



Workers Participation in Management as Ambivalence Approach: A study of Sugar Industry of Haryana

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ABSTRACT

The participative management style is a part of government labour policy in India. This system aims at getting better relations between workers and employers. This paper tries to examine to what extent workers in sugar industry of Haryana positively participate in the determination of management strategy, production planning, personnel policy, human development programme, and last but not the least the working conditions of employees. The result of our research indicates that the degree of workers' participation in management (WPM) is very low. Most sugar mills in Haryana have, however, not yet attained a high level of participation as the mills in south have occupied. As for the attitudes on both sides toward participative management, the union leaders want to extend their influence upon managerial decisions, while the managers are, if anything, wary of the growing influence of the former.

KEYWORDS : WPM, Sugar Industry, Industrial Relations

Introduction

Employee involvement and participation is growing its importance in every part of the world. The world is changing and most of the markets are open due to globalization. The worker's participation in management is an essential ingredient of industrial democracy, unless the status of the worker is raised and recognized as a partner in the industry and as a co-trustee of the community, he cannot be persuaded to put in his very best in the work. A modern forward-looking business firm does not keep its employees in the dark about vital decisions affecting them. It trusts them and involves them in decision making at all levels. Thus the status of the worker is the most important issue in the industry. The term workers participation in management (WPM) has been given several meanings. It is a process by which subordinate employees, either individually or collectively, become involved in one or more aspects of organizational decision making within the enterprises in which they work.

According to Keith Davis (1977) Participation refers to the mental and emotional involvement of a person in a group situation which encourages him to contribute to group goals and share the responsibility of achievement.

Benefits of Employee Involvement in Decision Making

Employee involvement in decision making creates a sense of belongingness among the workers as well as a friendly environment in which both the management and the workers voluntarily contribute to healthy industrial relations (Noah, 2008).

When employees are involved in making decisions, they gain a professional and personal stake in the organization and its overall success. This commitment leads to increased productivity as employees are actively participating in various aspects of the company and wish to see their efforts succeed overall. This is not only beneficial to company growth, but is also on-the-job training for workers. The increase in responsibility expands employee skill sets, preparing them for additional responsibility in the future. (Isaac. et.al, 1998)

There is an assumption held by many scholars and managers that if employees are adequately informed about matters concerning them and are afforded the opportunity to make decisions relevant to their work, then there will be benefits for both the organisation and the individual (Shadur et al., 1999). The benefits of employee involvement in decision making firstly increases employee's morale and job satisfaction and enhances productive efficiency and also provides employees the opportunity to voice their opinions, which can lead to better decisions for the organization.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of participation for management was initially limited to attaining higher productivity through a more committed workforce; later, as behavioral theories evolved, WPM was considered and expect-

ed to achieve more elaborate organizational goals, such as improvement in employee morale, improved industrial relations, motivation and commitment, and quality of work life. (Sen , 2012)

The objectives for the study carried out at three sugar mills are as below:

1. To know workers awareness about of participation in the decision making.
2. To ascertain the areas of workers participation in management.
3. To determine factors which aid or hinder the workers' participation in management.
4. To propose suggestions to overcome the encountered lapses

Workers Participation in Management in Indian Perspective

The most important factor regarding the success of workers participation in management is the support of the top management. It is the top management who can encourage employee involvement and participation. According to Lawler et al (1995) it is essential, as employee involvement needs the management support to develop and smooth implementation without any obstacle.

In India at National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC), Ramagundam, Andhra Pradesh, WPM is effectively functioning. It is found that here the management with the help of workers ensures that they are capable of taking fruitful decisions regarding policy making, service conditions, productivity, manufacturing supervision and administration. (Kumar and Taunk 2013)

At Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) Hyderabad, majority of the employees agreed that management have a positive attitude towards staff and they are treated with respect at their work places and the participation is confined to only workers. Employees agree that committee members share the information with their colleagues after the meetings, the workers participation in management improves understanding between managers and workers. (Rathnakar 2012)

Sugar Mills in Haryana

There are 12 co-operative sugar mills working in Haryana. All these mills have a federation- The Haryana State Federation of Co-operative Sugar Mills (SUGARFED) at their apex level. Ten Coop. Sugar Mills render service to about 70000 sugarcane growers' families out of total 6 Lac farming families in the State. These Mills provide employment to about 7500 personnel (workers and engineers) directly and to about 25000 people indirectly in the field of Cane harvesting, loading/un-loading, labor and transportation activities etc. (Sharma 2013).

Workers in the selected Co-op. Sugar Mills

Mill	Permanent	Seasonal	Daily Wager	Total
Panipat	210	277	173	660

Gohana	172	299	160	631
Meham	290	337	170	797
Total	672	913	503	2088

Analysis and results:

The data collected through questionnaire and personal interviews showcase the given results:

1. On the perspective of awareness.

Sr.	Aspect of workers	%
i	Full awareness of	92%
ii	Consent for implementation	93%
iii	Believe in positive impact on industrial relations	96%
iv	Believe that it brings peace and harmony in the mill	98%
v	Believe that it improves productivity	87%
vi	Knowledge of mills standing orders	83%
vii	Aspiration and freedom for union membership	100%

2. Areas of WPM in sugar mills.

Sr. No.	Aspect of workers	%
i	Attend all the meetings	86%
ii	Wish to be a member of any committee	71%
iii	Are consulted before taking decision on welfare	65%
iv	Are consulted before taking decision on workplace	56%
v	Are consulted before taking decision on salary	28%
vi	Are consulted before taking decision on administration	26%
vii	Are consulted before taking decision on machinery	41%
viii	Are consulted before taking decision on working hours	76%

- On the perspective of Workers Satisfaction and Involvement it is found that 92% of the workers always suggest something to their supervisor and out of that only 42% suggestions are followed up by their managers. 76% of workers opine that strike is never the method of solving problem. Again out of suggestions given by workers, in the area of welfare are followed 76%, in the areas of Working Environment (13%), Administration (7%), and New Technology (4%) are followed.

Findings

The most sugar mill employees are satisfied with the functioning of the participatory machineries and initiatives taken by management in organizational interest which is effective and efficient. Majority of them agreed that management have a positive attitude towards staff and they are treated with respect at their work places. They also agree that workers participation in management improves understanding between management and workers. A few workers complained that their supervisors are only concerned for production related problems. The most employees have the opinion that workers need trade unions

to protect their interest and the cooperation of trade unions is necessary to empower employees for their participation in managerial decision making. But there should be only one trade union and its area of concern should not be limited to welfare and social interest. Most of the employee says that committee members share the information with their colleagues after the meetings. They agree that workers participation in management improves understanding between managers and workers and those decisions taken at the committee meetings should be timely communicated and implemented.

Suggestions

- From the analysis it is clear that in Sugar mills of Haryana, Workers Participation in Management is positive. At the same time management cooperation in few cases is poor which could be improved by free flow of communication and information with the workers by educating and inducing a system of sharing the fruits of participation.
- Most of the employees agree that management should take the proper steps to reduce the conflicts between the labor as well as top level. Serious attention has to be given to the removal of hurdles.
- The management should focus on Workers Participation in Management Schemes. It should be properly done which would have a positive effect on all the activities of the Sugar mills.
- Supervisors must be trained and motivated as most of them are having a myth that they are being judged only on production measures. Hence they remain with a tag of 'hard task master' and inhuman with human subordinates.
- There should be only one trade union in a mill and membership to the trade union should be mandatory.

Limitations

- Due to paucity of time and money a limited numbers of mills are taken for study.
- The sample size of only 180 workers was too small, which could be increased.
- The study is carried out in off season, where only permanent employees are investigated.
- Workers were personally interviewed to fill up the questionnaire, so a certain amount of subjective errors on behalf of researcher are possible.
- Simple arithmetic percentage is used to analyse the data.

Conclusion

Workers participation in management in sugar mills is not much different than any other cooperative sector. The mills have members and workers director representative in all committees but the effect on majority of workers morale is not much. The area of concern for decision is limited to general welfare and production related aspects and lacks for machinery and equipment purchases and the training of workers on special equipments. Also the workers and supervisors need counseling and training to yield the benefits of WPM. At the same time managers and supervisors need to change their position of hard task master and they need to respect the human resource.

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