

Unit – V

Trade union

Trade unions are autonomous, membership-based associations of workers who advocate for and engage in collective bargaining on behalf of the working class. They offer guidance to their members who have issues at work, speak on their behalf when interacting with employers, and negotiate better pay and working conditions.

Additionally, unions support members' educational and learning possibilities, advance equal opportunity at work, combat discrimination, and aid in guaranteeing a safe and healthy atmosphere at work

Need of Trade union:

- Engaging in collective agreements with the administration ensures that workers and employees have improved working conditions.
- Providing workers with protection and monitoring employee hiring and firing.
- Assisting management in the proper level of worker grievance remedies.
- Referring a disagreement or issue to arbitration if it is not resolved.
- Discuss management issues, including working hours, extra compensation, pay, and access to healthcare and other social programs.
- To encourage collaboration with employers.
- To stir up support for labour and workers in the general public.

Characteristics of Trade Union

Association of Employees:

A trade union is simply an organization of workers who are members of a specific class of job, profession, trade, or business.

Association made voluntarily:

A worker voluntarily joins a union. No one can be forced to join a union.

Permanent:

Trade unions are typically considered permanent bodies. Members may join and leave, yet the union is still in place.

Shared Interest:

Members of a trade union come together over issues such as job security, better salary and conditions of employment, and other issues of common interest.

Group Action:

When a single employee complains about a particular management decision, the trade union will step in to help resolve the issue.

Significance of Trade Unions

- Trade unions give workers a place to connect and get to know one another, which fosters a feeling of cooperation. They allow employees to play, relax, and experience the environment.
- Trade unions are crucial in setting up face-to-face talks between employees and employers to resolve employee complaints. Trade unions are a useful tool for improving workplace relations.
- To ensure that union workers have improved working conditions: By banding together under trade unions, employees can better demand that their employers provide all basic support for their employees and, if necessary, use agitation to do so.
- To defend employees' desires: Trade unions protect workers' rights from mistreatment at the hands of employers.
- To advance the interests of employees: Trade unions try to better the financial circumstances and difficulties of the workforce.
- To ensure the well-being of their members, trade unions work to secure housing options. They also make arrangements for the union workers' children's schooling. Thus, the trade union works to advance the workers' socioeconomic well-being while also attempting to keep them away from bad practices.
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Methods of Workers Participation in Management

Worker's participation is a system where workers and management share important information with each other and participate in decision taking. Workers' participation in management is an essential ingredient of Industrial democracy.

The concept of workers' participation in management is based on Human Relations approach to Management which brought about a new set of values to labor and management.

Workers participation in management implies mental and emotional involvement of workers in the management of Enterprise. It is considered as a mechanism where workers have a say in the decision-making. It is a process by which authority and responsibility of managing industry are shared with workers.

Forms / Methods of Workers Participation in Management

Participation at the Board level:

This would be the highest form of industrial democracy. The workers' representative on the Board can play a useful role in safeguarding the interests of workers. He or she can serve as a guide and a control element.

Participation through ownership:

This involves making the workers' shareholders of the company by inducing them to buy equity shares. In many cases, advances and financial assistance in the form of easy repayment options are extended to enable employees to buy equity shares.

Participation through complete control:

Workers acquire complete control of the management through elected boards. The system of self-management in Yugoslavia is based on this concept. Self-management gives complete control to workers to manage directly all aspects of industries through their representatives.

Participation through Staff and Works Councils :

Staff councils or works councils are bodies on which the representation is entirely of the employees. There may be one council for the entire organization or a hierarchy of councils. The employees of the respective sections elect the members of the councils. Such councils play a varied role.

Participation through Joint Councils and Committees :

Joint councils are bodies comprising representatives of employers and employees. This method sees a very loose form of participation, as these councils are mostly consultative bodies.

Participation through Collective Bargaining :

Through the process of CB, management and workers may reach collective agreement regarding rules for the formulation and termination of the contract of employment, as well as conditions of service in an establishment

Participation through Suggestion Schemes:

Employees' views are invited and reward is given for the best suggestion. With this scheme, the employees' interest in the problems of the organization is aroused and maintained.

Participation through Quality Circles:

The QC consists of seven to ten people from the same work area who meet regularly to define, analyze, and solve quality and related problems in their area. These circles require a lot of time and commitment on the part of members for regular meetings, analysis, brainstorming, etc.

Empowered Teams:

Empowerment occurs when authority and responsibility are passed on to the employees who then experience a sense of ownership and control over their jobs.

Collective bargaining

Collective bargaining is a method that allows employees to negotiate as a group. Group bargaining usually takes place between an employer and a representative of an employee union. There are different reasons why employee unions may choose to negotiate with their employer.

For example, some do it to improve workplace equality or encourage the employer to implement more standards that protect employees at work. As of August 2022, the act that regulates this form of bargaining is the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

Importance of collective bargaining:

More employee training and support:

Many employees choose group bargaining as a way to demonstrate their discontent in terms of how much training and support they receive from the employer. As a result of bargaining, employees can get access to more on and off-the-job training opportunities that improve their qualifications.

Better compensation and benefits:

Some unions choose group bargaining to draw attention to a compensation problem within the organisation or the industry. In this sense, negotiating higher wages can be the first step to revolutionising compensation standards across the entire industry.

Improvement in workplace conditions:

It's also possible to use the power of bargaining to influence a positive change in workplace conditions. By researching national or industry standards and preparing a proposal, employees can identify workplace hazards and demand that the employer eliminates them.

A solution to day-to-day workplace issues:

Group bargaining can help employees address and ask for solutions to other day-to-day issues they encounter at work. Depending on the industry or organisation, this can refer to improvement in work schedules or providing employees with more resources.

Types of employee group bargaining

Conjunctive bargaining:

This type of bargaining happens when both the employer and the union want to gain from the other party's loss. It usually refers to negotiating salaries and other employee benefits.

Co-operative bargaining:

In this type of bargaining, both parties want to reach a solution that can benefit both parties simultaneously. Co-operative bargaining is common in disputes over technology, equipment or work terms.

Productivity bargaining:

Productivity bargaining is when an employer agrees to offer employees additional bonuses or improve their work conditions in hopes that this can increase employee productivity. Essentially, the employer's main concern is the organisation's success.

Composite bargaining:

Composite bargaining refers to a situation in which employees decide to bargain because they're concerned about their working conditions or policies. Their main goal is to create a safer and healthier workplace for themselves and others.

Stages of collective bargaining

The goal of group bargaining is to reach an agreement that satisfies both the employer and the union. When a group of employees wants to negotiate with an employer, they usually go through a multistep process that includes the following phases:

1. Preparation

During the first stage, a group of employees meets several times to decide what they want to negotiate. In many instances, this can refer to long-term issues that the union has been fighting for, like improvement in workplace diversity and inclusion.

2. Establishing representatives

As employees are preparing for negotiations, they engage in research and select one person to represent them in meetings with the employer. Depending on what they want to accomplish, they may do this by joining an already existing union or creating a new one. Both options have their benefits.

3. Opening

The opening stage begins when the union presents their proposal to the employer. If the changes they demand are contractual, the employer is likely to request some time to process the proposal and consult with the legal, human resources and even accounting departments.

4. Trading

During trading, the employer openly reacts to the proposal. Depending on the situation and what's in the proposal, the employer can accept it immediately, reject it or propose additional changes that work better for the organisation based on its current business model and valid contracts.

5. Agreement

Once both parties agree on what they've decided, a labour relations specialist begins preparing a draft of the agreement. When the final proposal is complete, both sides once again review it to confirm their demands.

Grievance handling in HRM

Grievance handling in Human Resource Management (HRM) refers to the process by which employee complaints, concerns, or disputes are formally addressed and resolved.

The goal is to provide a structured channel for employees to express dissatisfaction or report issues they are facing in the workplace. The process aims to reach an equitable resolution that satisfies both the employee and the organization, ideally in a manner that is confidential, timely, and fair.

Types of grievances in a company

Employee grievances can arise from various factors and situations in the workplace. Understanding the types of grievances can help human resources and management address issues more effectively. Here are some common types of employee grievances:

Work conditions

Safety Concerns:

Employees may raise issues related to unsafe work conditions, inadequate safety measures, or lack of safety equipment.

Environment:

Complaints about the cleanliness, temperature, or general working conditions.

Pay and benefits

Wage Issues:

Grievances related to salary, overtime pay, or wage deductions.

Benefits:

Complaints about vacation time, health benefits, retirement plans, or other employment benefits.

Management and supervision

Poor Management:

This includes complaints about inconsistent or unclear instructions, lack of support, or unfair treatment.

Discriminatory Treatment:

Accusations of discrimination based on race, gender, age, religion, or other protected categories.

Harassment:

Claims of sexual, verbal, or physical harassment.

Favoritism/Nepotism: Perceptions that certain employees are given preferential treatment.

Job roles and career development

Job Description:

Issues regarding unclear or frequently changing job responsibilities.

Lack of Growth Opportunities:

Concerns about lack of training, promotions, or opportunities for skill development.

Work Overload:

Complaints about excessive work, unrealistic targets, or lack of resources.

Work-life Balance:

Issues related to excessive working hours, lack of breaks, or intrusion into personal time.

Interpersonal relations

Coworker Conflicts:

Disputes or issues between employees that affect work.

Communication:

Grievances about the lack or ineffectiveness of communication within the team or company.

Company policies and ethics

Policy Issues:

Grievances related to company policies, including those that are outdated, unfair, or inconsistently applied.

Ethical Concerns:

Issues related to company ethics, such as fraud, dishonesty, or other illegal activities.

Miscellaneous

Retaliation:

Complaints that an employee is being unfairly treated as retaliation for reporting a grievance or issue.

Inadequate Resources:

Issues related to the lack of necessary tools, technology, or other resources required performing tasks effectively.

Relocation or Changes in Shifts:

Concerns about sudden location changes, shift timings, or other alterations in work schedules that adversely affect an employee's life.

Employment Termination:

Concerns or complaints related to layoffs, terminations, or the resignation process.

Employee grievance handling procedure

Reporting:

The employee submits a formal complaint through the appropriate channel. This could be via a grievance form, an email, or a scheduled meeting with the HR department.

Acknowledgment:

HR acknowledges the receipt of the grievance and may conduct a preliminary assessment to determine the severity and validity of the issue.

Investigation:

HR or designated parties investigate the grievance by gathering necessary information. This could involve interviewing the involved parties, collecting evidence, and reviewing any applicable laws or policies.

Evaluation:

After investigation, HR evaluates the findings and formulates a decision or recommended course of action.

Resolution:

Actions are taken to resolve the grievance, which may include disciplinary action, policy changes, or other measures aimed at resolving the issue.

Feedback:

The employee who raised the grievance is informed about the outcome of the investigation and the steps taken for resolution.

Documentation:

All steps, from reporting to resolution, are documented for future reference and compliance with legal requirements.

Follow-up:

In some cases, a follow-up may be necessary to ensure that the implemented measures effectively address the grievance.

Grievance handling techniques and methods

Handling employee grievances effectively requires a range of techniques that may be applied depending on the nature and severity of the complaint. The following are some grievance handling techniques commonly used in Human Resource Management:

Open-door policy

An open-door policy encourages employees to speak freely about their concerns with their managers or HR at any time. It is useful as a proactive approach for minor issues that can be resolved informally.

Active listening

While giving the complainant your full attention and refraining from interrupting while they share their grievances. This technique should be used in all grievance discussions to understand the issue fully.

Immediate acknowledgment

Acknowledging the receipt of the grievance as soon as possible to let the employee know that their concern is being taken seriously. It is Ideal for all types of grievances.

Formal investigation

A comprehensive review involving interviews, document collection, and other fact-finding methods. It is Best suited for serious complaints like harassment or discrimination.

Mediation

A neutral third party helps facilitate a dialogue between conflicting parties to reach a mutual agreement. It is useful for interpersonal conflicts among employees.

Anonymous reporting channels

Providing a way for employees to submit complaints anonymously. This is especially important for sensitive or potentially dangerous issues where the complainant may fear retaliation.

Root cause analysis

Identifying the underlying cause of the grievance rather than just addressing the symptoms. It is Suitable for systemic issues that require organizational changes.

Follow-up and feedback

Keeping the complainant informed about the steps being taken and the outcomes, and ensuring the resolution is satisfactory. It is Applicable in almost all cases to ensure that the issue has been resolved effectively.

Documentation

Keeping detailed records of the grievance, investigation process, and the steps taken to resolve it. It is Required for all formal grievances to protect both the company and the employee, and for legal compliance.

Escalation procedures

A structured process for escalating the grievance to higher levels of management or specialized departments, if it cannot be resolved at the initial stages. When a

grievance is either not adequately addressed or is of such a nature that it requires senior-level attention.

Training and workshops

Educating managers and employees about proper conduct, company policies, and the grievance process. It is Best as a proactive measure, but can also be useful as a preventative step following the resolution of a grievance.

Third-Party arbitration

Bringing in an external third party to make a binding decision regarding the grievance. When internal resolution is impossible or inappropriate, particularly for severe cases that could lead to legal action.

Safety at work

In today's fast-paced and competitive business landscape, ensuring workplace safety and promoting employee well-being has become a top priority for organizations. This is where the role of Human Resources (HR) becomes crucial.

One of the primary responsibilities of HR is to develop and implement comprehensive safety policies and procedures. This involves identifying potential hazards, assessing risks, and establishing protocols to mitigate them.

HR professionals collaborate with relevant stakeholders, such as management, employees, and safety experts, to design policies that align with industry standards and legal requirements. These policies cover areas such as emergency response plans, accident reporting, personal protective equipment (PPE), and employee training programs.

Importance of safety

Why Safety is important in the workplace?

Safety is paramount in the workplace. Employers are required to take all necessary steps to ensure worker safety. Employees have a responsibility to report any hazards they see so that they can be taken care of. Employers and employees both contribute to a healthier environment by working to make the workplace safe.

- Save lives

- Ensures no one is injured or killed while performing their duties
- Increases employees' confidence
- Decreases absenteeism
- Helps in retaining employees
- Promotes employees, employers, and clients' well-being and increase productivity
- Ensures on-time completion of projects
- Helps in avoiding liability claims
- Will lower employer's insurance premiums
- Reduces time and effort
- Increases the firm's reputation

Hazards in the Workplace

1. Work safety hazards

Work safety hazards are the most common risks in a workplace or work environment. They also can be specific to certain roles. Types of work safety hazards include:

Spills:

Spills can occur in any workplace so it's important to create a plan to prevent falls after a spill. To decrease the likelihood of a spill hazard, you can put out a caution sign to alert others so they should avoid the area.

Obstacles:

Tripping hazards occur when obstacles are in your path. They include blocked aisles, cords on the floor or poor equipment placement. To decrease the likelihood of a spill hazard, your company can create floor layouts and protocols to place objects where they pose the least threat of obstruction. Cords can be moved or covered to reduce tripping risk. You can also clearly mark stairs and steps using signs, floor paint and symbols.

Heights:

This hazard is more common in roles like painters or roofers that involve high elevations. To decrease the likelihood of a spill hazard, you can provide training for professionals who work on ladders, roofs or scaffolds to help keep them safe in high places. Continuous awareness and attention to safety procedures can help prevent incidents while working at different heights.

Machines:

Some professionals work with machines or equipment with moving parts like forklifts, farming equipment or excavators. To decrease the likelihood of a spill hazard, you can provide training and updated safety standards to reduce their risk of contact.

Tools:

Professionals may work with tools such as chainsaws, electrical equipment or hammers that may pose safety hazards. Teaching them how to use these tools properly can help create a safer environment.

Electricity:

Electrical hazards may be caused by frayed cords, missing ground pins, improper wiring or contact with live wires. Only qualified workers should operate near live electrical equipment. To decrease the likelihood of a spill hazard, you may require professionals to receive training and complete certification programs to be aware of these hazards.

2. Chemical hazards

Chemical hazards occur when a professional is exposed to chemicals in either solid, liquid or gas form. This includes those who prepare, ship, manufacture, package or handle chemical products. Chemical hazards can include:

- Liquids like cleaning products, paints, acids and solvents
- Vapors, fumes and dust from welding, asbestos, exposure to solvents or dust from interior construction
- Gases like acetylene, propane, carbon monoxide and helium
- Flammable materials and fumes like gasoline, solvents and explosive chemicals
- Pesticides that can be sprayed, applied or ingested

3. Physical hazards

Physical or environmental hazards are risks from within the environment that can harm your body without necessarily touching it. These hazards occur more frequently in certain industries. Physical hazards can include:

Noise:

Exposure to loud noises can be a risk in industries, such as construction or manufacturing, where employees work with loud machinery.

Temperature:

Some people like landscapers, roofers and delivery drivers may work in extremely cold or hot temperatures.

Lighting:

Low lighting or direct sunlight can be a workplace risk.

Radiation:

In certain work environments, professionals may be at risk of radiation exposure.

4. Ergonomic hazards

Ergonomic hazards can occur with physical motion or repetitive movements that put a strain on your body. Professionals can damage muscles, nerves, ligaments and tendons by performing the same motion repeatedly. Ergonomic hazards can include:

Lifting:

Repetitive or heavy lifting can be a workplace hazard.

Sitting:

Sitting for a long time, such as at a computer or desk, can become an ergonomic risk.

Posture:

Poor posture can result from actions like stooping over an assembly line, poor posture while using a computer or standing too long.

5. Biological hazards

Biological hazards are safety concerns associated with working with animals, people or infectious plant materials. These are more common in certain industries such as health care, education, emergency response, waste control and research. Biological hazards may include:

Plant and insects:

Professionals who work outside, such as biologists and landscapers, may encounter poisonous plants, stinging insects or biting reptiles.

Blood and bodily fluids:

Certain roles, such as those in health care, child care or veterinary care, may expose employees to bodily fluids.

Communicable diseases:

As with blood and bodily fluids, certain fields may expose professionals to bacteria and viruses that are airborne or communicable.

Fungi and mold:

Professionals may be exposed to fungi and mold in health care, home renovations, demolition or other fields. can help reduce exposure

Animal and bird droppings:

Professionals exposed to these hazards may experience breathing difficulties or other symptoms.

6. Work organization hazards

Professionals can be impacted by hazards or stressors that cause stress (short-term effects) and strain (long-term effects). These hazards are associated with workplace issues such as workload, lack of control, negative culture, discrimination and more. Work organization hazards include:

- Workload demands
- Workplace violence
- Lack of respect
- Lack of control
- Harassment
- Discrimination

Safety mechanisms

Employee safety refers to providing a safe working environment for employees by incorporating safe equipment and safe procedures at the workplace to ensure worker safety.

Employee safety is important to maintain a good safe work environment to improve morale and efficiency, which in turn contribute to the growth and profitability of the company.

Lack of safety procedures for employees could have legal and financial consequence. Safety training, periodic safety inspections, and the provision of proper personal protective equipment (PPEs) are part of the employee safety mandate an organization must follow.

It is not possible to measure the effects of human casualties. They can have grave consequences for employees and their families and friends as well.

This is why workplace safety and health measures are necessary. They are essential for the well-being of employers and employees alike. The feeling of assurance that one has, knowing that he will return safely from work, is more significant than anything else.

Ways to Create a Safe Working Environment

Being Aware and Identifying workplace Hazards:

This is the first step to create a safe working environment. Employers need to identify workplace hazards and safety issues first. Then they must take measures to address them accordingly.

Implementing Workplace Safety Programs:

Employers should investigate all accidents in the workplace. They should encourage employees to follow all safety procedures. Moreover, employers should clearly state the hazards of not following them in writing. This reduces the chances of mistakes.

Providing Proper Safety Training to Employees

Training is an important part of every company's safety program to protect employees from accidents. Research shows that new employees have a higher risk of workplace accidents. It is the lack of knowledge of workplace hazards and proper work techniques that cause this greater risk.

Using Protective Safety Equipment

The usage of equipment worn to minimize exposure to hazards that cause workplace injuries is significant. Not doing so can cause injury or even death. Employees may have to work with chemicals, machines, electronics, and other potential work hazards. Employers must provide such employees with personal protective equipment (P.P.E.). P.P.E. should be safely designed, constructed, and fit comfortably. Examples of P.P.E. are gloves, protective eyewear, clothing, earplugs, hard hats, etc.

Reporting Unsafe Working Conditions

Employees must inform any safety hazards or work risks to the management. Employers are legally obligated to ensure safe working environments for their employees. They must end workplace safety hazards and promote safety in the workplace.

Practicing Correct Posture

Bad posture is one of the main reasons for back pain. It is imperative to practice good and correct posture to reduce the risk of getting hurt.

Reducing Workplace Stress

Workplace stress can cause many health problems like anxiety, depression, etc.

Promoting Regular Breaks

Employers should encourage employees to take regular breaks. Taking frequent breaks will prevent tiredness and fatigue. This will further prevent injuries or illnesses. Breaks help employees stay fresh and focused.

Staying Sober and Alert

One of the major reasons for workplace fatalities is substance abuse. Substance abuse causes around 40% of all industrial workplace fatalities.

Individuals under the influence of alcohol or drugs are less alert. Their decision-making ability, coordination, concentration, and motor control get compromised. This creates risks for workplace injury and fatalities.

Easy Access to Exits in Case of Emergencies

If there is an emergency, it is important to have easy access to emergency exits. Easy access to emergency exits will reduce injuries and casualties.

Using Mechanical Aids

An industrial job may need employees to work with heavy equipment. There are many injury risks involved in trying to lift and move heavy objects. Employees can use a conveyor belt, forklift, or wheelbarrow instead of lifting manually.

Stress

Job stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker.

Stress management in HRM is a process that involves identifying, assessing, and addressing sources of stress within the workplace. This can be done through various methods such as developing policies and procedures to promote work-life balance, offering employee assistance programs, or providing training on stress management techniques.

By taking steps to manage workplace stress, employers create a healthier and more productive environment for their employees. Not only will this lead to better individual outcomes, but it will also benefit the business.

High stress in the workplace is one of the major reasons for employee absenteeism and low productivity. It has been found that employees who are stressed are more likely to take more sick days, be less productive when they are at work and have a higher turnover rate.

The factors that contribute to stress at work include but are not limited to long hours, heavy workloads, unrealistic deadlines, lack of break time, poor working conditions, and job insecurity. Stress can also be caused by interpersonal conflicts at work.

Managing Stress in the Workplace

Flexible Work Arrangements

Although certain schedules may not work, allowing some flexibility in an employee's schedule may relieve a great deal of stress.

Show Empathy

Many employees face a multitude of pressures that extend beyond their careers. As a result, they may not always perform to the best of their abilities and they may appear to struggle; however, it is important to note what they are going through and to take the time to understand where they are coming from.

Wellness Programs

While it's pertinent to address issues as they arise, managing stress before it becomes an issue even more important. Wellness programs include myriad strategies to promote mental health among staff and combat toxic stress. These programs may include a gym membership, meditation, therapy, dance classes, massages and more.

Address Issues Right Away

Some issues are not worth bringing attention to, and doing so may cause unnecessary drama within the office.

Prioritize Time Management

Staff tends to feel overwhelmed when they feel like things are out of their control. Whether that includes their daily goals, targets or projects when they feel they cannot actively control their outcomes they begin to panic.