

A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW ON PRIVATIZATION OF INDIAN AIRPORTS - A NEW DIMENSION IN PEOPLE MANAGEMENT EXPLORED

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ABSTRACT

Airport privatization in India has brought about changes in people management practices, driven by various privatization models and the integration of technology and innovation. This review explores the impact of privatization on people management strategies in Indian airports, highlighting challenges, opportunities, and implications. The study synthesizes 84 articles including mainly research articles, online sources (such as news articles and reports), and white papers from reputable sources including Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), EBSCO Host, other relevant case studies, and reports. The change management theory followed by a conceptual framework model is used to comprehensively examine the evolving dynamics of people management in airports post-privatization. It focuses on the role of strategic human resource practices in generating revenue, enhancing customer experiences, and prospering under private ownership or public-private partnerships. The review finds that airport privatization can catalyse operational efficiency, infrastructure development, and customer-centric services. It also emphasizes the importance of aligning organizational strategies with talent management practices to maximize the potential of privatized airports. The review offers strategic insights for policymakers, airport authorities, and scholars on how to channel privatisation's transformative power while ensuring the workforce's well-being, development, and productivity.

Keywords: Airport Authority of India, Change, Customer-centricity, Employees, Training, Up Skilling, Workplace.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian aviation sector has witnessed substantial growth following globalization and liberalization, marked by significant infrastructure development. The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MOCA) stated that currently, the Airport Authority of India (AAI) manages 153 airports, serving over 350 million passengers annually, with private operators in Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru (MOCA, 2021). The World Bank Group stated that the airports are categorized as government-owned, Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), or fully privatized (IBRD & IDA, 2022). Privatization, initiated in the 1980s, accelerated in the late 1990s and early 2000s, attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and improving operational efficiency and customer experiences. This trend is expected to persist as the government aims to enhance sector efficiency and sustainability.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) plays a pivotal role in shaping aviation policies, with initiatives like the air traffic flow management system and new airport development (MoCA, 2021). Privatization discussions extend to various Indian airports, aligning with a broader economic trend (Abbas, 2023) to boost efficiency and attract foreign investment. While privatization offers benefits like improved management, efficiency, and government revenue KPMG, (2018), potential drawbacks and alternative management approaches exist (Giri and Ashok, 2022). The effectiveness of privatization depends on

factors like market competitiveness, governance structure, and the airport's ability to achieve economies of scale. Careful regulation is vital to ensure fair competition and airport ownership significantly impacts performance (Vasigh et al., 2014). Investments in airport infrastructure contribute to economic growth and job creation, making transportation infrastructure, including aviation, essential for global competitiveness, especially in tourism (ILO, 2022). Amidst remarkable sector growth and improved passenger experiences, there's a substantial need for robust talent management practices and a skilled workforce to sustain the sector.

Governments increasingly outsource various HR functions to the private sector, citing the need for efficiency and flexibility. Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) agency ICRA Management Consulting Service IMAcS, 2016 identifies skilled manpower gaps in airport operations, including runway, taxi maintenance, fire fighting, terminal equipment, fuel complex, cargo handling, and CNS equipment maintenance, projecting needs up to 2030-35. Proponents argue that rigid public systems prompt outsourcing to leverage private sector advantages. Recent federal and state initiatives, such as the Competitive Sourcing Initiative and workforce recruitment outsourcing, offer empirical insights. States also explore HR outsourcing options, reflecting a growing reliance on the private sector.

Benchmarking and addressing research gaps in data heterogeneity are essential for comprehensive people management analyses at airports. The growing reliance on private and non-profit firms to provide HR functions has underscored the need for further research in this field. The public sector's focus on potential cost savings and efficiency gains has sometimes overshadowed the need for an employee-centric approach. Consequently, the study attempts to learn from both successful and unsuccessful cases of airports post-privatization in India to promote businesses in the service sector.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Airport privatization has been a significant development in the Indian aviation sector. Over the past two decades, India has seen a remarkable transformation in its airport infrastructure, largely driven by privatization initiatives (Singh et al., 2016). Various privatization models, including Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), long-term leases, and equity stake sales, have infused capital and innovation into airport development projects (Avdiu & Weichenrieder, 2020; Fernandez et al., 2016; Howell et al., 2022; Mourgues & Kingombe, 2017; Pavithra, 2020). These models also influence human resource management practices, such as talent acquisition, training, and performance evaluation (John & Solomiya, 2019; Rolim et al., 2016; Singh et al., 2016). The transition of a significant portion of AAI employees, both technical and non-technical, including contract labour, to private operators marked a crucial dimension in airport business management.

Government hiring prioritized social objectives over skill and knowledge, but some AAI technical managers needed refinement. The Airport Authority of India staff that transitioned brought strengths to the private operator, ensuring uninterrupted operations. Transitioning staff improved passenger terminal services and collaborations with security agencies. Due to the complexity and dynamism of the environment today, success depends more and more on the intelligent balancing of various functional aspects. For effective strategic management, the shift from a single-function focus to a multifunction focus is crucial. The seasoned leaders went through a transformation to let go of outdated ideas and become actively involved in the teams to achieve organizational objectives Asian Development Bank (ADB), Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL) (ADB, 2019; AEL, 2022; Kim & Panchanatham, 2019; MoCA, 2019).

However, challenges included cargo, fire division, and landside management. Unionization posed challenges in maintaining a professional environment (Krishnan, 2021). Union leaders' influence on management decisions and contracts complicates modernization, as human resources participation challenges due to the private sector focus on performance culture and legacy mind-sets (Krishnan, 2023). The policy implications for airport privatization involve aligning government hiring, training, and retention with the privatization agenda, mitigating trade unionism driven by political perspectives, and nurturing internal leaders. Ownership issues require only reputable business houses with sound management experience and financial strength to bid for privatized airports. Mandating airport management experience for future eligibility is crucial (Paddeu et al., 2019).

Airport privatization presents challenges like workforce restructuring, labour relations changes, and adapting to new technologies (Alexander et al., 2020; Pasha & Hickman, 2017). To address these challenges, a strategic approach to human resource management is essential, fostering employee engagement and addressing evolving skill requirements (Miyoshi, 2015; Boonchunone, et al., 2021; Tan & Masood, 2022; Vasigh et al., 2014). The adoption of advanced technology in privatized airports enhances operational efficiency and reshapes the skills demanded by employees (Davahran & Yazdanifard, 2014). Continuous training and development programs are essential to equip the workforce with digital competencies. Studies indicate that private airports are often more productive due to quick and efficient decision-making. Investment in technology and infrastructure also contributes to increased productivity in both public and private airports.

The literature review on the post-privatization of Indian airports highlights the need for further research in people management. There is a lack of comprehensive studies on the challenges and innovative strategies in this sector. Addressing these gaps including an employee-centric approach is crucial for enhancing operational efficiency, passenger experience, and sector growth. A focused research agenda benefits airport authorities, private operators, and policymakers, contributing to the broader discourse on privatization and its impact on the aviation industry. Building upon this imperative for focused research, one promising avenue is the application of the Change Management Theory Model (2.1) to comprehensively examine the evolving dynamics of people management in post-privatization Indian airports.

Application of the Change Management Theory Model

The privatization of Indian airports presents both challenges and opportunities for people management. Challenges include adapting to new ownership structures, competing with private-sector employers, embracing new technologies and attracting skilled employees. Opportunities include increased investment, improved efficiency, and improved customer experience. The success of people management depends on managers' ability to adapt and create an attractive workplace.

Change management involves developing plans, implementing changes, tracking progress, and evaluating results. Implementing change management theory in the context of PPPs in airports leads to positive results in people management. This positively impacts business acumen, customer-centricity, technological absorption, marketing, infrastructure development, and sustainable economic growth (Pillay et al., 2017).

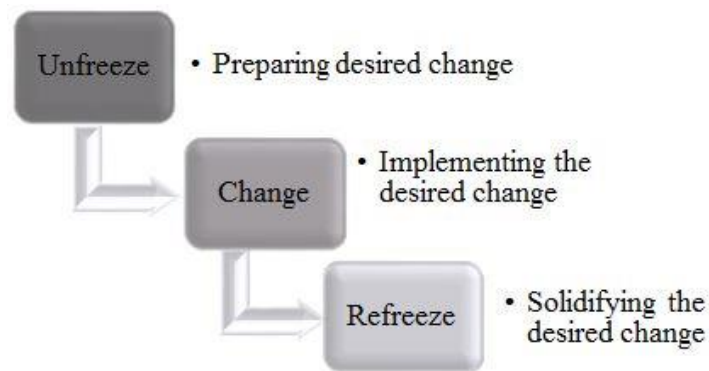


FIGURE 1

KURTZ LEWIN'S THREE-STAGE MODEL OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT

As depicted in Figure 1, Effective change management involves engaging stakeholders, building trust, communicating, and providing support to employees. The contingency approach acknowledges that management practices adapt to the specific organizational context. While many airports globally are government-owned, India's aviation sector has witnessed substantial private-sector involvement, resulting in enhanced customer satisfaction. This shift is driven by the need for skilled human resources and tremendous growth in aviation traffic. Change management theories have been successfully applied to the transition of public airports to the private sector in India, leading to positive outcomes in people management and addressing the challenges faced by the aviation industry. Private sector involvement has reshaped leadership and management practices, emphasizing talent management, and human capital development. Effective communication and adaptation are key to managing change in this dynamic industry.

Change management theory, particularly Lewin's three-stage model, has been effectively applied to the transition of public airports to the private sector. It involves unfreezing, changing, and refreezing stages, helping employees accept and adapt to change (Earle, 2019). Implementing change often requires challenging existing cultural norms within an organization, which can be a significant obstacle. Effective change management involves communicating the rationale and benefits of change (Chiu & Salerno, 2019). The labour market is evolving into a two-tier structure, with a high demand for new skills. High-skilled jobs may be replaced by skilled and semi-skilled positions due to technological advancements like AI and ML (Best & Eftimov, 2019).

Private airport people management focuses on hiring and retaining skilled employees, emphasizing talent identification and development for leadership roles (Chamorro & Kirschner, 2020). The resource-based view highlights human capital's importance in gaining a competitive advantage. Employee value is determined by skills, knowledge, and abilities (Gerhart & Feng, 2021). Despite infrastructure investments, challenges like modernization, air traffic management, and skilled workforce shortages persist in the Indian aviation sector (MoCA, 2021). Effective communication is crucial in change management, and organizations must adapt their strategies to stay ahead of industry changes (Montek, 2021). Airports, through changed management practices, celebrate their unique qualities to offer unforgettable passenger experiences and promote global airport expansion. Airport privatization has necessitated agile, innovative, and cost-effective leadership and management practices, embracing modern technologies (Anderson, 2022).

According to a report by the Asian Development Bank (ADB, 2017) “Publicness” and “privateness” are in most cases not innate properties of a public good but social construct. As such, they represent a policy choice. National governments can step in when there is under provision at the national level. But when global challenges arise, International

cooperation is necessary and can happen only by the voluntary action of many governments. Given the many pressing challenges, progress in determining what is public and what is private will require strong, committed, personal, and institutional leadership. United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report, p.116.

A study reveals a positive correlation between human capital investment, leadership, and strategic orientation on airport performance. Better investment leads to better leadership, which in turn improves the company's strategic orientation. However, leadership doesn't significantly impact performance. The study recommends organizations focus on improving human capital through education and training. Transitioning from transactional to transformational leadership in airports can significantly impact business outcomes and people development. Transactional leadership focuses on maintaining order and efficiency through rewards and punishments, leading to stable operations. On the other hand, transformational leadership encourages creativity, adaptability, and personal growth, fostering a more adaptive and resilient environment (Cho, 2023; Frost & Sullivan, 2018; Groves, 2020; Groves & LaRocca, 2011; Hassan et al., 2019; Jati et al., 2015; Nick, 2023; Bastola, 2020; Tania Hodgkinson, 2021). The transformational leadership approach boosts employee engagement, encourages innovation, and fosters adaptability. It also leads to higher customer satisfaction, efficiency and cost reduction, and a competitive advantage by responding to industry trends and customer demands. Transformational leaders invest in professional development, career advancement, and personal growth, resulting in a more skilled workforce, better retention rates, and increased promotion opportunities. In conclusion, transitioning from transactional to transformational leadership at airports can lead to positive changes in behaviour, business outcomes, and people development, benefiting the airport's operations and employees' career prospects (Li et al., 2019; Sung & Kim, 2021).

Transformational leaders conducting effective training and development programs not only increase productivity but also contribute to job satisfaction and employee development. Employee engagement and the implementation of attrition management strategies ensure a stable and committed workforce. Ultimately, these efforts foster a culture of growth and success within airport organizations, leading to comprehensive compensation, including career and succession planning a holistic approach to managing people at the airport in a competitive work environment is evident as a key factor in the long-term success of the organization. By paying attention to these factors, airports can not only ensure the smooth running of their day-to-day operations but also create an environment that benefits both employees and the organisation. Understanding how these factors are interconnected is essential for airports to remain competitive and successful in an industry marked by constant change and challenge. Effective leadership and a commitment to employee development, play a pivotal role in shaping airport organizations. These factors not only foster a culture of growth but also form the foundation for strategies like airport recognition based on the ownership model, as discussed in Figure 2; ensuring airports remain competitive and successful in a constantly changing industry.

Airport Recognition Based on the Ownership Model

Universal Airports Model

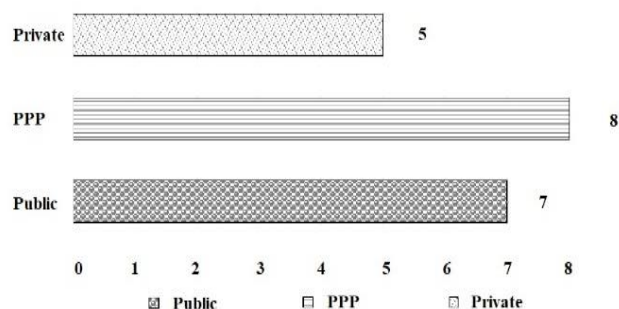


FIGURE 2
SKYTRAX RANKED “TOP-20” OF THE WORLD’S BEST AIRPORTS - OWNERSHIP MODEL (SKYTRAX, 2019)

It depicts the top 20 world’s best airports by ownership model, according to Skytrax. Singapore Changi Airport, a public airport, ranked first in 2023, followed by Doha's Hamad International Airport, a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) airport, and Tokyo Haneda Airport, a government-run airport, took third place (Skytrax, 2023). Over 20% of European airports are privatised or operate as PPPs, with a higher prevalence of private ownership in the UK compared to continental Europe. Ison et al. (2011) posit that many airports in the United Kingdom are operated entirely by private companies, in contrast to continental Europe, where partial private ownership is more typical. Similar situations apply worldwide; the steady global growth of airport privatisation has been most prominently attributed to the liberalisation of aviation in Europe. Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that airport privatisation has aided in the structural transformation of the aviation industry by promoting non-aeronautical revenues, the growth of Low-Cost Carriers (LCCs), and raising airport competitiveness. Japan has ninety-seven airports, of which twenty-eight are owned by the government, sixty-five are owned by local governments, and four are managed by private companies (Miyoshi, 2015).

Worldwide there are seven airports with public ownership models including Singapore Changi, Icheon, Munich, Vancouver, Taiwan, Helsinki, and Shanghai Hongqiao; eight airports with PPP models including Honk-Kong, Doha Hamad, Centrair Nagoya, Zorich, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, Vienna, and Copenhagen; five airports are owned by private sectors including Tokyo, London Heathrow, Tokyo Narita, Kansai, Sydney (Money control, 2018). Overall, only 16% of airports in Europe are entirely privatised, leaving the remaining 75% under public sector management. 25% of airports in Europe are controlled by mixed public-private shareholders (Graham, 2020). In India, after the privatisation of Cochin Airport in 1999, there are airports which come under PPP including Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Delhi, Goa, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Lucknow, Mumbai, Mangalore, Thiruvananthapuram, still the Government of India (GOI) plans to privatise more airports between 2022 and 2025, including Bhubaneswar, Bidar, Chennai, Coimbatore, Dehradun, Indore, Nagpur, Navi Mumbai, Patna, Trichy and Varanasi (Khan, 2021). Post-privatization, numerous advantages have been realized, such as increased efficiency, streamlined procedures, and enhanced customer service.

Other benefits include improved infrastructure development, increased competition and innovation, and better financial performance (Ivanko & Ferenc, 2013). The study of airport privatization in India has resulted in significant improvements in airport infrastructure, technology, and management practices. The study noted that the privatization of Delhi and Mumbai airports had led to significant improvements in service quality, with a reduction in

wait times, increased baggage handling efficiency, and enhanced security screening procedures (Tiwari, 2018). Airport privatization has been the subject of intense debate among economists and policymakers. Supporters argue that it promotes efficiency, innovation, and investment, while opponents argue that it leads to higher costs, reduced service quality, and lower labour standards. The privatization of Bangalore, Hyderabad, and Cochin airports has led to significant improvements in service quality, with higher customer satisfaction levels, shorter wait times, and increased revenue generation (GMR, 2023; Sambrani, 2014; Ali, 2013). The study also noted that the privatization process had led to the adoption of international best practices in airport management, resulting in more efficient and cost-effective operations. As given in Figure 3 new conceptual framework helps to identify effective strategies and practices for managing people by Indian private operators in this context.

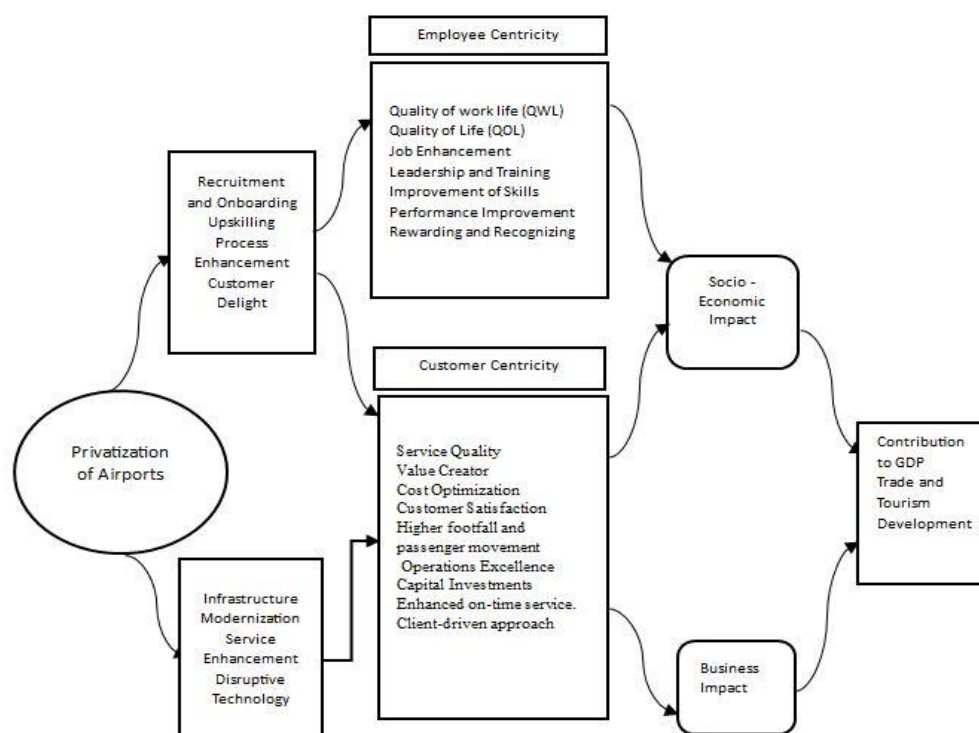


FIGURE 3

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF INDIAN AIRPORT PRIVATIZATION

It depicts the changing trends in people management post-airport privatisation in India. It shows that private airports remain focused on creating an environment that is both employee and customer-oriented. The privatization of airports has brought about a transformation in various aspects of airport management and operation. One of the key areas impacted is infrastructure modernization, where private operators have invested significantly in upgrading airport facilities, runways, terminals, and gates to meet the growing demands of passengers. This modernization has led to service enhancement, offering travellers a more efficient and enjoyable airport experience. Disruptive technologies have played a pivotal role in this transformation (Dragicevic et al., 2022; Dussart, 2021; Kovynyov & Mikut, 2018; Rojas Romero et al., 2021; Zaharia & Pietreanu, 2018). Private operators have embraced technology to streamline processes, improve security, and enhance the overall passenger journey. Recruitment and on boarding processes have adapted to incorporate technological advancements, focusing on up skilling employees to effectively manage and utilise these technologies.

Process enhancement has become a priority, with private operators emphasizing efficiency and cost optimization. This, in turn, has contributed to customer delight by reducing wait times, improving baggage handling, and offering a more seamless travel experience. Simultaneously, employee-centric initiatives such as improving the Quality of Work Life (QWL) and Quality of Life (QOL), create a more motivated and engaged workforce. Job enhancement and leadership training have become integral to employee development, with a focus on improving skills and performance. Rewarding and recognising employees for their contributions to customer-centric service quality has become a standard practice among private operators. The customer-focused approach has resulted in higher footfall and passenger movement, driving operations excellence and capital investments. These investments, coupled with enhanced on-time service, have not only improved customer satisfaction but have also had a socio-economic impact by creating jobs and stimulating economic activity in the airport's vicinity. Ultimately, these efforts translate into increased revenue and profitable operations for private airport operators, demonstrating the positive business impact of airport privatization. The combination of infrastructure modernization, and service enhancement, makes airports key value creators in the aviation industry.

The conceptual framework highlights the importance of selecting bidders carefully, transferring resources from government establishments on fixed-term contracts for knowledge transfer, building quality engineering and business schools through PPPs, blending cultures post-privatization, and linking talent performance with business results. Ensuring consistent HR Policies and practices is vital for long-term sustainability. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on airport operations necessitates rethinking manpower deployment, revisiting productivity, and performance standards, embracing mechanization, automation, digitization, and up skilling. Airport modernization plans, technology upgrading, and government support are vital for retaining staff and ensuring the success of privatization.

Game Changers – Customer-Centricity, and Best Workplace Practices

Airport managers take a strategic and holistic approach to customer service and airport branding, customer satisfaction with their airport experience significantly improves, and airport net revenue tracks, up skilling, and training employees for a direct relationship with increased customer satisfaction are fruitful. Training airport employees for a direct relationship with customers improves satisfaction, net revenue, and branding when combined with a strategic and holistic approach to customer service by airport managers. Private airports employ strategies to unify their staff to work as a single organization, promoting their brand, values, higher footfall and passenger movement, operational excellence, capital investments and service standards. Reward and recognition programs encourage employees who exceed expectations and prioritize customer satisfaction. This helps to improve employee satisfaction and retention, potentially leading to improved operational performance.

Technological advancement empowers all shifts in society, including customers' changing expectations. Private airports invest in training programs and initiatives to help their employees stay up to date with the latest technologies and processes. Employers and employees of the private airport are in line with a strategic service delivery strategy and customer service brand, it is the essence of success factors that customers continuously receive exceptional customer service. Additionally, efficient and consistent employee communications make sure that airport staff members are the first to learn about upcoming activities, operational modifications, and capital construction so they not only feel valued members of the airport family but also better anticipate customer needs, respond to customer inquiries, and take part in enhancing the airport's reputation.

Private players invest in leadership development programs and create a supportive work environment. Technological advancements in private airports, such as Artificial intelligence, Machine Learning, Virtual Reality and robotics, enhance job satisfaction, blurring the line between work and personal life (Cijan et al., 2019). Due to the modern liberalisation, privatisation, and globalisation of Airport Service Quality (ASQ), private airports offer excellent airport services to create a great passenger experience. India has embraced this trend by privatising several of its airports and by emphasising good service quality at its airports; according to them, private airports must place a high priority on customer satisfaction (Sharma, 2004). Employee Value Added (EVA) and Employee Value Proposition (EVP) measures to assess and improve airport performance private airports often offer more specialized training and development opportunities, which helps to improve an individual's skills and performance (Mkubwa & Lyimo, 2019).

Over the next four years, approximately 80% of companies in the aviation, travel, and tourism industries plan to implement digitalization strategies. These strategies include utilising technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), app- and web-enabled markets, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), Mixed Reality (MR), user and entity big data analytics, machine learning, and cloud computing. As a result, roughly 50% of these companies expect to reduce their workforce (Hadzilacos et al., 2019). The efficiency of workplace systems in addressing areas of genuine concern directly impacts the overall process. By utilizing smart systems to automatically clear 99.99% of people, bags, and cargo, the focus of the human effort is directed towards the remaining small percentage of potential threats and edge cases. This approach not only enhances security but also streamlines the process for everyone involved (Baker, 2019).

Private players contribute to economic growth by providing job opportunities, funding, driving competitiveness, and stimulating innovation (Chai et al., 2018; Lin & Zhang, 2017; Noruzoliaee et al., 2015; Wang & Zhang, 2020; Zhang & McGuire, 2022). Their entrepreneurial risk-taking ability creates wealth and generates income, making them crucial contributors to the economy. Despite the increasing uncertainties in the global landscape, emerging economies such as India have shown strong resilience to global volatility and have grown steadily, making them among the world's fastest-growing economies. To bridge skill gaps in the economy by eventual growth in GDP, the private sector invests more in education and vocational training, facilitates skills and training programs, creates partnerships with educational institutions and experts, and, most importantly, develops a skilled and future-ready workforce. Private operators provide key training including Cargo operation – including different categories of dangerous goods and their management, Occupational Health and Safety, Security Awareness Training, Basic AVSEC Course, Inline Recertification Course and Test, Basic AVSEC Refresher, Safety Training, IT training, Explosive Handling and Detection, Environment Management Training, Soft Skills Training, Other Technical and non-technical training for employees related to the domain (IMaCS, 2016). This enhances the employee-centricity to customer-centricity approaches in private sectors through adequate training, especially leadership training. Top-tier private airports understand the importance of creating a distinct brand for their company. Disruptive technologies significantly improve the performance of private airports and remain competitive (Di Vaio & Varriale, 2020). A positive customer experience that meets and exceeds passenger expectations influences the growth and profitability of airports. Frontline airport employees are well-trained, recognized, and practised with tools to support customers, provide seamless navigation, and provide accurate information (Kennedy, 2021).

Modernizing airport infrastructure becomes essential for private airports' success and has a positive impact on their bottom line (Olariaga & Moreno, 2019). To become more employee-centric and customer-centric, private airports allocate sufficient resources and

funds, have the necessary knowledge and expertise, to develop employees' skills and train them to strive to maintain consistency and continuity in their initiatives (Oudkerk, 2020). Recruitment and on boarding with cabin crew applicants meet a variety of criteria, age ranges, academic qualifications, and physical attributes. Furthermore, private airports make it easier for employers to manage their employees' travel schedules, as they book flights with greater ease and accuracy (Sabic et al., 2021). Privatized airport facilities have shown a positive impact on workplace practices focused on employees, with advantages including greater flexibility and convenience for businesses resulting in increased efficiency, a safer environment for employees, and improved business management. In addition to boosting employee morale and productivity, privatization enhances the customer experience with more personalized services that make customers feel valued. Private airports offer numerous benefits to businesses in terms of employee-centric workplace practices (Serrano & Kazda, 2020). Airport services have many distinct aspects and dimensions, and each one affects customer satisfaction to varying degrees (Li et al., 2022). Airport privatisation reflects a mix of new strategies, such as more equity-based compensation for management and investment in better passenger services and technology. Airport operators increase volume without adding space by investing in technology, management, and better utilising existing space (Basa et al., 2022).

Airports under private ownership have resulted in a surge in passenger traffic, generated employment opportunities, and stimulated investments. Furthermore, they have proven to be more efficient and better equipped to cater to customer requirements, providing a superior level of service that has benefited not only the passengers but also the local businesses. Private-sector involvement in the airport industry and offers suggestions for ways to promote successful customer-centric involvement. The World Bank Group investigated and stated that "*Data Show Private Infrastructure Investment Continues to Improve Following Pandemic Slump*" (IDBR & IDA, 2022). Likewise, regarding safety and security training, airports have integrated customer service training. It provides a unique set of opportunities for training and development with more specialized training and development opportunities, such as safety and security training, aircraft maintenance training, and pilot training which comes with the necessary skills needed for success in the aviation sector. Highlighting the Quality of Work Life (QWL), Quality of Life (QOL) and Job enhancement. Furthermore, private airports also offer talents the chance to participate in other activities, such as travel, which allow them to experience diverse cultures and better understand their job, ensuring an inclusive culture and the best workplace practices (Ahluwalia, 2011).

LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The review recognizes potential constraints arising from sampling methods and variations in viewpoints. Subsequent research endeavours may explore facts of people management in airport privatization, undertake empirical inquiries, and investigate how privatization influences the overall airport journey. Comparative examinations spanning diverse countries can yield valuable insights.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Effective people management is crucial in successfully privatising airports, as it ensures that the workforce is adequately prepared for the shift from government to private ownership. Leaders and managers prioritizing workforce preparation to address the evolving privatized airport sector are crucial.

Employee-centricity and customer-centricity are key components of airport people management. Leaders and managers prioritise the needs and concerns of both employees and customers to ensure a positive airport experience leads to the overall success of the airport.

It is establishing clear performance metrics and accountability mechanisms defining the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to both passenger satisfaction and operational efficiency. It ensures a balance between excellent passenger service and financial viability.

The change management theory supports leaders and managers in navigating the challenges of airport privatization and facilitating a smooth transition. Investment in employee training and development is crucial in the successful privatization of airports. Leaders and managers up skilling the workforce ensure they are equipped to manage the changing airport landscape.

Collaboration between public and private entities is crucial in the effective management of the organization. Leaders and managers foster partnerships between government entities, private companies, and other stakeholders to make certain that the airport operates efficiently and meets the needs of all stakeholders involved.

Training and developing professionals enhance employees' emotional intelligence and significantly impact talent development activities help employees engage in work, have better workplace practices, and build accountability in the organization. A highly trained and motivated workforce drives better productivity and ensures superior business results.

CONCLUSION

The privatization of airports in India is transforming the aviation industry. It requires strategic thinking, adaptability, and a commitment to both employees and customers. Private operators are focusing on efficiency, cost reduction, and improving employee motivation through performance-based incentives. Elevating customer service and employee satisfaction is also a priority. The airport must have workforce readiness plans to ensure a smooth transition, including communication, training, and performance incentives. Effective people management is crucial for successful airport privatization. Prioritizing employees and customers, applying change management theory, investing in training, and fostering stakeholder collaboration are essential leadership and management implications. These practices contribute to the successful management of privatized airports.

Airport privatization in India introduces new people management practices that boost employee morale, productivity, and customer satisfaction. Challenges like adapting to new workplace practices, talent recruitment, and fostering innovation remain unveiled. This review emphasizes the importance of strategic human resource practices in this evolving aviation landscape, highlighting their role in generative revenue, enhancing customer experiences, and prospering under private ownership or PPPs. Aligning leadership and management practices with customer-centricity, investing in employee development, implementing efficient workforce development, establishing performance metrics, and fostering stakeholder collaboration are essential for successful management.

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Received: 17-Oct-2023, Manuscript No. jiacs-23-14100; **Editor assigned:** 19-Oct-2023, PreQC No. jiacs-23-14100(PQ); **Reviewed:** 02-Nov-2023, QC No. jiacs-23-14100; **Revised:** 04-Nov-2023, Manuscript No. jiacs-23-14100(R); **Published:** 10-Nov-2023