IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON MEMBERSHIP, PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT OF WORKERS IN TRADE UNIONS - An Analytical Study

SYNOPSIS
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PURPOSE OF STUDY

The presence of trade union changes the whole work environment including relationship between employers and employees, employees and managers, employees and employees also affects the human resource policies and practices of the industrial units. The aim of forming trade unions could have been to protect the workers from the exploitation of employers, get improvement in working conditions and enhancement in remuneration and welfare services of the members. It has been observed that major differences exist in the human resource policies and practices between the firms which have unions and which do not have. Unionized business firms tend to have more job classifications, greater emphasis on internal hiring and better fringe benefits. However, the unionized firms have been observed to increase variety of costs due to strikes and work stoppages, increased overtime work etc.

After independence there has been a fast growth of employees' unions in public and private sector undertakings in India and membership increased enormously over the successive years after 1950. Because of industrial unrest, mainly during 1970s, Indian Industries suffered heavy losses both on economic as well as on social fronts. However, after 1990 when the concept of globalization and privatization emerged, it has been felt that the perceptions and thinking of employers and employees both have changed not only in India but in other countries of the world. It is being claimed that the membership of unions is
declining throughout world and are losing their grip over the employees due to their weak bargaining power and declining membership. Many Indian studies undertaken to assess impact of globalization on unions have observed declining membership and growing alienation of workers in trade unions. This decline in membership is being claimed statistically but what prevails on qualitative front is something to be known.

Membership, participation and involvement are basic fundamental concepts of any labour organization. Membership is considered as the constituency of a trade union and the extent of participation and involvement of the members exhibits their leanings, interest, support and commitment towards union. It is said that in post reforms period the influence of the unions is dwindling and the equation between labour-management relations has altered dramatically. It is apprehended that employers have become stronger and the unions seem to have lost their influence. However, the findings of the studies conducted in last four decades have revealed that workers were more union-oriented and had their higher degree involvement and participation in union activities. Concerning to this problem some dilemmatic issues arise : is the membership of unions declining? Have workers started taking lesser interest in their unions and their activities? Has the perception of workers about unions in present global economy changed? Do the factors (like in plant, out-plant, personal, background etc.) determine and influence workers' interest and their level of
participation in unions? Does job satisfaction level influence the union participative behaviour of the workers/members? Do HRM policies and practices of the industrial undertakings influence that membership, participation and involvement of the workers in unions?

Information and data giving answers of these queries are very much lacking. There is dearth of such empirical studies in India and much of the data available are anecdotal in nature.

**NEED OF THE STUDY**

As already stated there is dearth of such empirical studies in Indian context. A survey of the relevant literature reveals many unexamined questions and such a study would contribute empirically and theoretically to the existing research. Moreover, enormous changes have occurred in all spheres including technology, work environment, human resource management policies, thinking and perception of employers on one side and in the expectations, needs, aspirations and living standards of workers on the other side. Therefore, the study of participation and involvement behaviour of union members and identification of correlates associated with these variables shall be of great value.
RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Given the sparse research findings available this study formulates following some exploratory hypotheses which shall be tested in course of study.

1. Personal, background and organizational factors determine participation and involvement behaviour of union members.

2. Human Resource Management policies of an industrial organization and the workers' job satisfaction levels determine and influence the participative and involvement behaviour of the members/workers in unions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study shall be as follows:

1. To study the membership of unions in study units and examine the interest, participation and involvement of members in unions and their activities;

2. To study relationship of personal, background and organizational factors with union participation and involvement behaviour.

3. To examine relationship between Job satisfaction levels and union participative behaviour.

4. To study human resource policies of study units and ascertain their influence over the union participation and involvement behaviour.
**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

(a) **Universe of the study:** The study proposes to select two (big/medium sized) industrial units: (i) The Carriage and Wagon Workshop, Jagadhari (Saharanpur), a unit of Northern Indian Railways (hereinafter called as UNIT A) and (ii) The Goodyear India Limited, a multination company at Ballabhgarh (Faridabad) (hereinafter called as UNIT B). Both the units have trade unions and employing operative workers more than 5000 and 2000 respectively.

(b) **Unit of investigation:** The workers who are members and non-members of the unions shall be the units of investigation.

(c) **Sampling and sample size:** The study samples shall be comprised of union workers – members and non–members selected from both units on the basis on stratified random sampling. The size of study samples shall be kept ideal depending on the size of the units, number of workers (members and non-members of unions).

(d) **Measures:** The membership of the unions in both the units shall be known from union offices and their leaders. List of those who are not the members of any union shall also be prepared. The extent of members' participation in unions shall be known on three point – Likert type scale. For these responses, points shall be allotted for bringing objectivity in summated responses and making comparative evaluations. For measuring the interest of members in their unions, index of union-interest shall be prepared having
4-point scale. For measuring Job satisfaction levels, a job satisfaction index shall be constructed consulting the ones used by industrial psychologists and behavioural researchers. The personal, background and other related information and data shall be collected through questionnaires/schedules.

(e) Procedure: The study shall be based on interview, questionnaire and archival methods. The data on the dependent and independent variables shall be collected through questionnaires/schedules and by holding personal interview with respondents. The respondents shall be assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The study shall the following procedure:

First of all inventory of the workers on present rolls of the companies and list of the worker members of different unions in both the units shall be obtained. Two study samples-one from each unit shall be selected.

The questionnaires and schedules shall be constructed on which the personal, economic and background information shall be obtained along with other relevant responses pertaining to membership, participation and involvement in unions and their activities, relationship between union membership and involvement and various factors shall be ascertained. HRM policies of the study units shall be examined by the investigator and job satisfaction levels pertaining to them shall also be ascertained on five-point scale. Relationship of union participation and involvement with job
satisfaction levels of the worker members shall also be known. In the last
data shall be analyzed and conclusions be drawn.

(f) **Statistical Analysis of data:** The data shall be collected, tabulated and the
statistical methods like mean, percentage, standard deviation, chi-square
test, correlation etc. shall be used for analyzing the data and drawing
inferences.

**DIMENSIONS TO BE STUDIED**

- **Independent Variables:** age, experience, skill and education, monthly
  income. Marital status, number of dependents, background (rural/urban)
  and job satisfaction levels.

- **Dependent Variables:** membership of unions, interest and involvement in
  union activities.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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