

FACTORS ADVERSELY AFFECTING INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN WEST BENGAL COLLIERIES

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Abstract

Industrial relations pattern is influenced by various factors. It is basically the relationship between the parties involved in the process of organisational activities. Parties are employees, employers, management representing employers, trade union representing employees and the Government. If there prevails a congenial state of co-existence among different parties in an industry, industrial relations situation manifests a positive climate. And such climate helps to promote sound industrial relations.

Key Words: Industrial Relations, Industrial disputes, Trade union rivalry

Introduction

Industrial Relation (IR) is dynamic in nature. The nature and climate of IR can be seen as an outcome of the complex set of transactions among the major players such as state, the employers, the employees and the trade unions in a given socio - economic context. The performance of an organization is largely regulated by the pattern of IRs maintained in the organisation. IR should be taken as part and parcel of human relationship at large and not as something extraneous to it. They must be regarded as natural concomitant of the industrial life of a society.

Among the various important factors which determine and regulate this relationship are the IR policy and practices of the organisation, attitudes of the management and the labour, strength of the labour unions, multiplicity of unions, joint consultation, labour legislation and methods for settlement of disputes. Industrial relations however, are primarily a matter of attitudes, i.e. how does the management feel about the labour and vice versa. Good relationship cannot, however, be grown overnight, but has to be developed and nurtured by both the parties over a period. It is only through an attitude of mutual trust and respect that harmonious and cordial IR can develop in an organization or industry. Harmonious IRs within an organisation is essential for its efficient running. No organisation can function efficiently and produce the goods and

services if there are constant strikes, work stoppage and turmoil between the management and the labour. Therefore, healthy IRs between workers and management are essential for the growth and development of the organisation and the country as well. It is impossible to introduce any innovation on productivity improvement exclusively through the various industrial engineering techniques, if the sound IRs do not exist in the organisation. One of the major problems of a developing country is to increase the per capita income of the population through rapid industrialisation as well as through improvement in agricultural field. Industrialisation will create more employment opportunities and help in achieving a better standard of living. For rapid industrialisation, healthy climate has to be created which will encourage investments and attract entrepreneurs. One of the major factors which attract investment is the state of industrial peace. No nation can take up a programme of industrialisation unless the proper climate prevails. Strikes, unrests and lockouts only lead to loss of man-days in industries and consequent monetary loss to the nation in terms of lost production.

From the above, it is clear that the industrial relationship is also one of the many stages of its stepping into corporate and integrated life. Hence maintenance of harmonious IRs between management and employee in industrial settings in our country is of great significance in order to boost up the economy of the country.

It is important to note that society is dynamic and industrial society, which is a part thereof, is also changing. So relations among the different participants of the industry constituting what is called IRs, is a dynamic one and assumes complex and varied dimensions in the changing scenario.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to explain the prevailing state of IRs practised in West Bengal collieries through the analysis of some selected parameters affecting IR:

1. To ascertain the factors that affect the IRs in the Coal Mining Industry.
2. To ascertain the causes of industrial disputes in the Coal Mining Industry.

Research Methodology

IRs are not created in vacuum. They are the product of the circumstances in which people work and live together. It is an abstract idea. So its direct measurement is not possible. It can be measured indirectly only through certain appropriate and important parameters. After surveying the literature and making an exhaustive study of the subject certain parameters have been identified as yard-sticks, having important bearing on IRs. These parameters are: -

1. Industrial disputes.
2. Grievance handling procedure.
3. Trade union rivalry.
4. Frequency of occurrence of misconduct.
5. Breach of code of discipline.
6. Welfare facilities & amenities.
7. Social security.
8. Mode of collective bargaining.

Information and data were collected personally by the authors from each of the concerned department from files and documentary sources. After collection, information and data were compiled and duly represented. A few office bearers of the trade unions as well as company employees have been interrogated through stratified random sampling method to know their views regarding the effectiveness of collective bargaining process of this industry. The investigators also interviewed management personnel to have their views.

Result/ Discussion

Industrial relations pattern is influenced by various factors. It is basically the relationship between the parties involved in the process of organisational activities. Parties are employees, employers, management representing employers, trade union representing employees and the Government. If there prevails a congenial state of co-existence among different parties in an industry, industrial relations situation manifests a positive climate. And such climate helps to promote sound industrial relations.

On personal query / interaction with the workers, trade union personnel and management people in West Bengal Collieries, it is gathered that following factors adversely affects industrial relations: They are:-

1. Active money- lender activities.
2. No recreational facility for loader.
3. Intoxication of workers.
4. Difficulties in withdrawing retiral money.
5. Increased work load.
6. Low wages in comparison to other industry.
7. Absence of proper educational, medical and other welfare facilities.
8. Ill-treatment and victimisation of workers.
9. Indiscipline amongst workers.
10. Corrupt management.

11. Absence of quick and impartial grievance procedure.
12. Irregular functioning of works committee.
13. Inability of labour Welfare Officer to dispose of issues pertaining the welfare, social security measures.
14. Existence of Inter-union rivalry and multiple trade unions.
15. Non-implementation of Wage Board Recommendation concerning wages and other issues on the date stipulated.
16. Lack of proper categorisation of workers.
17. Low payment of bonus in comparison to other industry.
18. Lack of proper promotional facilities.
19. Unhealthy working conditions.
20. Inadequate housing facility.
21. Non-functioning of grievance settlement machinery.

Conclusion

Industrial relations is the manifestation of various attitudes possessed by a worker. And so the analysis of such attitudes contributing to industrial relations is very much essential not only in the coal industry in West Bengal and Indian union as a whole but in any industrial organisation as well. Such study enables us to find out the causes of dissatisfaction and satisfaction and thus undoubtedly aids to remove the reflections of adverse affect of industrial relations expressed in the different forms of disputes, restriction of output, low production, personal conflicts between managements and workers, absenteeism, high turnover and other sorts of activities breaching peace in industry. Moreover, accumulated grievances make the workers so much unhappy that they ought to revolt against managements' arbitrary functions and whims and to resort to strike as a last weapon to them. And it will be unnatural and astonishing if the workers inspite of alarming exploitation and non-cooperation by their managements keep them a loof from redressing their grievances and demands and make room for their managements to continue victimisation strategy.

Thus dissatisfaction on the above facilities of workers violates the ingredients of peace in the industry and worsens the very fabric of worker-management relationship therein. So industrial relations can best be founded if the sources of dissatisfactions are arrested.

Hence, overhauling the matter pertaining to the development of industrial relations in the collieries, we might reach the conclusion that establishment of cordial industrial relations in West Bengal collieries might rest mostly on the factors as follows:-

1. Economic factors
2. Working conditions
3. Welfare measure

4. Healthy living condition
5. Union activities
6. Social security
7. Opportunity for promotion
8. Disputes settlement machinery
9. Management approach, philosophy, style of functioning.

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