to pressure of the moment, conflicting decisions or pressure exerted by the department at any given time. Infante et al. investigated argumentativeness in interpersonal communication inside organisational communication:

Independent-mindedness involves the tendency of people to have their own thoughts and opinions, rather than passively accepting the opinions of others, and to express and advocate those personal views. This theory examines effective organisational communication from two perspectives:

1. It predicts that employees prefer supervisors who give subordinates freedom of expression and affirm subordinates' self-concepts, and
2. it predicts that employees who are treated this way by their supervisors will benefit the organisation because they will be more productive, more satisfied with their jobs, and more committed to the organization (Infante et al. 1987:326) .

This theory assumes that customs held by the general society should also be affirmed in the workplace. While freedom and individuality are fundamental values, the

organisations usually adopt an autocratic form of management to gain compliance to rules and authority. Based on the assumption that macro and micro structure will be most effective when their values are consistent, researchers believe workers should be more productive and satisfied and perceive their supervisors as more effective when supervisors encourage independent-mindedness individually, and independence in their subordinates. (Infante et al.1987:326).

The theory of independent-mindedness has a hint of a systems perspective in that it treats individuals and organisations as part of a larger cultural system.

The theory assumes that organisation must reflect the larger culture of their workers if they wish to manage effectively. This theory has focused on a form of interpersonal communication and relationships. The theory suggests applications for group and organisation-wide communication.

This theory is applicable to ZR. It emphasises on applications for group and organisation and wide communication. Therefore it deals with four levels of a system-cultural, organisational, dyadic (superior-subordinate) and individual and implies a fifth level, small group communication. The communication contexts are found in ZR.

The subordinates were satisfied with the superiors who were argumentative but not verbally aggressive-superiors. The subordinates like such superiors because they feel superiors are more effective in influencing upper management. Therefore Infante and Gorden (1987) were right in their investigations to indicate that subordinates were more satisfied with supervisors who encouraged them to argue work-related issues, even if the subordinates themselves did not like to argue.

Gorden and Infante, (1987) pointed out that the key factor in a culture supporting employee rights may be the degree that subordinates like to argue and are encouraged to do so. Employees desired more freedom of speech in the workplace and that

employees who believed they had more freedom of speech were also more committed to their organisations and satisfied with their work and supervisors.

Norton (1978) places emphasis on how things are said rather than what is said. A speaker's communicator style guides how receivers interpret his or her words. The researchers expected that differences in communicator style would explain differences in supervisors' argumentativeness and influence with those at the top of the organisational hierarchy (upward influence).

According to Infante et al, communicator style may be viewed as an overall impression of a number of traits: contentious, open, dramatic, dominant, precise, relaxed, friendly, attentive, and animated. Traits can be combined to form a particular style. For example, an affirming communicator style consists of relaxed, friendly, attentive traits. Supervisors usually rate themselves on upward effectiveness and their subordinates on communicator style.

Argumentativeness most strongly predict upward effectiveness. For example, subordinates are happy with superiors who are composed, friendly, open, attentive, and relaxed. Subordinates judge animated and relaxed superiors as having the ability to understand their subordinates. It is most likely that such subordinates will get satisfaction by the end of the day. Pacanowsky (1982) has pointed out that the Theory of Independent Mindedness provides an example of the benefits of covering laws research in organisations. It has four major strengths:

- a) The theory is testable; studies have shown that argumentativeness is a favourable trait and that it is related to satisfaction with supervisors and upward effectiveness. Empirical support for the theory has begun to accumulate.
- b) The theory is consistent with other theories and research in the field. Although the theory challenges the conventional wisdom that

organisations should demand unquestioned obedience to authority, it produces research consistent with theories of employee voice.

- c) The theory is useful; it indicates how organisatiozational training should be changed to increase members' productivity.
- d) Finally, researchers have tested the theory using actual superiors and subordinates in organisations rather than by asking inexperienced participants to predict what they might do (Infante et.al. 1987: p 329).

### **3.7 The role of communication in ZR**

From what has been discussed in Chapter 2, there is hope that the new management team will boost the morale of its workers and in return raise the morale of the workers and the image of the company.

The main objective of the new management team is to restructure the company in order to leave a sizeable, workable, efficient and effective workforce, which will contribute to the improvement of the economic value of ZR. The aim is to bring the company to the point where value will be measured according to standard economic rules, especially the ability to satisfy the requirements of the passengers and freight traffic users.

This could easily be done if ZR management sees the need to have a powerful and effective employee communication system. Communication in an organisation has a role to play in image-building. The Railway Workers Union of Zambia (RWUZ) (president Enerst Ndamana), should also take a step to help the union communicate with its members frequently. This may bring about a great challenge in the company which may result in changing needs. The union should also, like the new management where possible, have current market information about the customers.

There is need for ZR to collect accurate data about their customers' objectives and vision. This will enable them realise the importance of QR and JIT. Cushman & King write:

Being a successful business executive in the 1990s will be very difficult, and require a new method of orientation. Rapidly changing technologies, the globalization of economic forces, unexpected competition, and quick market saturation are creating an increasingly complex, volatile business climate. As environmental turbulence increases, the rate of organisational change increases which is necessary for survival. To compete successfully in such an environment requires that executives employ new management assumptions and practices which emphasise organisational innovation, adaptability, flexibility, efficiency, and rapid response management.

(Cushman and King, 1992:1)

The discussion below gives definitions of: innovative, adaptive, flexible, effective and rapid response management in ZR.

- a) Innovative management within ZR refers to the functioning of communication system to change itself and to generate new ideas. That is, management and employee in product development, innovation in corporate structure, humanpower, utilisation, marketing servicing and competitive positioning.
- b) Adaptive management within ZR refers to employees changing values to suit customer's taste. For example, most of the customers believe in Quick Response (QR) and Just In Time (JIT). Both management and employees should adjust appropriately to government regulations and strategic positioning of competitors.

Flexible management in ZR refers to the capacity of the company to expand, contract, and shift direction on services and competitive strategy and to excise unproductive or underproductive units.

Efficient management at ZR refers to maintaining the company's reputation, employee satisfaction, customer care, and product quality.

Rapid response management at ZR refers to the ability to gain and maintain the reputable standard in speed of response to environmental change.

In conclusion, a high speed response management could be adopted, so that it could be developed, implemented, maintained through information technologies within a unique communication environment. It is possible for people to adjust to technologies through the use of effective communication processes. This can be done in developing and maintaining continuous company evaluation in order to improve the programmes. Therefore, if ZR noted what has been discussed above in its communication policies, the image of ZR can be improved.

The next chapter discusses on the experiences the attachee had during the attachment.

# Chapter 4

## Personal Experiences

### 4.0 Personal experiences

This chapter gives an illustrative account of the personal experience during the attachment at ZR which may help the reader to appreciate this report. Since it is based on the student's experiences and observations, there is a possibility of it being subjective.

### 4.1 Place and purpose of the attachment

As indicated earlier, the attachment was undertaken for a period of four months from 1st July to 31st October 1999.

Each student suggested a place of attachment where she/he would do her/his attachment. The author chose ZR, a railway transport company because of its core importance in the transport system and economic development of the country.

Prior to the attachment, the attachee made all necessary arrangements through the office of the Head of Department, Mass Communication in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences of The University of Zambia. The attachee started communicating with ZR Public Affairs Manager as early as March 1999. The Manager Public Affairs through Manager Training responded favourably to the attachee's request. However, before the attachment started the Head of Department communicated to ZR about what was expected of the attachee during the attachment

**Table 5**

**Table 5 Proposed Programme**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Activities</b>
26/07/99	Manager public Affairs to introduce the attachee to the Directorates & various departments	Be given details on different departments & their operations.
02/08/99	Main Workshops & Rolling stock	To advertise the Sales Outlet (make a brochure and give out to people in town & various work place & FGDs.
09/08/99	Attachee to work with safety & Environment and Infrastructure departments	Check on the Rail Crossing and the track. Are they being maintained with the little resources?
16/08/99	Freight, Operations and Passengers.	Find out how they are marketing the company. Are they concerned with transit time? Are they keeping the passenger train clean?
23/08/99	Formative Evaluation	Formative Evaluation
30/08/99	Human Resources, Police, Medical, Insurance pensions & Union offices	Is there a deliberate policy the motivation of workers other than the sale of houses
20/09/99	Travel to Northern District	. Visit branch lines & interview customers
04/10/99	Travel to Southern District	Visit branch lines & interview customers
18/10/99	Evaluation & Reports	Evaluation

The terms of reference of the attachment were agreed upon by both the University and ZR before the commencement of the attachment. For example, the attachee was categorically told that there was no provision of an allowance in the conditions of service for the student who was on attachment.

#### **4.2 ZR's expectations and orientation**

When the attachee reported on the 7th July 1999, she was given a warm welcome. The Manager Public Affairs introduced the attachee to members of staff in the department. The attachee was introduced as a post graduate student from UNZA on industrial break for research. Members of staff were urged to give the attachee maximum cooperation in order for the attachee to collect enough data for her thesis. The attachee was told to feel at home and work extra hard as part of the team. Though the department was aware of the importance of introducing the attachee immediately to other departments, this was only done after a month, just before she started conducting the FGDs. A letter was sent to all heads of departments introducing the attachee. Furthermore, the manager asked the attachee to make a proposed timetable as in Table 5 based on her Project Proposal (PP). The proposed timetable, however, was not followed due to pressure of work.

The department comprised the manager, SPAO, two Public Affairs Officers (PAO): a translator and a photographer, plus the secretary.

The first week was an orientation week. The attachee was given an orientation manual on the work of the public affairs department. During the orientation period the attachee read extensively on the operations of ZR to acquaint herself with the operations of the organisation. She did this in order to familiarise herself with various activities, achievements and constraints of ZR.

She was told of what was expected of her and what she was not supposed to do. She was expected to write articles for the newsletter fortnightly, conduct interview whenever they were visitors for the newsletter or Rail Magazine, which comes out

followed. The proposed timetable was supposed to be followed side by side with departmental work. Nevertheless, the attachee later realised that the delay was inevitable, because most departmental work, which the attachee was supposed to do, was to be done in a specified time. Deadlines were normally set.

#### **4.3. Work hours**

The attachee used to report for work at 07:30 hours. The day at ZR starts at 07:30 and ends at 1700. Morning Tea break is between 09:00 and 09:15 hours, Lunch 12:30 - 14:00 hours, Afternoon Tea break 15:30 and 1545 hours. During the morning Tea breaks, beverages like, Milo, Holicks, Nesquick, Cocoa, Coffee, Tea, and soft drinks like Coca-Cola, Fanta, Sprite, Mazoe with snacks were provided. There is a provision in the departmental budget for the refreshments.

The attachee used to make a cup of coffee/tea for herself just like any member of staff. Occasionally the secretary would make tea for members of staff if the departmental briefings pro-longed. There was a variety of brands of beverages and biscuits from which one could choose.

The office orderly could not make tea for the department as the usual custom in most organisations, because none of them was attached to a particular department. Each office orderly was given a minimum of sixteen offices to clean. It was practically impossible to make tea for the members of staff. THE SPAO, Mrs. Chushi told the attachee to feel at home and enjoy the departmental tea. Sometimes, Mrs. Chushi used to buy scones for the attachee and the secretary from the two ladies who were doing this as a away of raising funds for the Miss ZR contest. They both belonged to the accounts department.

#### **4.4 Office accommodation**

The attachee shared an office with the SPAO for the period she was there. During the initial stage there was no desk chair for the attachee from which to work from. She was using one of the sofas in the room, which was meant for the visitors. She used to

have a backache by the end of the day. After a month a chair was found for her. She shared a table with Mrs. Chushi up to the time she left. The attachee worked hand in hand with the SPAO. Every morning all departmental members reported at the Manager Public Affairs for a departmental briefing. During the day the attachee and the SPAO would visit the head's office whenever there were new developments

#### **4.5 Location of the office**

The MPA's office is part of the administration block. The secretary's office is attached to the Manager Public Affairs' office. The SPAO's office is adjacent to the manager public affairs' office and there is an office in between. The SPAO's office is placed on the line of human resources offices block. The offices for the PAO translations and PAO photographer are behind the administration block. They are slightly far away from the administration block

#### **4.6 ZR's expectations of the attachment**

The attachee was treated as full-time employee. She was expected to report for work at 07:30 hours and knock-off at 17:00 hours. She was not supposed to leave the premises without permission from the Manager Public Affairs, or SPAO. The attachee was supposed to be ready for any instantaneous duties outside Kabwe town. She was supposed to cover stories, attend meetings, official openings of seminars, attend to visitors during receptions and always to be ready for urgent assignments.

#### **4.7 Relationship with the staff**

The attachee related very well with all members of staff. The public affairs staff are very friendly and sociable. They involved the attachee in their day to day activities. Despite the company being big she was able to call most of the employees by name. Most workers were amazed at the resourcefulness of the attachee. Some junior officers looked at the attachee as a saviour who would bring light in the company and make known their plight to the new management. 'At last there is light at end of the tunnel,' they used to say.

The attachee enjoyed working at ZR under the management of Crawford. He is very versatile and hard working person, just like the attachee's supervisor Professor Francis P. Kasoma. The Manager Passengers was of great benefit to the attachee. He handled her with patience. Despite the attachee taking long in putting-up the posters he never pushed her around. The Manager Workshops, Mrs. Helen Mukumba, was very kind to the student. On one of the trips to Lusaka the attachee had a sumptuous meal at Chisamba Safaris and Ibis Gardens with her. Her kindness and humbleness was evident in the way she carries herself. The Manager Freight was very helpful to the attachee.

The attachee mingled freely with all the teams, that is, management, middle management, and the unionised members. An article in Railnews said:

During her stay she fitted in the system well. The likelihood of her being mistaken for a ZR employee was high. Before she left, she was able to call many employees from different departments by their names (Railnews, 1999:22).

The attachee is very grateful to management for the treatment which they gave her. She was invited to attend a seminar on customer care seminar, she is yet to receive her attendance certificate. They were ready to listen to her suggestions and some of the contributions she made bore fruit even before she left. The Managing Director, Crawford, is an amiable person, who has a developmental attitude towards work. He has maintained a very high profile and his flamboyance has stayed within the bounds of good taste. From the way he does things, the attachee was able to deduce that he believes in the involvement of all levels of management and executives in planning. For example, when the attachee presented to him the importance of using mass media, he asked her to tell the Manager Public Affairs to do cost/benefit analysis for the executive committee. Unfortunately the Manager Public Affairs did not see need of doing that.