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An Analysis of Industrial Labourer in India with Special Reference to Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

Labour markets play a significant role in determining the success of the economic restructuring policies and their impact on the population. The social aspects of minimum wage and job security regulations are necessary to promote the welfare of the workers. Rapid growth of employment and real wages should be of primary interest to workers in any country. They are also justified in view of varying conditions of demand and supply and varied job requirements like skill, knowledge, aptitude, ability, experience etc. but the object of the government is to minimize income inequalities and inequalities in the distribution of wealth. Human Resource managers are expected to understand these varying approaches because they provide them theoretical underpinnings for much of the role of Human resource management. The three popular approaches to industrial relation are unitary approach, pluralistic approach, and Marxist approach. This reflects that no proper implementation of rules and monitoring authorities is apparently found with industries. The analysis Age-wise distribution of workers revealed that 32.22 per cent of workers belong to the age group of 21 to 30 years followed by 25.56 per cent of workers in the age group of 31 to 40 years. This indicates that 57.78 per cent of the workers fell in the age group of 21 to 40 years in all the three category of industries.

Keywords: *Industrial Labour, Employment, wages.*

Introduction

Labour markets play a significant role in determining the success of the economic restructuring policies and their impact on the population. The social aspects of minimum wage and job security regulations are necessary to promote the welfare of the workers. Rapid growth of employment and real wages should be of primary interest to workers in any country.¹ An international comparison involving countries South Asia, East Asia, Latin America and the developed world reveals that over the last 25 years or so. While employment and real earnings per employee in the manufacturing sector have risen only slowly in India, the performance of the East Asian countries has been most outstanding in this respect. The rapid growth of employment and real earnings per employee in East Asia is the combined result of labour policies along with a whole range of successfully implemented export orientated industrialization policies which yielded rapid GDP growth. Wages and employment are two variables which vitally affect the economic well-being of a

substantial segment of population of any nation.² it is worthwhile to take a look at the place occupied by wages and employment in major schools of economic thought. If one takes a broad sweeping view of economic theory as it has evolved over time, one can discern at least five types of approaches to the issues of wages and employment determination. Wage differentials on the basis of occupations, units and areas (when real wages are taken into account) can be justified on the basis of equal pay for equal work among workers. They are also justified in view of varying conditions of demand and supply and varied job requirements like skill, knowledge, aptitude, ability, experience etc. but the object of the government is to minimize income inequalities and inequalities in the distribution of wealth.³ Thus wage differentials are not desirable in a socialistic pattern of society. However, formulating uniform wage policy ignoring differences in individual Skills, knowledge etc., units ability to pay, varying living costs in different regions, varying demand and supply conditions, differences in occupations etc., is practically not possible. Hence, a compromise between uniform wage policy and wage differentials has to be

developed in view of the principle of socialistic pattern of society Inter-personal, inter-unit, inter occupational differentials are more predominant in unorganized sector of Indian economy. But even in organized sector and public sector units, wage differentials are quite common. But the tendency appears to be towards minimization and regularization of personal wage differentials and to narrow down the gap between maximum and minimum wage in a unit. ⁴

Structure of Minimum Wages in Tamilnadu

Table 1: Comparative Minimum Wages Rates Across States in Tamilnadu (in Rs.)

Sl. No.	Industries	Rates as on 31.12.2004	Rates as on 15.11.2010
1.	Spinning, Printing, dyeing	57.40	170.72
2.	Power loom	59.25	81.91
3.	Finishing, bleaching	98.54	170.72

Source: 1. Labour Bureau Government of India, 31.12.2004
2. Department of Labour and Employment, Tamil Nadu, 15.11.2010

Industrial Labour Relations: Existence of conducive labour relations is critical for promoting economic development in general and industrial development in particular. A study of data on number of strikes and lockouts in India reveals a declining trend. It is a welcome feature on the industrial front. It augurs well for the Indian economy. The number of man-days lost because of lockouts has continuously been on the decline. In regard to the spatial dispersion of the incidences of strikes and lockouts, it is observed that Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, kerala, and Rajasthan are the most affected states.⁵ among sectors, financial intermediaries (excluding insurance & pension funds) recorded the maximum number of strikes and lockouts)

Table 2: Strikes and Lockouts (Man-Days Lost, in Millions)

Year	Strikers		Lockouts	
	Number	Man-days lost	Number	Man-days lost
2004	236	4.83	241	19.04
2005	227	10.81	229	18.86
2006	243	5.32	187	15.01
2007	210	15.06	179	12.11
2008	250	7.02	182	10.46
2009	91	2.05	31	0.84

Source: Labour Bureau, shimla

Approach to Industrial Relations: The scenario of industrial relations is perceived differently by different people, For some, industrial relations is related to class conflict, others perceive it in terms of mutual co-operation and still others understand it in terms of competing interests of various groups. Human Resource managers are expected to understand these varying approaches because they provide them theoretical underpinnings for much of the role of Human resource management. The three popular approaches to industrial relation are unitary approach, pluralistic approach, and Marxist approach.⁶

Trade Union Membership: As of today, there are more than 66,000 registered unions and most of them are affiliated to one of the other central trade union. Table 3 presents details about the Central Trade Unions, their affiliates, political affiliation, date of establishment and membership claimed.

Trade Union Membership

Table 3: Details of Trade Union Membership in India

Year	No. of Unions Registered	Membership ('000)
1990	52016	7019
1991	53535	6100
1992	55680	5746
1993	55784	3134
1994	56872	4094
1995	57952	6538
1996	58805	5613
1997	59968	7408
2008	66000	8207

Source: Various issues of Labour Year Book-2010.

As Table 3 shows, there has been a steady increase in the number of registered unions, but their membership fluctuated from year to year. The figure slipped to all time low in 1993, but increased in the years that followed.

Industrial Relations

Table 4: Trade Union Facility, Grievance Procedure and Labour Enforcing Authorities of Industrial Workers

Industrial Relations Facility	Number of workers			Total Number of Workers
	Cotton spinning	Cotton weaving and processing	Power Loom	
Extent of Trade Union				
Available	33 (27.50)	–	–	33 (9.17)
Unavailable	87 (72.50)	120 (100.00)	120 (100.00)	327 (90.83)
Total	120 (100.00)	120 (100.00)	120 (100.00)	360 (100.00)
Grievance Procedure				
Available	41 (34.17)	42 (35.00)	36 (30.00)	119 (33.06)
Unavailable	79 (65.83)	78 (65.00)	84 (70.00)	241 (66.94)
Total	120 (100.000)	120 (100.00)	120 (100.00)	360 (100.00)
Labour Welfare Enforcing Authorities				
Available	41 (34.17)	54 (45.00)	52 (43.33)	147 (40.83)
Unavailable	79 (65.83)	66 (55.00)	68 (56.67)	213 (59.17)
Total	120 (100.00)	120 (100.00)	120 (100.00)	360 (100.00)

Source: Survey data. Note: Figures in parentheses are percentages to respective totals.

Of the 360 selected workers 33 workers have trade union membership and all of them are cotton spinning industries. About 327 workers are not the members of trade union. Since all other industries do not permit any involvement in trade union activity. In the cotton weaving and processing and power loom industries no one gets enrolled himself/herself as member of any trade union. Among the three sample industries out of 360 industrial workers, 41 in cotton spinning, 42 in cotton weaving and processing and 36 in power loom industries follow the prescribed grievance procedures for the redresses of workers Problem. 241 workers opined that no proper grievance procedure is available and practiced in the industries. However, grievances, if any, are settled through mutual discussion between the workers and the management. Table 4 also depicts that the visit of labour enforcement authorities availability among three industries. 147 workers consented that the facility is available, whereas 213 reported that no such labour enforcement authorities visited the industries. This reflects that no proper implementation of rules and monitoring authorities is apparently found with industries. The industrial workers belong to three categories of industries viz. cotton spinning, cotton weaving and processing and power loom industries in the study area. The analysis Age-wise distribution of workers revealed that 32.22 per cent of workers belong to the age group of 21 to 30 years followed by 25.56

per cent of workers in the age group of 31 to 40 years. This indicates that 57.78 per cent of the workers fell in the age group of 21 to 40 years in all the three category of industries. The gender-study of Industrial workers explores that 224 (62.22%) are male and 136 (37.78%) are female workers. It is also to pin point that out of 360 industrial workers 31 are male children workers and 14 are female children workers. This reflects employment of child labour is seen in the industries.

Suggestions

1. The practice of social security measures must be applied to the ground so as to elicit employee motivation and involvement and the consequent gratification. Nothing strokes employee motivation like assured social security measures.
2. Strategic planning and continuous strategy development need to be environment-friendly to be free from the risk of 'set-up to-fail syndrome'.
3. Industrial workers clamoring for more wages and bonus payment produce the unpleasant effect of disturbing industrial peace and harmony. They must be brought to the mainstream through nurturing a shared vision where intellect and acumen reign supreme along with brawn power.
4. All industrial workers need to own themselves with full freedom to join trade unions to create

the competing values framework of collaboration creation competition and control. Employers and Employees should not prey upon one another.

Conclusion

Labour is the most dynamic agency in the process of production. The inestimable importance of labour in terms of its productivity has been emphasized with the appearance of the Robinsian Scarcity approach to theory of economics. The promotion of economic development through flexibility and swiftness of production hinging on this indispensable agency has therefore become conspicuous in itself.⁷ Industrial establishments need to be aware of the imminent cleavages between the employers and employees resulting from preventable factors such as factious labours, dullness of morbidity of labourers resulting from lack of fluidity of market factors, unpleasant spread among the stages of production resulting in dehumanizing labour and rendering it more and more mechanical.

Ethical Clearance: Completed

Source of Funding: Self

Conflict of Interest: Nil

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