

# McDonaldization of Work in Indian Fast-food Industry

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*This study explores the nature of fast-food work in the Indian context using a qualitative case-study approach. The production and service systems at an Indian fast-food chain outlet and employees' experiences of these systems are analyzed. Standardization and routinization is not strictly enforced compared to multinational chains like Domino's or McDonald's. Workers from rural background with little education oppose these practices as they find it difficult to adapt them. Poor pay, hectic workload and limited potential for growth become acceptable to young and vulnerable workers due to lack of alternate job opportunities.*

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## Introduction

Many studies have examined the nature of work in the fast-food industry (see Gould, 2009). There is a debate about the dehumanizing nature of work in this industry. Several studies have reported pervasive supervisory control, poor pay, work hustling and poor growth prospects (Royle, 1999). Standardization and routinization is seen as resulting in such dehumanizing nature of work (Ritzer, 2011). Standardization and routinization of work have also been the central themes of such research (Leidner, 1993; Ritzer, 2011).

Levitt (1972) describes how production line approach can be adopted to service industries to improve quality, efficiency and uniformity. Further, he attributes the success of McDonald's as a fast-food chain to the replication of such conditions in its organization. Following McDonald's, many other fast-food chains, successfully replicated such environment. According to Mayhew and Quinlan (2002), the fast-food industry produces standardized products and services using work routines that are standardized by deskilling of tasks and minute division of labor. The implication of such

standardization has gone beyond the fast-food industry to affect the society at large. Ritzer (2011:1) defines McDonaldization as “the process by which the principles of fast-food restaurants are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as of rest of the world.”

Indian fast-food industry is of considerable size and has been growing rapidly (Parker, 2009). It consists of several multinational as well as local Indian brands. Multinational chains dominate the market at present with nationwide presence. In their efforts to create their nationwide presence, the domestic firms tend to copy the products and operational procedures of the foreign companies. While the nature of work in the multinational brands has widely been examined, studies in the Indian context are surprisingly low. The present paper therefore aims to address this issue. As standardization and routinization of work is seen as central to the fast-food work nature, the study discusses these aspects first. It then goes on to discuss the opposition to such standardization alongside exploitative working conditions.

### **McDonaldization**

Ritzer (2011) identifies four different dimensions of the McDonaldization. First is efficiency, which is about optimum method of doing work. The entire process at McDonald’s is broken down into simple, repetitive tasks. Further, each task is perfected over time, in order to reduce any unnecessary movement and the layout of the work place is designed to facilitate

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speed and efficiency. Second, calculability is the idea of quantifying in order to remove subjectivity or discretion. At McDonald’s such measurement is pervasive. The raw material patties are measured and cut according to pre specified sizes, and the time it takes to complete each step is clearly defined. Several indices like the number of customers served in a day, the number of customer complaints received, and the level of customer satisfaction, help the management keep track of its performance.

Third, at the heart of McDonald’s, success is uniformity and predictability. The food is supposed to taste same everywhere and over time and is served quickly and courteously. Uniformity is achieved by institutionalizing the ‘best way’. Detailed procedures mention precisely how to carry out each step of the entire process and how long it should take to carry out each step. These procedures are encoded in standard manuals. At McDonald’s, the “six steps of the window service”, describe the rules for standard attitudes and demeanors as well as actions and words in detail (Leidner, 1993). Fourth, control is exerted through close surveillance and supervision in order to ensure adherence to routines.

### **Demeaning Work?**

One of the criticisms of fast-food industry comes from the demeaning nature

of the work (Allan et al., 2006). In fact, so much has been the criticism that the term McJobs (McDonaldized jobs), has evolved to refer to jobs which are demeaning in nature. Merriam Webster's collegiate dictionary defines McJobs as those jobs that are "a low-paying job that requires little skill and provides little opportunity for advancement", this kind of job is demeaning, alienating and "not big enough for the human spirit" (Mayhew & Quinlan, 2002).

Braverman's labor process theory is central to the criticism of fast-food work. He argued that exploitative capitalist organizations are incessantly looking to deskill and routinize the work. Tasks are broken down into small and simple steps, which make it easier to standardize and automate work. Ritzer (2011) quotes one of the employees at a fast-food center noting, "Any trained monkey can do this job." Workers use only a part of their skills and abilities. The employees' decision-making and discretion is removed by routinizing the work. Such deskilled labor is not only cheap but also easy to control.

Ritzer (2011) argues that McDonaldization is dehumanizing in many ways. He contends that there is irrationality in the seemingly rational system of standardization. The process of standardization leads to loss of enchantment, as anything that is considered as magical, mysterious, fantastic and dreamy is considered inefficient. The qualitative aspects of work are lost in the mad rush for quantitative aspects and efficiency. The job becomes boring after

a while, as the worker has to repeat the same steps at a great speed. Moreover, the tight control imposed in the work place lead to loss of autonomy and control.

There is little skill enhancement, little prospect for future growth and high turnover (Mayhew & Quinlan, 2002). Therefore, these jobs are perceived as "dead-end" or "short-gap". The stop-gap perspective sees the job as temporary and a trade-off between immediate material needs and doing a mundane, repetitive job (Gould, 2009). In addition, satisfying personal relations between the employees are not likely to develop due to the part time and temporary nature of the job

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Studies found work intensification (Allan et al., 2006). The managers try to hurry up the workers, to get the work done faster. This exhortation to hustle was found to be widely prevalent in McDonald's management ethos. In brief, the work does not offer either job satisfaction or stability leading to high level of resentment, job dissatisfaction, alienation, absenteeism, and turnover.

### **Young & Vulnerable Workers**

Several studies take a view that fast-food industry specifically recruits certain sections of society. Several au-

thors (Lucas, 1997; Lucas & Ralston, 1996; Curtis & Lucas, 2000; Royle, 1999 as cited in Allan et al., 2006), contend that fast-food industry recruits young and vulnerable workers as they are compliant and flexible. Another study (Mayhew & Quinlan, 2002), mentions that fast-food industry grew with young and temporary workers and that in future it is reliant on these workers. According to Robinson (as cited in Gould, 2009), fast-food employers prefer teenagers because these workers cannot adequately assess if they are being treated fairly and reasonably which is in turn due to their lack of prior exposure to employment. According to Royle (1999), because of this lack of prior exposure, these young workers have little else with which to compare their working conditions. These workers can therefore, be made to toil in ways other experienced workers resist to (Royle, 2000; Schlosser, 2002 as cited in Gould, 2009). Gould (2009) found that chronologically older employees were more likely to be dissatisfied with work in fast-food industry.

Royle (1999) also argues that, in various countries, McDonald's employs weaker and marginalized sections who lack alternative employment opportunities. Because the workers desperately need the job, they are not likely to resist management control. He uses the term "recruited acquiescence" to describe recruiting suitable individuals who do not resist control. According to him, the corporation is able to weed out those who resist control and take advantage of others.

### **A Positive View**

However, not all studies point to such negative view of fast-food work. Some studies contend that fast-food jobs help young workers advance in their career. The fast-food industry gives many their first experience of paid work (Gould, 2009). Such studies argue that this opportunity to be employed in fast-food industry can be a career advantage for several reasons. Firstly, it is difficult for teenagers to find alternate entries into the job market other than through fast-food industry. Secondly, working with multinational employers in fast-food industry, gives teenagers a chance to develop effective work habits and attitudes towards work, apart from giving them a chance to observe good management practices. This learning can result in self-development and future-employability. Lastly, fast-food industry also offers some people a chance to rise through the hierarchy from menial roles without conventional forms of education and diverse work history.

Studies, which take a positive or neutral view of the fast-food work, talk about compatibility. Some people are compatible with the McDonald's culture and are content with routine and simplicity (Gould, 2009). According to Royle (1999) and Gould (2009), these compatible workers show enthusiasm on the job. Such studies identify two such categories. First category is those who have qualifications and are capable of finding a better job, but are "coasting". Second category consists of those who lack the qualifications and stay due to the lack of alternatives.

Afew studies also argue that employees carry positive attitude towards fast-food industry (Allan et al., 2006; Gould, 2009). These studies reported that their participants often indicated that they are treated well, expressed a positive view towards management and work organization, and said they had access to training and human resource-related advantages.

In summary, the literature seems to be divided on the demeaning nature of the jobs in fast-food restaurants. While few studies take a negative view of these jobs, others take a positive view. In the light of this unresolved debate, the present study explores the nature of the work in the Indian fast-food industry, which is of considerable size, with a latent demand of around US \$ 12 billion as of 2009 (Parker, 2010). The industry is also projected to grow very rapidly almost doubling in a span of ten years. While in 2004 the latent demand was US \$9 billion, the demand in 2014 is projected at around US \$16 billion (Parker, 2010).

There are several players in the industry. Few of them are multinational brands like Pizza Hut, McDonalds, KFC, Domino's Pizza, Coffee Day and Barista while others are Indian brands like Nerula's, US Pizza and Pizza Corner (Jauhari, 2003). The multinational brands, McDonald's, Domino's and Pizza Hut, all entered India in 1996. Currently all of them have nation-wide presence and more than 100 outlets. McDonald's has more than 160 outlets ("mcdonaldsindia", n.d.), Pizza Hut has more than 140 ("pizzahut.co.in", n.d.) and Domino's has more than 378 ("dominos.co.in", n.d.).

The success of these chains can be attributed to the application of successful manufacturing and supply chain practices to deliver their unique brand image. Several studies have elaborated standardization and routinization in all these chains. On the contrary, the Indian fast-food brands like US Pizza, Pizza Corner and Nerula's lack such nationwide presence, though they started at around the same time (Jauhari, 2003). Besides, these brands have only less than 100 outlets (Jauhari, 2003). These domestic firms tend to copy the products and operational procedures of the foreign companies.

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While the production and service systems in these multinational fast-food brands have been extensively studied especially in western contexts (Leidner, 1993; Ritzer, 2011; Schlosser, 2005), the literature in the Indian context, particularly on Indian brands is not found. The present paper aims to fill this gap. Indian fast-food industry provides employment to large numbers. While Domino's and Pizza Hut employ more than 10,000 people, McDonald's employs around 4,000 workers ("mcdonaldsindia", n.d.; "dominos.co.in", n.d.; "pizzahut.co.in", n.d.). In view of such large work-force, it becomes necessary to explore the nature of work in this industry.

### **Methodology of the Study**

A qualitative case-study approach was used to provide a thick description

of the work context. The author faced the same difficulty as was faced by previous researchers in gaining research access. Employers, especially major ones are suspicious and therefore reluctant to give access (Allan et al., 2006). Researchers therefore rely either on interviews with workers away from workplace or use secondary resources. One of the outlets of Pizza-Indian (name changed) in the city of Ahmedabad was chosen for the study. Pizza-Indian is an Indian brand Pizza chain. In-depth interviews with employees were supplemented with non-participant observation to collect data. Site accessibility and employee willingness and their availability limited the number of interviews and the sample composition. By interviewing to employees at different levels of hierarchy, multiple perspectives on the nature of the work were brought out.

Data was collected in two stages. In the first stage, the author was able to gain access into the Pizza-Indian outlet. Six employees were interviewed during this stage. These employees were in different work profiles and hierarchy: service-crew (2), kitchen-crew (1), kitchen supervisor (1), assistant store manager (1) and the store manager (1). The interviews were semi structured in nature. The tenure of the participants varied between one month and six years. During this stage the author also conducted non-participant observation at the outlet and made field notes. After ten days, the store manager did not permit the author to enter the outlet citing labor trouble. Further interviews were therefore conducted outside the outlet. Two interviews were

conducted during this stage. Both these employees were service crew members who also worked as delivery boys. Both were men and their tenure at the outlet was between one and two years. The author also visited different stores of Pizza-Indian (two stores in Ahmedabad and two stores in Hyderabad) on a number of occasions. On such occasions, the author observed how the Pizza-Indian staff carried on their work and how they interacted with customers and made detailed notes of the same.

The McDonaldization framework as detailed by Ritzer (2011) was used to analyze and understand the systems and processes in place at the outlet. The framework served as a tool to understand the differences in context between this outlet and other multinational brand outlets belonging mostly to North America, Europe and Australia. This understanding, in combination with the backgrounds of the employees and their perceptions about the nature of work was used to bring out a critical perspective.

### **The Context: Pizza-Indian Outlet**

Pizza-Indian claims to have pioneered freshly baked Pizzas in India in the early 1990s. It has since expanded by franchising and had 90 odd stores in 34 cities across 12 states. The outlet where this study has been carried out has started only six months back. The revenue turnover of this outlet is also low. It is around seven lakhs of rupees per month which is very low when compared to any McDonald's or Domino's outlets (Jauhari, 2004).

There are various aspects specific to this Pizza-Indian outlet when compared to multinational fast-food chains. This Pizza-Indian outlet is a Dine-in restaurant where the customer is serviced at the table. On the contrary, McDonald's is a self-service restaurant which emphasizes on quickness of serving (Leidner, 1993). Domino's has a focus on home delivery and take away (Jauhari, 2004) and therefore, the focus is again on quickness. It guarantees a home delivery within 30 minutes or else the Pizza is free. McDonald's is aimed at turning the tables faster, where the customers go to grab a quick meal. In a typical McDonald's restaurant, the ambience encourages eating quickly and moving away (Ritzer, 2011). The seats by design are not cozy and the outlet is cramped. On the other hand, this Pizza-Indian outlet offers an ambience where customers can enjoy their meal in a relaxed manner. The outlet is spacious and sofas are cozy and comfortable. There is upbeat music in the background. Therefore, though, quickness in delivering the Pizza to the table is important in case of Pizza-Indian, it is not of paramount importance as in the case of McDonald's or Domino's.

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There are other peculiarities of Pizza-Indian as a fast-food restaurant. It offers on the menu "Unlimited Pizza" which is the most frequently ordered

item on the menu. For a fixed price, unlimited pizza is served along with salad and dessert. This menu is not available on the menu of other multinational brands. Frequently, the place is also used for parties where "Unlimited Pizza" is usually the only menu item. Several "Unlimited Pizzas" ordered at once lead to pooling of demand and can help mitigate the demands on the staff. The salads in the "unlimited orders" are also prepared at once and kept on the salad counter from where the customer serves himself. Salads are not served individually to each customer on the table but the salad counters are frequently replenished.

However, "Unlimited Pizzas" and parties can sometimes place severe demands on the make-line, as there are too many orders to be filled in a short time. Therefore, the work in Pizza-Indian has small periods of hectic work interspersed with large periods of lull. Though this is natural to any fast-food restaurant, the periods of hectic work are smaller and much more hectic at Pizza-Indian.

The restaurant manager and the franchise owner are at the helm of the organization structure of the outlet. Only the restaurant manager is on Pizza-Indian payroll. All other employees are on the franchisee payroll. Below the restaurant manager an assistant manager, shift supervisor and kitchen supervisor manager handle all the day to day activities. While the service crew (nine) report to the shift supervisor, the kitchen crew (seven) report to the kitchen supervisor.

The manager and the franchisee together decide on other employees' salary. The pay structure is not the same across all Pizza-Indian outlets. All the employees are paid on a monthly basis and not hourly basis. The salaries are based on work experience and the kind of references the employee is able to get. The work is scheduled in two shifts, the morning one from 9am to 2pm and the evening one from 2pm to 11pm. Employees take turns to serve in different schedules.

### **The Production & Service Processes**

The processes at Pizza-Indian mimic the process of McDonaldization at least in theory. The design of the process and system design reflect the underlying theme of McDonaldization. The processes are designed to be efficient. The menu at Pizza-Indian is limited—16 varieties of pizzas in three sizes and two types of baking, two varieties of salads, and one dessert. Limited menu aids in standardization of the process. (Ritzer, 2011).

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Pizza-Indian replicates a standard industry practice of making Pizza. The process is similar to that followed at fast-food giant Domino's. The entire process is broken down into small, simple steps and streamlined. The approach seems to be that of “one best way” of scientific

management by Taylor (Leidner, 1993). First is par-baking the dough... par-baked crust undergoes a sequence of steps in becoming the final Pizza; oiling the pan, saucing, itemizing, cheesing, topping, baking, cutting and serving.

The kitchen is designed to optimize worker movements and eliminate unnecessary steps. There are four basic sections: cutting and utility, dough preparation, salad making and make-line. The make-line section in particular resembles a factory layout. It has a 'U' shaped layout with two ovens one over another on one side, pizza preparation stage on the opposite side and a cutting section on the third side. It is designed so that a single worker can handle all the stages, however, multiple workers can also work on the line during peak hours. When multiple workers, work on the line, the make line truly resembles an assembly line, where each worker does his job and then passes the product to the next stage for further processing. Each section is also designed to minimize the hand movements of the workers.

Quantification is quite extensive across the various stages of food production. It starts with the process of dough making. In the words of the shift manager: “All the ingredients are mixed according to the “portion chart”....It gives how much of each ingredient are to be mixed to form 12 kgs of dough mix...The worker physically weighs them and then mixes...This ensures right composition”.

The amount and size of toppings added to make a particular type of Pizza

is also mentioned in a “portion chart”. Besides, the process of baking the Pizza is controlled, by specifying the exact temperature to which the pizza is heated and for how much duration. In the words of the supervisor: “We have guidelines for the right temperature and time for each process... par baking, baking... or making a brownie... We set the oven accordingly in the beginning. Then it is automatic”.

The spirit of calculability (Ritzer, 2011) is most conspicuous in the customer service process. Starting from the time the customer sits at the table, it specifies the time limits before which the next item needs to be served. There are hygiene rules also where the quantification is conspicuous, for e.g., cleaning kitchen table every two hours and washing hands for three minutes in lukewarm water before the starting to work. Such quantification helps in removing subjectivity and discretion and decision making on the part of the crew members (Ritzer, 2011). It helps in uniformity and predictability. Uniformity in quality cannot be achieved when there is worker discretion (Levitt, 1972). Like many fast-food chains, Pizza-Indian also strives to ensure that its product is uniform in quality over time and across all the outlets. The shift manager asserted that this led to product being of same quality, taste, size and price at any of the branches.

Uniformity is achieved through standard processes, routines and scripts, which are codified into the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) process manual. The manual lists down, in great

detail, various processes at Pizza-Indian, besides also detailing how these processes should be carried out. For e.g. detailed SOPs also exist for the process of dough preparation, pizza preparation and baking and salad making processes. The SOP gives the minute details like the composition and amount of ingredients and the method of preparation.

Scripts are used even for customer service aspects. The host (the service boy who receives the customers at the door) is supposed to follow a standard script of wishing the customer. The process of serving the customer on the table is also standardized. There is a specified sequence of steps to be followed. Even in an “unlimited” order, the sequence of steps for serving is also predictable. The shift manager describes the elaborate sequence, as: “Request for type of soup the customer wants... then serve the soup... request the customer to help himself with type of salad on the salad bar... wait for the customer to finish the salad... then request for serving the plate... serve the plate, then serve garlic bread, then serve Pizzas in given sequence.. Ask for the next item that the customer is going to eat... then serve that...if that is not available, inform the kitchen supervisor and the assistant restaurant manager... inform the customer that it will be ready in a while, serve a different Pizza meanwhile... Ask if the customer is finished, then remove the plate... then ask for dessert and serve it...wait for finishing it, then ask for removing the desert cup... handover the bill, collect the bill money, pay it at the counter, give back the receipt ..Greet with a smile before leaving.”

It is important to note that the detailed instructions also take care of the contingencies. This exemplifies how discretion and decision making are removed from the crew member's work. Routinization and scripting also extend into the personal space of the crewmembers of Pizza-Indian, as was observed by Leidner (1993) in the case of McDonald's. All crew members wear a uniform and are asked to groom in a specific way.

Further, these standard systems have controls in place to ensure adherence to routines. A Kitchen order token (KOT) is one such measure, which can be used for keeping track of the customer service time. There are other measures like customer feedback form, which is given to each customer at the end of the meal. The customer can also send feedback through email to the central office. The manager sums it up thus: "If the Pizza is left there without serving, it gets cold... regular customer can make out the difference between a standard product and the product of low quality if it is served cold... customers can send their feedback either through the form they fill or through the online site.."

The uniformity across outlets is also maintained by limiting the control of the franchisee on the processes inside the outlet. The restaurant manager is on the payroll of Pizza-Indian. All the staff is also controlled by Pizza-Indian. Further, according to the manager, the central office also does frequent audits to ensure that the outlet is run as per Pizza-Indian standard practices.

### **Really McDonaldized?**

There are elaborate rules and the system has been designed at least in theory to mimic standard processes in multinational fast-food chains like McDonald's and Domino's. The spirit of central management is to not only replicate such standard systems of multinational firms but to do better than them. However, these rules and standard practices are not strictly enforced at the outlet. The deviations from standard practices are significant. There is a difference in what is in the book and what is practiced. There is also difference in what is said and what is done. Personal observations at the outlet on a number of occasions and cross verifying the statements made by several employees have led to the conclusion that the rules are not enforced stringently. Such non-adherence is partly due to lack of standard training systems and the realization of the need for adherence at the outlet management.

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Pizza-Indian does not have any standard training programs for the employees. According to Leidner (1993), crew-training process is critical to McDonald's standardization. McDonald's central administration supplies videotapes and other training materials to its franchises

in order to train its crew. Managers at McDonald's are recommended to follow a standard four-step process in training the crew members. First, the trainees watch the videotape, then they watch an experienced worker perform the task, then they try out the job themselves under trainer's observation while the trainer makes corrections if needed. In contrast, there is no such centralized formal training at Pizza-Indian. The manager, kitchen supervisor and all the workers have stated that the training is mostly on the job with occasional instructions given by the supervisor. Crewmembers are initially given simple tasks and slowly moved on to complex tasks. The manager clarifies "Training is mostly on the job as of now. There is no formal training. Recently the central management has recognized the need for a centralized formal training. Corporate trainers with audio visual aids have visited our store once." Lack of such training has resulted in lack of clarity among crew members especially regarding quantitative aspects of customer service. Upon interviewing, each of the employees spoke about numbers in how the customer is served. However, each one mentioned a different number, which reflects a lack of strict enforcement of standards. The supervisor and manager confirmed the lack of such enforcement and flexibility in adherence

Further, the crew members also oppose these standards, especially those rules that extend into their personal appearance. The author observed that most of the crewmembers did not groom themselves according to standard appearance expectations. The feeling among the

workers is that the management should only mind their output and not interfere too much with their personal space. Most of the workers come from poor rural backgrounds. Hygiene and grooming rules like having nails neatly clipped, shaving regularly, wearing ironed clothes, having the haircut short etc. do not come naturally to them. Therefore, they oppose demands to strict adherence to such rules. There is also opposition to scripted routines. For e.g., on most occasions, greeting the host is not as per the standard script. Most of the crew members are undereducated to understand English. They have minimal education and do not even understand the standard scripts in English. The managers too do not enforce strict adherence, as they fear that will lead to workers quitting the job.

To conclude, though the aim of the standards manuals and spirit of the central management are in the direction of standardization and routinization in line with multinational chains like McDonald's and Domino's, the practice of such standardization is not found. Further, lack of formal training, worker opposition to rules that they found difficult to adapt make it difficult for management to enforce such rules. This finding has implications for understanding the nature of work in the Indian context.

### **Extracting Surplus Labor**

While standardization is not enforced strictly, exploitation is apparent. The salaries paid to the employees are low reflecting the general trend in the fast-food industry. The crewmembers' monthly

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salaries translated to a little more than 100 rupees a day, which is less than the prevailing average daily earnings for regular worker in urban Gujarat (Hirway & Shah, 2011). Payment for sick leave is left to the discretion of the owner. Sometimes they also do not get their salaries on time. They are asked to work overtime on Saturdays and Sundays and do not get paid for it. Even on regular days the workers are not allowed to go home after the shift has ended if there is work pending. The workers also suggested a tendency on the manager's part to hustle during the peak hours. The manager agrees that the work is hectic especially during peak hours on Saturdays and Sundays. These findings are in line with other studies on fast-food industry (e.g., Allan et al., 2006).

Besides, skill enhancement is low for the crew members and therefore growth prospects are miniscule. Breaking the entire food production and service process into small and simple steps eliminates the need for trained chefs and waiters. These steps can be easily taught to any person with rudimentary skills (Leidner, 1993). As discussed earlier, the training given to the crew members is minimal and is also not formal. Supervisor gives a few instructions after which the new worker learns by watching others on the job and then by doing it himself. The skill enhancement is minimal in fast-food chains supervision (Mayhew & Quinlan, 2002).

### **Recruited Acquiescence**

Despite the hectic load and poor pay and limited growth prospects, the author noted employees working for more than four years with Pizza-Indian. However, according to the manager the turnover is very high. He explains the discrepancy: "They do not work continuously for long periods... Most of them come from other places... they take a break once in three months and go home... But some of them join back... If their place is filled by someone else, they go to other Pizza-Indian outlets." Therefore, though people work for longer periods, they do not work continuously at the same outlet. They go home and their place is filled by someone. They switch to other outlets, where there are vacancies. The employees seemed to accept the exploitative nature of the job as the very nature of work possible for them.

According to Royle (1999) and others as noted earlier, fast-food industry employs young workers, especially from marginalized sections of the society in order to exercise better control. Findings at Pizza-Indian support this argument. Crew employees at this outlet are young. The entire crew is less than 20 years of age. The shift manager said this was because older people were difficult to manage. The maximum education for the crewmembers is 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Most of the crew can only read and write in Hindi. They did not think through about alternate employment opportunities before joining the outlet. Most of the crew is also from places outside Ahmedabad. They are from places like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Nepal.

Hirway and Shah (2011) observe that Ahmedabad attracts a large number of workers from neighboring states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Workers also come from distant states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand apart from the neighboring country, Nepal. Intra state migration within Gujarat to places of high growth such as Ahmedabad is also high. The prevalence of high unemployment rates in these places is the prime reason for migration to Ahmedabad. Hirway and Shah also point to the general trend of poor quality of employment in Gujarat where workers are considered as a mere factor of production. Lacking security of employment, these workers are unlikely to complain about non-payment of wages and violation of other labor laws. The employee background as described above is thus in line with “recruited acquiescence” as described by Royle (1999). Like other fast-food industries, this outlet seems to recruit young and vulnerable migrant workers who lack alternate employment opportunities.

### Conclusion

As is evident from the above discussion the management is able to levy good control over workers by system design and supervision and is able to extract

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surplus labor for the given pay. This is made possible by recruiting young and vulnerable migrant workers. The workers accept the poor pay, hectic work load and limited growth prospects that the job offers as the nature of the work possible for them owing to lack of better alternatives. They however oppose standardization mainly in appearance and use of scripts. Hailing from poor, rural backgrounds they find it difficult to adapt to such practices, which are different from their ways of living. It is to be noted that while hectic workload, poor pay and limited growth potential are common across the fast-food industry in India, the emphasis on standardizing personal appearance and following standard scripts is uncommon. Employers therefore may not enforce such practices out of the apprehension that the workers would leave to work at other places where there is no insistence of such standardization. However, workers do not have much choice in accepting poor working conditions as such exploitation is rampant in the industry.

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