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An investigation into employees' involvement in management strategies to address ambiguity in labor-management relations: A conceptual framework

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Abstract: The term "workers' participation in management" is very broad and has evolved over time to mean various things. In a labor-management cooperative setting, no managerial staff members take part in the decision-making process. It is a necessary component of the industrial democracy. It supports industrial peace and harmony and improves labor-management cooperation. In India, employee participation in management is occasionally improving. These committees were used for short-term objectives prior to independence, and consulting them was not thought to be necessary. Following independence, joint management councils and work committees were established. Three new avenues for worker participation in management were introduced in 1975: worker committees, joint management councils (JMCs), and worker directors on the board of directors (public sector). It makes sure there aren't many industrial disputes in order to prevent a downturn in the economy. By fostering improved industrial relations and more effective and efficient management, worker participation in management opens the door to higher production and productivity. Employees who participate in management are able to express themselves and recognise their own worth, which makes up for any sense of loss that comes with material benefits. It encourages employees by eliciting powerful emotions in them. Additionally, it serves as a catalyst for bettering employee productivity and labour relations. The purpose of this essay is to examine how employee participation in management affects industrial relations across a range of industries.

Keywords: decision-making, industrial relations, worker participation in management, steel industry

1. Introduction

The phrase "industrial relations" first appeared in print in Britain and North America in the late 1910s and early 1920s. People's importance and their status as "the most vital asset" have always been highlighted in this field of study (Edwards, 2009). This wide field of study was first known by a variety of titles, such as labour management, personnel administration, employment management, and labour relations. Some of these names became more well-known while others vanished; over time, the significance and background of these names became apparent. The emphasis on the relationship between employers and employees with regard to work and employment was the unifying theme among all of these terms. Ultimately, a single general term that encompassed all of them—industrial relations—was used to describe this entire field of research and practise (Kaufman, 2001). The industrial revolution, which occurred in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, is where industrial relations first emerged. It developed in response to issues that the workforce was facing, such as low pay, lengthy and boring workdays, dangerous and unfavourable working conditions, and abusive supervisors. Consequently, these issues caused a huge commotion in the face of violent strikes and increased staff churn (Hayter, 2018). Webb and Webb (1897) claim that the most popular strategy used by early trade unions to settle disputes and enhance working conditions was collective bargaining. These days, organisational behaviour and human resource management are replacing industry relations as a declining field of study. However, the industrial relations lesson is still relevant today. According to Chan (n.d.), industrial relations are the relationships that exist in the business sector, primarily between workers and management as well as between trade unions and the government, and that either directly or indirectly advance the economy and industry. In developing nations like India, industrial relations techniques are crucial. The participation of workers in management is one such excellent practise.

Uncertainty in labour relations and COVID-19:

COVID-19 A pandemic is a humanitarian and health emergency. When there were fewer cases at first, the situation appeared under control. However, as the virus spread, industry closures and a nationwide lockdown resulted, losing millions of jobs and subjecting workers to harsh working conditions as a result of layoffs brought on by the industry's economic crisis and the country's major industries ceasing to operate. The management's failure in some cases to provide monetary compensation for surviving the pandemic in accordance with general lay-off regulations caused great uncertainty in the industrial relations between all parties involved, which in turn infuriated the trade unions and management.

Employee Involvement in Management: Employee participation refers to giving employees a voice in organisational decision-making. It makes employees in the company feel like they belong. It is coming together to start, staying together to move forward, and cooperating to achieve success. Mahatma Gandhi made this suggestion in 1920 in order to increase prosperity for both workers and shareholders. To establish harmony and tranquilly within the company, there needs to be friendship, trust, and cooperation between employees and management. There are two distinct phases to the history of worker participation in management: pre- and post-independence. (H. Pahuja, 2015).

Employee involvement prior to self-reliance: Workers were not involved in management prior to independence, and management held the view that workers' opinions only mattered when there was a need to increase production and that workers should not be consulted on matters that were defined by management. There was also no discussion of employee recognition or participation.

Employee involvement following independence: The Industrial Conflict Act of 1947 expands the use of WPM in India. India's Joint Worker's Management Council was established as a result of the model agreement's recommendations.(JMCs).The government began to accept workers onto the board of directors in the 1970s. The Indian government amended the first constitution in 1976 to include WPM as one of the country's guiding principles. The government filed a bill in the parliament in May 1990. Almost 26 years have passed since the 1947 Industrial Dispute Act and other amendment acts. 2010 saw the implementation by the Indian government of a law requiring all industries employing twenty or more workers to legally settle labour disputes. (H. Pahuja (2015).

In India, worker participation and knowledge: Monitoring employee participation in management is particularly challenging in a nation with such a large population that includes individuals from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. Only when the gap between employees and management closes will it be feasible, which can be accomplished if the company offers structural training that encourages management and employees to learn together.

Objectives and managing employee participation

The goal of the WPM is generally divided into two categories in India: 1. Objectives that will help the management and objectives that will mostly help the workers. (Van de Val, M., and P. Ghosh (1978). The workings of employee involvement in management Allowing employees to participate at all decision-making levels is essential for their meaningful engagement in the organisation, which benefits the organisation in many ways. The employees will benefit from feeling 1. A greater comprehension of their role

Types of Employee Involvement in Management: According to (Dickson, 1981), there are two categories of involvement:

a. Direct involvement: Each employee has the chance to directly and uniquely contribute to managerial decisions. Between the employee and management, there are no intermediaries.

b. Indirect participation: The workers take part via agents or government agencies. Employees are encouraged to communicate their concerns to the representatives, who then bring them up with management.

Advantages of employee involvement in management: The following benefits of worker involvement in the decision-making process have been demonstrated: -

A. Productivity: When employees participate in management, the organization's overall productivity increases. Employees experience a sense of belonging and being a prominent part of the company.

B. Mutual understanding: It creates a more effective channel for communication between the two sides. It helps employees and management better understand one another's work and builds a mutual understanding of what is expected of them at work. Additionally, it fosters democracy and serenity within the company. Employees and management work together and enthusiastically carry out their responsibilities.

C. Effective communication: When employees participate in management, their opinions and feedback are welcomed and could help improve how work is done. The issues are resolved by consensus. It gives them a sense of community within the company, and they are comforted in knowing that management will always step up to assist them in times of need.

D. Industrial democracy and peace: It assists management in maintaining the contentment and happiness of its workforce, which in turn promotes harmony and peace in the organization's industrial relations. By giving them a chance to voice their opinions, employees' interests are protected. Furthermore, employee involvement in management is essentially a preventative measure against labour disputes, which are less likely to occur.

Overarching goal:

The main goal of this research is to examine how employee relations practises, workers' participation in management, and worker motivation and satisfaction relate to various Indian industries.

Particular Goals :

The following lists the research's objectives:

1. To investigate employee motivation levels through deeper engagement.
2. To determine how employee participation aids in expressing their interests and forging positive working relationships with management.

Study's scope: The purpose of the study is to determine whether worker participation in management reduces uncertainty in labour relations and how it affects employees' performance at work in relation to different Indian industries. It also aims to shed light on the uncertainty brought on by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Relevance of the research: The major goal of this study is to provide an enhanced understanding of workers' participation in management and IR practise in relation to Indian industries. Additionally, it seeks to investigate how employee involvement raises motivation levels and how this affects industrial relations. In order to support the researchers in their future research, this study will help them close any gaps in the literature and provide additional readings. The most recent findings regarding the examination of the relationship between employers and employees and how a closer involvement of workers helps them achieve their goals will be provided by this research study. Furthermore, the goal of this study is to provide Indian steel industry professionals with useful knowledge regarding how work-related pay (WPM) boosts worker motivation and productivity. Additionally, this will improve the functioning of numerous industries and help employers keep friendly working relationships with their staff

2. Review of Literature

Factors influencing employees' involvement in management

Encouragement and satisfaction with the work they are doing at their place of employment are necessary for the employees. (Vijayashree P, Dr. M. Chandran, 2008) found several factors that affect employees' involvement in management; these are listed below: One of the elements that affects employee satisfaction is the career development programme

(a). Many companies invest time and resources in their employees' professional development so they can advance in their careers and have the chance to learn new skills and abilities while at work.

b) Salary structure: As the main reason an employee works for an organisation, their salary is one of their most important characteristics and serves as a motivator. When this basic need is met, workers feel secure about their livelihood. They expect a fair and sufficient compensation for the work they perform.

c) Cultural diversity: The atmosphere at work is greatly impacted by cultural diversity. People's diverse origins and cultures may contribute to the exchange of ideas and aid in the process of arriving at wiser decisions.

d) Employee recognition: When workers perform well and are positive, they should be rewarded. This helps them feel good about themselves and meets their needs for social validation and self-worth, which in turn drives them to improve, which is advantageous to the company and the individual.

3. Conclusions

In today's world, uncertainty is a common occurrence in industrial relations. It might be brought on by the pandemic, changes in policies, or the adoption of new technology. The three main categories of uncertainty that

people encounter are structural, job-related, and strategic. By incorporating participation in organisational decision-making, all of this uncertainty can be minimised. It has been demonstrated that decision-making staff members are constructive. When employees participate in decision-making, they typically see it as more advantageous to them personally. When employees participate in decision-making, there is less uncertainty and better outcomes. Employees who participate in organisational communication or decision-making processes feel less insecure about their work. When there are organisational changes, like implementing new technology, when there is a pandemic, when government policies change, or when there is a recession, employee participation should rise. It lessens job insecurity and gives the employee a sense of recognition.

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