

Origin and Growth of working Participation Scheme

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Abstract

Like other behavioral terms, WPM stands for workers participation in management, WPM means different things to different people depending upon their objectives and expectations. Thus, WPM is an elastic concept. For example, for management it is a joint consultation prior to decision making, for workers it means co-determination, for trade unions It is the harbinger of a new order of social relationship and a new set of power equation within organizations, while for government it is an association of labour with management without the final authority or responsibility in decision making.

Keywords: workers, decision making, trade union, WPM

1.0 Introduction

All other matters like wages, bonus etc., are subjects of collective bargaining and are excluded from the preview of the workers participation schemes the world Individual grievances are also excluded from its scope.

2.0 Definition

Like other behavioral terms, WPM means different things to different people depending upon their objectives and expectations. Thus, WPM is an elastic concept. For example, for management it is a joint consultation prior to decision making, for workers it means co-determination, for trade unions It is the harbinger of a new order of social relationship and a new set of power equation within organizations, while for government it is an association of labour with management without the final authority or responsibility in decision making.

Let us also go through some important definitions of WPM.

According to Keith Davis, “Workers’ 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 in responsibility of achieving them”.

In the words of Mehtras “Applied to industry, the concept of participation means sharing the decision-making power by the rank and file of an industrial organization through their representatives, at all the appropriate levels of management in the entire range of managerial action”. A clear and more comprehensive definition of WPM is given by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

2.1 According to the ILO:

“Workers’ participation may, broadly be taken to cover all terms of association of workers and their representatives with the decision-making process, ranging from exchange of information, consultations, decisions and negotiations to more institutionalized forms such as the presence of workers’ members on management or supervisory boards or even management by workers themselves as practiced in Yugoslavia”.

In Yugoslavia, WPM is governed by the Law on Workers' Management of State Economic Enterprises and Higher Economic Association. The Act consists of a three-tier participation structure: collective bargaining, workers' council, and board of management.

In fact, the basic reason for differences in perception of WPM is mainly due to the differential pattern of practices adopted by various countries while implementing workers' participation in management.

For example, in Great Britain and Sweden, WPM is in the form of Joint Consultation through Joint Consultative Committees, Works Committees in France, Co-determination Committees in West Germany, Joint Work Council in Belgium, Workers' Council and Management Board in Yugoslavia and Union Management Co-operation in USA.

In India, WPM is in the form of, what we call Labour Management Cooperation and Workers' Participation in Management. It is implemented through the agencies like Works Committees, Joint Management Councils (JMCs) Shop Councils, Unit Councils and Joint Councils. Notwithstanding, these different forms of WPM differ only in degree, not in nature.

Be the perceptual differences as these may, WPM is a system of communication and consultation, either formal or informal, by which the workers of an organization are kept informed, as and when required, about the affairs of the undertaking and through which they express their opinion and contribute to decision-making process of management.

2.2 Characteristics:

The following are the main characteristics of WPM:

1. Participation implies practices which increase the scope for employees' share of influence in decision-making process with the assumption of responsibility.
2. Participation presupposes willing acceptance of responsibility by workers.
3. Workers participate in management not as individuals but as a group through their representatives.

4. Worker's participation in management differs from collective bargaining in the sense that while the former is based on mutual trust, information sharing and mutual problem solving; the latter is essentially based on power play, pressure tactics, and negotiations.

5. The basic rationale for worker's participation in management is that workers invest their labour and their fates to their place of work. Thus, they contribute to the outcomes of organization. Hence, they have a legitimate right to share in decision-making activities of organization.

3.0 Objectives

The objectives of WPM are closely netted to the ration-able for WPM. Accordingly, the objectives of WPM vary from country to country depending on their levels of socio-economic development political philosophies, industrial relations scenes, and attitude of the working class.

To quote, the objective of WPM is to co-determine at the various levels of enterprises in Germany, assign the final to workers over all matters relating to an undertaking in Yugoslavia, promote good communication and understanding between labour and management on the issues of business administration and production in Japan, and enable work-force to influence the working of industries in China, for example. In India the objective of the government in advocating for workers' participation in management, as stated in the Industrial Policy Resolution 1956, is a part of its overall endeavor to create a socialist society, wherein the sharing of a part of the managerial powers by workers is considered necessary.

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