

SOS POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

MBA HRD – 204

SUBJECT NAME: INDUSTRIAL WELFARE

UNIT-IV

TOPIC NAME- AGENCIES OF LABOUR WELFARE

We are discuss about five labour welfare agencies of India. The agencies are: 1. Central Government 2. State Government 3. Employers 4. Trade Union and 5. Other agencies.

1. Central Government:

Ours is a welfare state wedded to the policy of doing welfare to the people of the country. For the economic rejuvenation of the country, the toiling masses must be taken care of, their lots must be improved. In this regard, the Government has an active role to play.

The Government has to come forward to bring about intellectual, physical, moral and economic betterment of the workers, so that their whole-hearted and willing co-operation may be readily available for the economic upliftment of the country in our Plan objectives, workers have been accepted as an essential part of the Apparatus of industrial and economic administration of the country.

The Central Government has paid attention to improve the conditions of workers. Various enactments have been promulgated to safeguard the interests of workers, to extend to them economic benefits and social security.

The Factories Act, for example, is a bold attempt to extend various facilities to factory workers their housing facilities, economic benefits, social security's and physical safety etc. The Mines Act is another piece of legislation that aims at providing welfare to mine workers.

So far as mines are concerned, Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund has been instituted to boost the morale of coal mine workers under the Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act. Similarly, Mica Mines Labour Welfare Fund and Iron Ore Mines Labour Welfare Fund have been created by specific Acts of the Central Government. Again, we find Plantation Labour Act for the welfare of plantation workers.

Besides the various Acts passed for the welfare of labour in mines, plantations and factories, the Central Government has kept its Labour Ministry alive to the conditions of workers. Measures have now been adopted to provide medical aid, legal and financial aid to workers under various schemes.

To ensure industrial safety, various precautionary measures have also been enforced. Prevention of the possibility of accidents has been one of the objectives of the Government's welfare measures and actually the incidence of accidents has come down.

The Government of India has introduced an industrial housing scheme for the accommodation of industrial workers. Social Security legislations such as The Workmen's Compensation Act, Maternity Benefit Act and The Employees' State Insurance Act have been in force.

2. State Government:

The State Governments in India were more or less indifferent to labour welfare, prior to independence. But now various State Governments are very alive to the conditions of labour and are up and doing for the upliftment of the lots of the workers.

There are popular governments in some states where workers are adequately taken care of. Labour fronts of different political parties are now sufficiently strong to press the demands of workers to the Government and the link between the State Governments and the labour wings of political parties is so close that various facilities are now being made available to the workers through the State Government's machinery.

3. Employers:

Employers in India today have started realizing that they should identify their interest with those of the employees. No prudent management can now ignore the interests of their workers and expect to reap the benefits of higher labour productivity.

So, for their own interest, employers are being compelled to adopt welfare measures for the workers. There are only a few employers in India who have been sympathetic to labour welfare but others are extending various benefits to workers only under compulsion.

Several industries such as cotton, jute, textile, engineering, sugar, cement, glass, chemical etc. have been brought under legislative measures to give facilities provided by different industries either under legal compulsion or under union pressure.

We can say that employers in India with their professional training background are becoming more and more conscious about the workers whom they now consider the most essential tool to gear up their organisational activities.

Employers who are still maintaining a negative attitude or an indifferent attitude towards workers are surely to pay for their foolishness. Days have changed. All over the world is the slogan for workers to unite. Moreover, employers who fail to understand the potentialities of the labour force, the fullest utilisation of which can bring miraculous results for the organisation, are sure to suffer.

4. Trade Union:

Last but not the least important agent for the welfare of workers is the "Workers' union." Conflicts between labour and capital existed since industrialisation, they still exist and will

continue to exist. The complete harmony and amity between the two opposite-interest groups cannot be achieved.

Not only in India, but nowhere in the world has industrial peace been ensured? Here is the role for the Trade Union to play in the matter of bargaining. Various facilities of different nature — economic, social, cultural — are made available to workers by Trade Unions.

The Indian Trade Unions have not yet been able to do much to ameliorate the lot of their members. Their participation in this sphere has been mainly through their association with the Labour Welfare Advisory Committees constituted by the Governments.

It is worthwhile to mention that trade unions in the textile industry (Textile Labour Association) and the Mazdoor Sabha have made provisions for various welfare facilities to the workers.

Educational and cultural upliftments through trade unions have been made possible. With the change in the attitude of the employers (many of whom are governments themselves), the nature of trade unions in India — from militancy to conciliatory — is now noticeable.

Various welfare services are now made available to the workers through Trade Unions after the trade union leaders' direct discussions and deliberations with the employers across the table.

However, trade unions should take some measures for the welfare of workers. They should come forward to assist the employers and the Government in formulation and administration of welfare schemes. To find out the needs of the workers and to bring them to the notice of the employers should also come under the purview of trade union activities.

A modern Trade Union has to educate its members, organize for them various inexpensive programmes and to act as a watch-dog of workers' interests. Trade Unions have, as a matter of fact, a great role to play for the welfare of the workers.

(5) Labour Welfare Work by Other Agencies:

Apart from the agencies closely associated with the industries (Government, Central and States, employers and trade unions) several other agencies have also done, commendable work in the field of labour welfare.

Such agencies are:

(a) Social Service Agencies:

Several social service agencies such as Bombay Social Service League started by the Servants of India Society and similar leagues in Madras and Bengal the Shiv Seva Society, the Bombay Presidency Women's Council, the Maternity and Infant Welfare Association, the Y.M.C.A., The Depressed Classes Mission Society and many other missionary societies play an important role in organising the welfare work, both by helping employers and labour in their welfare activities and by independent efforts. These agencies have provided various welfare activities, like

education, indoor and outdoor games, establishment of co-operative societies, night schools and libraries etc.

(b) Municipalities:

A few municipalities and municipal corporations have also taken special welfare measures such as cooperative credit societies, maternities and nursery schools, adult schools, crèches, etc. These progressive municipalities, are also in Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Kanpur, Madras, Ajmer etc.