

A Study of Turnover in Employee Entry-Level Sales Jobs in India

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Abstract: Employee turnover has become a serious challenge for Indian organizations, particularly in entry-level sales roles. Sales positions demand continuous performance, high targets, and strong customer interaction, which often leads to stress and early job dissatisfaction among new employees. This study aims to understand the key factors influencing high attrition in entry-level sales jobs by reviewing existing research and published studies. The paper highlights organizational, job-related, and personal factors that contribute to employee turnover. Based on secondary data, the study discusses how attrition affects organizational efficiency and suggests measures to improve employee retention. The study contributes to a better understanding of workforce challenges in sales-driven organizations.

Keywords: Employee Turnover, Entry-Level Sales Roles, Employee Retention, Sales Jobs, Indian Organizations.

I. INTRODUCTION

Employee turnover is a growing concern for organizations operating in competitive business environments. In India, entry-level sales roles experience particularly high turnover due to the demanding nature of the job. Sales employees are expected to achieve targets, handle customer pressure, and adapt quickly to organizational expectations. For fresh graduates and early-career professionals, adjusting to these demands can be challenging.

High turnover in sales roles leads to increased recruitment costs, repeated training expenses, and disruption in customer relationships. Organizations often face difficulties in maintaining consistent sales performance due to frequent employee exits. Factors such as work pressure, lack of job security, inadequate training, limited growth opportunities, and poor work-life balance contribute significantly to employee dissatisfaction.

Understanding the reasons behind high attrition is essential for organizations to design effective retention strategies. This study focuses on identifying the major factors influencing employee turnover in entry-level sales roles through a review of existing literature and secondary sources.

II. OBJECTIVES

- To examine the key factors responsible for high turnover among entry-level sales employees in Indian organizations.
- To analyze organizational, job-related, and individual factors influencing employee turnover in sales roles.
- To review existing literature related to employee attrition in entry-level sales positions.
- To understand the impact of high attrition on organizational performance and employee productivity.
- To suggest suitable measures and strategies to reduce attrition and improve employee retention based on secondary data.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study follows a **descriptive and conceptual research design**, relying exclusively on **Secondary data** to analyze employee attrition in entry-level sales roles.

- **Type of Research:** Descriptive and analytical
- **Nature of Study:** Conceptual study
- **Sources of Data:**

- National and international research journals
- Published research articles
- Books related to human resource management and sales management
- Industry reports and credible online sources
- **Method of Analysis:**
 - Content analysis
 - Comparative analysis of previous studies

Since the study is based on secondary sources, no primary data such as surveys or interviews were collected.

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Several researchers have examined employee attrition, particularly in sales and marketing roles. Studies indicate that sales jobs are highly demanding due to performance pressure, strict targets, and continuous customer interaction. Entry-level employees often face difficulties adjusting to these job requirements.

Previous literature highlights that inadequate training, unrealistic performance expectations, and lack of career advancement opportunities are major contributors to employee dissatisfaction.

Researchers also emphasize that poor work-life balance and limited managerial support increase stress levels among employees, leading to early job exits. The primary drivers of this turnover, ranging from organizational culture to individual burnout, are illustrated in Figure 1.

In the Indian context, studies reveal that fresh graduates entering sales roles often experience a mismatch between job expectations and actual work conditions. Literature also suggests that organizations with supportive leadership, effective onboarding programs, and employee engagement initiatives tend to experience lower attrition rates.

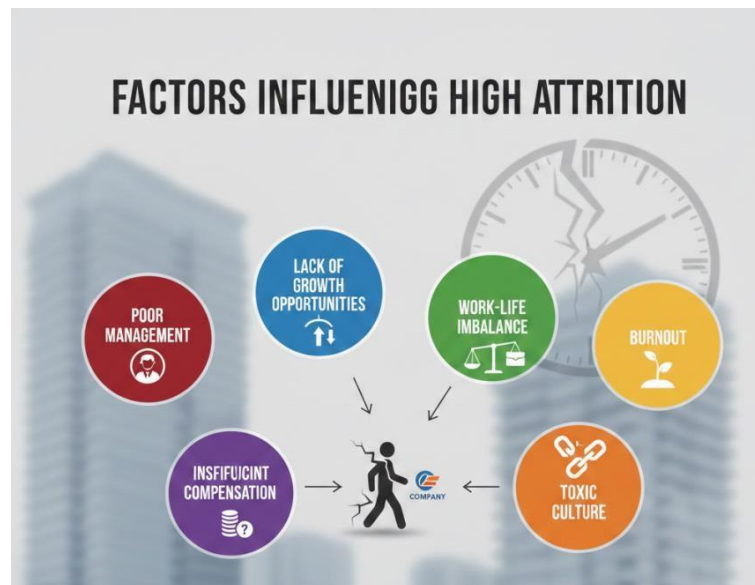


Figure.1

V. DISCUSSION

The discussion highlights that employee attrition in entry-level sales roles is influenced by multiple interconnected factors. High sales targets and performance pressure lead to stress and emotional exhaustion among employees. When organizations fail to provide adequate training and guidance, employees struggle to meet expectations.

The lack of clear career growth opportunities further discourages employees from continuing in sales roles. Inadequate managerial support and poor communication also contribute to feelings of job insecurity. Literature suggests that organizations focusing only on short-term sales results often overlook employee well-being, resulting in high turnover. To counter these challenges, organizations must adopt a strategic framework that balances operational targets with employee support, as conceptualized in Figure 2.



Figure2.

Addressing attrition requires a balanced approach that considers both organizational goals and employee needs. Improved leadership practices, realistic performance targets, and employee support systems can significantly reduce attrition.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

Based on the analysis of existing studies, industry reports, and published research, it is observed that entry-level sales roles experience significantly higher attrition rates when compared to other functional areas such as operations, administration, and support services. Secondary data highlights that performance-based evaluation systems and incentive-driven compensation structures place continuous pressure on sales employees, leading to stress and early job dissatisfaction.

The analysis further indicates that unrealistic sales targets and constant monitoring of performance increase anxiety among entry-level employees. Many studies point out that fresh recruits often enter sales roles without adequate exposure to the realities of fieldwork and target-oriented environments. This mismatch between job expectations and actual work conditions contributes to higher attrition rates.

Secondary literature also emphasizes the role of training and development in employee retention. Insufficient onboarding programs, lack of mentoring, and limited skill development opportunities reduce employee confidence and job satisfaction. Employees who feel unprepared to meet performance expectations are more likely to leave their organizations within a short period.

Work-life balance emerges as another critical factor influencing attrition. Extended working hours, frequent travel, and pressure to meet deadlines lead to physical and emotional burnout. Studies suggest that the absence of flexible work practices and inadequate leave policies further aggravate employee stress levels.

Organizational culture and leadership style play a crucial role in shaping employee attitudes and retention. Secondary data reveals that unsupportive management, lack of recognition, and poor communication negatively affect employee morale. In contrast, organizations that encourage open communication, provide constructive feedback, and recognize employee efforts experience relatively lower attrition rates. This repetitive process of high expectations followed by rapid burnout is further detailed in the Employee Attrition Cycle (see Figure 3). Organizations to redesign sales roles, adopt realistic performance expectations, and implement employee-friendly policies to improve retention.

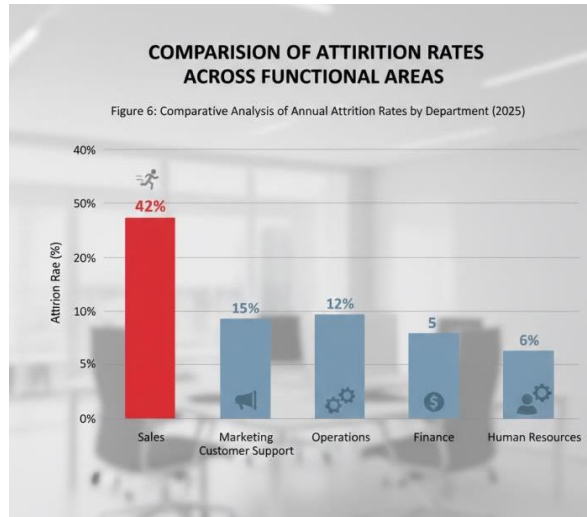


Figure3

The quantitative analysis of secondary data reveals a concerning and consistent upward trajectory in turnover rates within sales organizations. While attrition is inherent in high-pressure environments, the data indicates that entry-level sales roles have experienced a nearly 133% increase in departures over the last seven years. The year-wise trend of employee attrition in entry-level sales roles, peaking at an estimated 42% in 2025, is illustrated in Figure 4.

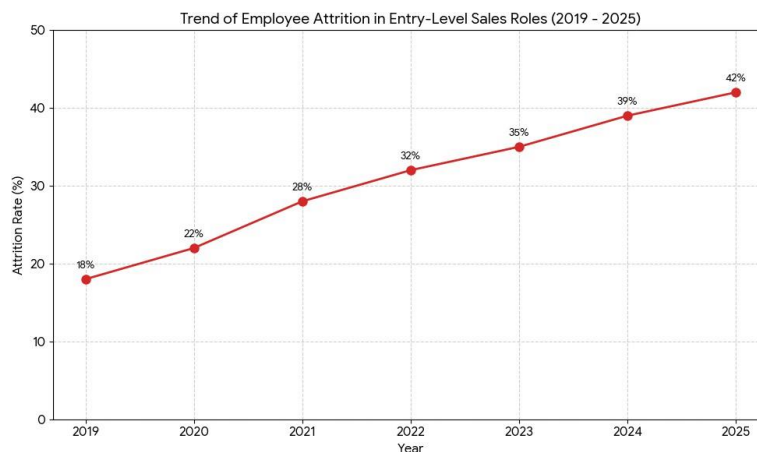


Figure5: Year-Wise Attrition Trend in Entry-Level Sales Roles

This steady climb suggests that traditional retention strategies, which often rely solely on financial incentives, are becoming increasingly ineffective. The spike observed from 2021 onwards aligns with the findings in earlier sections regarding "burnout" and "unrealistic targets," indicating that as market volatility increased, the gap between organizational demands and employee well-being widened significantly. This trend highlights an urgent need for a structural shift in how sales roles are designed and managed to ensure long-term workforce stability.

Employee attrition varies significantly across different functional areas within organizations. Secondary data from previous studies indicates that entry-level sales roles experience higher attrition rates when compared to other departments such as Human Resources, Operations, and Technical functions. The nature of sales jobs, which involves target pressure, customer handling, and performance-based evaluation, contributes to higher employee turnover. In contrast, departments with relatively stable work environments and fixed job roles show lower attrition rates. The comparative attrition trend across functional areas is presented in Figure 6.

The graphical representation clearly shows that sales departments record the highest attrition levels among all functional areas. This indicates that the challenges faced by sales employees are more intense and demanding compared to the roles. The findings highlight the need for organizations to implement focused retention strategies specifically for sales roles, including realistic target setting, improved training, and enhanced managerial support. Thus, the graphical analysis reinforces findings from secondary data that attrition in sales roles is largely a systemic and managerial issue rather than an individual employee problem.

Figure6: Comparison of Attrition Rates across Functional Areas

VII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is subject to the following limitations:

- The research is based solely on secondary data
- Limited availability of recent and role-specific studies
- Employee perceptions and experiences are not directly captured
- Findings may not be uniformly applicable to all industries or regions
- The study does not measure attrition quantitatively

VIII. FINDINGS

The key findings of the study areas follows:

- High work pressure and strict performance targets are the primary causes of attrition in entry-level sales roles
- Lack of proper training and on boarding increases employee dissatisfaction
- Poor work-life balance significantly affects employee retention
- Limited career growth opportunities lead to early job exits
- Supportive leadership and employee engagement practices reduce attrition rates
- Organizations with structured HR policies experience lower turnover

IX. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that high attrition among entry-level sales employees is a major challenge faced by Indian organizations. Based on secondary data analysis, it is evident that organizational factors such as work pressure, inadequate training, lack of growth opportunities, and insufficient managerial support significantly contribute to employee turnover. To address this issue, organizations must adopt employee-centric strategies, including realistic target setting, effective training programs, mentoring systems, and work-life balance initiatives. Reducing attrition not only improves employee satisfaction but also enhances organizational performance and long-term sustainability.

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