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Impact of Grievances on Industrial Relations

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Abstract

This paper made an earnest attempt to present the impact of industrial disputes on the interpersonal relations in an industry. Industrial relations have become most delicate and complex in modern Industrial Society. It attempts at arriving solutions between conflicting interests of the individual, group and community. The various causes and forms of grievances have been explained. In the reverent hope of researcher, various settlement machinery like step ladder policy, open door policy are recommended in this paper which when implemented in the true spirit, as and when necessary, results in a sound Industrial Relations system.

Keywords : Industrial disputes, Industrial Relations, Grievance, Grievance procedure

Introduction

A sound industrial relations system is one in which relationships between management and employees (and their representatives) on the hand, and between them and the State on the other, are more harmonious and cooperative than conflictual and creates an environment conducive to economic efficiency and the motivation, productivity and development of the employee and generates employee loyalty and mutual trust.

Importance of Industrial Relations:

The healthy industrial relations are key to the progress and success. Their significance may be discussed as under

Uninterrupted production The most important benefit of industrial relations is that this ensures continuity of production. This means, continuous employment for all from manager to workers. The resources are fully utilized, resulting in the maximum possible production. There is uninterrupted flow of income for all. Smooth running of an industry is of vital importance for several other industries; to other industries if the products are intermediaries or inputs; to exporters if these are export goods; to consumers and workers, if these are goods of mass consumption.

Reduction in Industrial Disputes Good industrial relations reduce the industrial disputes. Disputes are reflections of the failure of basic human urges or motivations to secure adequate satisfaction or expression which are fully cured by good industrial relations. Strikes, lockouts, go-slow tactics, gherao and grievances are some of the reflections of industrial unrest which do not spring up in an atmosphere of industrial peace. It helps promoting co-operation and increasing production.

High morale Good industrial relations improve the morale of the employees. Employees work with great zeal with the feeling in mind that the interest of employer and employees is one and the same, i.e. to increase production. Every worker feels that he is a co-owner of the gains of industry. The employer in his turn must realize that the gains of industry are not for him alone but they should be shared equally and generously with his workers. In other words, complete unity of thought and action is the main achievement of industrial peace. It increases the place of workers in the society and their ego is satisfied. It naturally affects production because mighty co-operative efforts alone can produce great results.

Mental Revolution The main object of industrial relation is a complete mental revolution of workers and employees. The industrial peace lies ultimately in a transformed outlook on the part of both. It is the business of leadership in the ranks of workers, employees and Government to work out a new relationship in consonance with a spirit of true democracy. Both should think themselves as partners of the industry and the role of workers in such a partnership should be recognized. On the other hand, workers must recognize employer's authority. It will naturally have impact on production because they recognize the interest of each other.

Reduced Wastage Good industrial relations are maintained on the basis of cooperation and recognition of each other. It will help increase production. Wastages of man, material and machines are reduced to the minimum and thus national interest is protected.

Thus, it is evident that good industrial relations are the basis of higher production with minimum cost and higher profits. It also results in increased efficiency of workers. New and new projects may be introduced for the welfare of the workers and to promote the morale of the people at work. An economy organized for planned production and distribution, aiming at the realization of social justice and welfare of the masses can function effectively only in an atmosphere of industrial peace. If the twin objectives of rapid national development and increased social justice are to be achieved, there must be harmonious relationship between management and labor.

Objectives of Industrial Relations:

- To safeguard the interest of labor and management by securing the highest level of mutual understanding and good-will among all those sections in the industry which participate in the process of production.
- To avoid industrial conflict or strife and develop harmonious relations, which are an essential factor in the productivity of workers and the industrial progress of a country.
- To raise productivity to a higher level in an era of full employment by lessening the tendency to high turnover and frequency absenteeism.
- To establish and promote the growth of an industrial democracy based on labor partnership in the sharing of profits and of managerial decisions, so that individuals personality may grow its full stature for the benefit of the industry and of the country as well.

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- To eliminate or minimize the number of strikes, lockouts and gheraos by providing reasonable wages, improved living and working conditions, said fringe benefits.
- To improve the economic conditions of workers in the existing state of industrial managements and political government.
- Socialization of industries by making the state itself a major employer.
- Vesting of a proprietary interest of the workers in the industries in which they are employed.

Grievance in Industry:

Grievance means any type of dissatisfaction or discontentment's arising out of factors related to an employee's job which he thinks are unfair. A grievance arises when an employee feels that something has happened or is happening to him which he thinks is unfair, unjust or inequitable. In an organization, a grievance may arise due to several factors such as:

Violation of management's responsibility such as poor working conditions

Violation of company's rules and regulations

Violation of labor laws

Violation of natural rules of justice such as unfair treatment in promotion, etc.

Various sources of grievance may be categorized under three heads: (i) management policies, (ii) working conditions, and (iii) personal factors

1. Grievance resulting from management policies include:
 - o Wage rates
 - o Leave policy
 - o Overtime
 - o Lack of career planning
 - o Role conflicts
 - o Lack of regard for collective agreement
 - o Disparity between skill of worker and job responsibility
2. Grievance resulting from working conditions include:
 - o Poor safety and bad physical conditions
 - o Unavailability of tools and proper machinery
 - o Negative approach to discipline
 - o Unrealistic targets
3. Grievance resulting from inter-personal factors include
 - o Poor relationships with team members
 - o Autocratic leadership style of superiors
 - o Poor relations with seniors
 - o Conflicts with peers and colleagues

It is necessary to distinguish a complaint from grievance. A complaint is an indication of employee dissatisfaction that has not been submitted in written. On the other hand, a grievance is a complaint that has been put in writing and made formal.

Grievances are symptoms of conflicts in industry. Therefore, management should be concerned with both complaints and grievances, because both may be important indicators of potential problems within the workforce. Without a grievance procedure, management may be unable to respond to employee concerns since managers are unaware of them.

Therefore, a formal grievance procedure is a valuable communication tool for the organization.

Grievance Procedure:

Grievance procedure is a formal communication between an employee and the management designed for the settlement of a grievance. The grievance procedures differ from organization to organization.

1. Open door policy
2. Step-ladder policy

Open door policy:

Under this policy, the aggrieved employee is free to meet the top executives of the organization and get his grievances redressed. Such a policy works well only in small organizations. However, in bigger organizations, top management executives are usually busy with other concerned matters of the company. Moreover, it is believed that open door policy is suitable for executives; operational employees may feel shy to go to the top management.

Step ladder policy:

In this policy the steps to be followed are as follows:

Step 1: In the first step the grievance is to be submitted to departmental representative, who is a representative of management. He has to give his answer within 48 hours.

Step 2: If the departmental representative fails to provide a solution, the aggrieved employee can take his grievance to head of the department, who has to give his decision within 3 days.

Step 3: If the aggrieved employees is not satisfied with the decision of departmental head, he can take the grievance to grievance committee. The grievance committee makes its recommendations to the manager within 7 days in the form of a report. The final decision of the management on the report of grievance committee must be communicated to the aggrieved employee within three days of the receipt of report. An appeal for revision of final decision can be made by the worker if he is not satisfied with it. The management must communicate its decision its decision to the worker within 7 days.

Step 4: If the grievance still remains unsettled, the case may be referred to voluntary arbitration.

Conclusion:

The foregoing analysis reveals that Grievance in an organization effect industrial relations. So in order to build an harmonious industrial environment, first all the Grievance should be identified, and then sort out the reasons and try to know how far they are effecting Industrial relations and then try to solve them by using above procedures, Management should evaluate the procedure to know the smooth functioning through the following check list.

- Was the incident closed with a sense of satisfaction on both the parties.
- Did the solution contribute to the operational efficiency of the organization.
- Was the case handled in a way which strengthened the line authority, specially at the level immediately above that at which dissatisfaction was first expressed.

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