CHAPTER I

Research Problem and Methodology
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RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODOLOGY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Harmonious Relations in every sphere of human activity is a pre-requisite for socio-economic progress. Establishing and maintaining smooth and cordial relationship between labour and management is of utmost importance. Industrial Relations play a vital role in the management of modern business and industry. For every nation to achieve the expected rate of industrial development among other factors, the most important one is the existence of healthy labour-management relations. The existence of peaceful, harmonious, and cordial relations, a fairly good mutual understanding and cooperation between the employees and employers, is responsible in a large measure for the stability, prosperity and growth of any organisation. Harmonious, peaceful and cordial employee-employer relations contribute much for carrying on the productive activity in a smooth fashion, stepping up the levels of efficiency and profit earnings etc., in the organisation and improving the standard of living, welfare, prosperity and happiness of the employees. Smooth and cordial relations are essential for any organisation if it is to survive for a long
time and achieve the corporate objectives. Thus establishing cordial Industrial Relations is a fundamental pre-requisite not only for the growth, stability, and prosperity of the organisation, but also for the welfare of the management and workers in the organisation and the society, nation and world at large.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problems of Industrial Relations occupy an important place in the economic and social life of a country. In recent years they have not only attracted the attention of the employer and employees with whom they are directly concerned but also the Government and the Community. Cooperation between all the sections in industry and fair conditions of work are essential for productive efficiency and industrial progress.

Work stoppages resulting from industrial disputes not only hamper the industrial production but also create an atmosphere which is uncongenial for maintaining harmonious industrial relations. The poor state of industrial relations affect the larger interests of society. This is more so in an underdeveloped country like India, which aims at achieving planned progress based on social justice. Successive five-year plans stressed the need for industrial harmony and the role different
parties have to play in maintaining it. Maintenance of industrial peace, thus is a sinequnon for the economic progress of a nation.

Well-developed transportation is a pre-requisite, to promote economic progress. The smooth and speedy implementation of many developmental programmes depends on the development of transport. Therefore much depends on the efficient management of workers and maintenance of harmony. If anything goes wrong with transport, it may disrupt production elsewhere and lead to enormous losses. This necessitates one to understand as to what factors, actually lead to interruptions of work in the transport sector. In other words, our intimate study of industrial relations in transport sector will help one to understand the various problems.

The present study being an attempt to make an analytical and descriptive research of the "Industrial Relations in Transport Sector - A Study in Karnataka State Road Corporation", transport constitutes an important sector of the nation's economy. Transport industry including road transport forms the life veins of the economy. It need not be over emphasized that the maintenance of harmonious industrial relations in such vital area is of paramount importance. Work stoppages in KSRTC lead to heavy economic loss of the employers, employees, government
and to the community. The office goers, the students, the public etc., would suffer enormously if there is a dislocation in the normal working of the transport system. There are certain other problems such as absenteeism, late coming, labour turnover, multi-unionism, inter and intra-union rivalries etc., which disturb the tranquility of industrial life. Solutions to all these problems cannot be found unless they are understood in their proper perspective. There is a need to understand the problem systematically, analyse and interpret these problems. Thus Industrial Relations research has a crucial function in this context.

1.3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the development of every new field of study, a state is reached when it becomes indispensable to refer to the whole work done in the past. There is large and growing volume of literature of varying quality in the field of industrial relations.

The studies and research work carried out on the subject of Industrial Relations can be grouped into several categories such as, studies related to

a) Area and case studies

b) Industry-cum-regional studies

c) Studies on KSRTC
a. Area and Case Studies

In India, fundamental regional variations exist in different parts of the country in terms of rate of growth, degree of industrialisation, type of technology, socio-economic characteristics of labour and management, organisational problems, leadership pattern etc. Under these circumstances, one can hardly expect to have a uniform pattern of industrial relations system and structure in all the regions and at all the levels. Recently, need has been felt to understand and interpret the problems of industrial relations in different environments and as a result various regional/area studies have been undertaken. These studies enable to perceive the inter area and inter-regional differences in terms of the unique features of their environment.

Among the prominent area level studies Singh (1983) in his study on Maharashtra advocated for a convincing change in the attitude of managers and workers for the achievement of their mutual goals and requirements. While Nair (1973) has presented a comprehensive picture of all the major aspects of industrial relations in Kerala, Rastogi (1965) studied the trade unionism, industrial disputes, labour welfare, working and service conditions, absenteeism etc., in Uttar Pradesh. Nagaraju (1981) has studied Analysis of Regional level industrial relations system
in Karnataka, Sen and Piplai (1968) have done a study of industrial relations in West Bengal, Agarwal (1971), Kanwarlal (1971) both have studied the determinants of industrial relations situation in Madhya Pradesh, Bhatnagar and Sharma (1984) have examined the role of labour welfare officers and they conclude that honest officers were often victimised by the concerned employers. The studies of Budania (1971) in Rajasthan, Kumar (1972) in Andhra Pradesh and Ghosal (1972) in West Bengal, Rajesh Pande and P C Pande (1996) on M/s Almora Magnesite Ltd., Almora in Uttar Pradesh, Pranneshwari (1984) on Tea Plantations in West Bengal are other area level studies.

b. Industry-cum-Regional Studies

There has been an increasing tendency to study the problems of industrial relations at the industry cum regional level. The striking feature of these studies has been the emphasis of empirical methods. The important studies in this area are that of Sivayya (1968) on Ship Building Industry in Vishakapatnam ports, Thakur and Munson (1969) on Printing Industry in Delhi, Das (1971) on Sugar Industry in Uttar Pradesh, Ganju (1978) on Paper industry in Andhra Pradesh, Sivayya (1971) on Sugar Industry in Andhra Pradesh, Ayyar (1967) on Engineering Industry in Andhra Pradesh, Govindappa Naidu (1981) on


Textile Industry being one of the oldest industries in India has received part of the attention of researchers particularly in Bombay, Ahmedabad and Kanpur, which are the leading centres of textile manufacture and which have witnessed some of the earliest industrial conflicts. The important studies in textile industry are Majamdar (1973), Systematic study of IR’s in Ahmedabad Textile Mills; Singh (1968) and Shirmali’s (1970) Socio-economic studies of Industrial climate in Kanpur textile industry, Agarwal’s (1971) Analytical analysis of industrial disputes in cotton textile industry of Madhya Pradesh and the studies on work regulation, discipline, union involvement and dispute settlement machinery in cotton textile industry of Bombay by Morris (1965), Thakur (1962) and Ridgel (1956). Among the recent studies Mammoria (1978) assessed the Problem of Industrial relations in selected textile units in Rajasthan against the socio-economic background of workers, the policies of employers, the management philosophy and the statutory provisions. Laldas (1980), in his study in Textile Industry of Indore, finds that the industrial relations is more a human problem depending for its solution on mutual trust and confidence between the parties. Asdhir (1987) assessed the effectiveness
of industrial dispute settlement machinery in textile industry of Punjab and Gaur (1986) in Cotton textile industry of Rajasthan, Rama Rao (1987) on Labour Management relations in textile industry in AP. These studies assessed systematically industrial relations, socio-economic climate, industrial disputes, work regulation, discipline, union - movement, dispute settlement machinery, the policies of the employers, philosophy of the management, statutory provisions, working and effectiveness of industrial dispute settlement machinery in the textile industry in different areas of the country.

Attempts have also been made to study the Industrial Relations situation in the areas of public services and white collar situations. The important studies in this context Pandey (1967) studied government employees relations in UP, Punekar and Savur (1970) stated the white collar relations in Bombay, Singh (1977) explained the pattern of staff relations in the Indian Civil services, Kohli (1983) proved the hypothesis in Indian Airlines that better the labour management relations, greater will be the productivity and efficiency in the operation of services. On the similar pattern, Malhotra and Nanda (1980) reviewed critically the leading events and experiences in the field of Industrial Relations in 1980s in Banking and Airlines sectors.
Several attempts have been made to study the industrial relations at the unit level where some assessed the nature of industrial relations at the plant level, others had a more specific objective of identifying the factors which contribute to conflicts in industrial relations. The studies in this regard have been conducted by Kamath and Associates (1962), Shukla (1968), Saxena (1970), Dhingra and Challappa (1971) in Bombay, Calcutta, Meerut and Delhi respectively. Similarly Mahapatra (1977) in Roorkela Steel Plant, Reeta Mathur (1986) in Steel Authority of India Limited.


c. Studies on K.S.R.T.C.

Hanumanthappa (1975) examines the pricing, investment and planning of Road Transport and suggested to provide better facilities for the efficient maintenance of the vehicles and other equipment in order to improve the overall operational efficiency of the undertaking. Further adequate investment on plant, machinery and equipment
commensurate with the rate of growth of the undertaking is very essential. He also recommended Decentralisation of the organisation for effective control and efficient management of the organisation.

Mahesh Chand (1983) studied the performance appraisal of Public Road Transport undertakings. It dealt with inter-firm analysis among different PRTU's and an intra-firm analysis for K.S.R.T.C. by measuring selected performance indicators and using the proposed evaluation methodology. He suggested methodology for inter-firm and intra-firm comparison of performance for STU's through simple indices called 'Percent Index', 'Standardised index' and 'Combined index'.

He brought out the need for developing a good data base and a proper Management Information System (MIS) for effective performance monitoring. He also deployed production and cost functions to analyse the performance of STU's.

Raju (1991) analysed the financial management in Road Passenger Transport with specific reference to KSRTC and comes to a conclusion that the Corporation has opted for moderate aggressive policy rather than Complete Conservative Policy and suggested management must apply a control mechanism for better operational efficiency.
Sharada (1995) studied the circumstances under which nationalism of passenger road transport in Karnataka was undertaken and to understand the corporate objectives of the KSRTC, she suggested a suitable pricing policy for adoption by the organisation for the fixation of its fares and recommended cost plus pricing model for the organisation to become financially viable.

Moulvi (1997) made a pioneering study on the impact of social security and labour welfare measures and to explore the differences and to present the comparative picture on production, productivity, absenteeism and attitudes of the workers in the Regional Workshops of KSRTC at Bangalore and Hubli, he came to the following conclusions:

i) There is perceptible increase in social security and labour welfare expenditure in aggregate and real terms in both the organisations.

ii) The per-worker expenditure on social security measures have increased enormously in both the organisations.

iii) Both the organisations have achieved appreciable increase in labour productivity in aggregate as well as real terms.
iv) Provisions of social security measures have resulted in a perceptible decline in the date of accidents in both the organisations.

Research Gaps:

An analysis of the above works indicates that some of their contents have become outdated. These studies, no doubt, add to the repository of knowledge as they are both informative and analytical. The available literature has considered certain aspects of Industrial Relations in certain states during a particular time frame.

Some studies have been made on some aspects of Industrial Relations in some major ports, railways and airways. There are few studies on Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation and since these studies are not connected with Industrial Relations, there is considerable scope for research in this area. It is in this sense that the present study occupies importance and aims to fill up a part of this gap by making a humble contribution to the understanding of the pattern of Industrial Relations in Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation. This study can be of immense help for all the actors in the Industrial Relations scenario of the organisation.
1.4. OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the study are -

(1) To review the existing scenario of Industrial Relations in India in general and Karnataka in particular.

(2) To examine the Industrial Relations in KSRTC based on secondary data pertaining to number of strikes, growth of strikes causes for strikes and its impact on KSRTC.

(3) To study the extent and growth rate of industrial disputes in KSRTC.

(4) To assess the perception of employees, management and union leaders regarding Industrial Relations based on primary data.

(5) To identify the problem/constraints confronted by KSRTC.

(6) To cull out the findings from the study and suggest measures to strengthen the industrial relations machinery in KSRTC.

1.5. HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses have been set up to give a proper direction to the study.

1) There is a positive correlation between the job satisfaction and the number of dependents. On the other hand, there is a negative
correlation between the job satisfaction and the age, marital status and higher education.

2) Monetary factors tend to dominate over non-monetary factors in causing industrial disputes.

3) Better the labour management relations greater the efficiency in the operation of the KSRTC.

1.6. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The term Industrial Relations covers all employee - employer relations of an organisation and the present study is restricted to the study of industrial relations between the workers and the management of KSRTC.

For the purpose of study “Workers” are deemed to persons who are actually engaged in work (Class III and IV employees) of the organisation.

“Management” includes all the Board of directors including the Chairman, Managing Director and Class I and II officials. With regard to “Trade Union Leaders”, office bearers of all the existing Federations and Trade Unions were taken for the purpose of the study.
Though Industrial Relations occupies broader area, the present study confines to the issues like strikes, industrial disputes, workers' participation in management, Role of Trade Unions, various other perceptions of the respondents etc.

1.7. PERIOD OF THE STUDY

The study covers the year of inception in general and based on time series data over a period of 10 years from 1988-89 to 1997-98. The primary data relating to the opinions of workers, trade union office bearers and management executives of the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation has been collected during the year 1997-98.

1.8. METHODOLOGY

A systematic inquiry and application of appropriate methods is very much necessary for research. This has an important bearing on the collection of reliable and accurate information. The main burden of the present study is to make an intensive inquiry of various aspects of industrial relations by the use of empirical approach. For the present study, the case study method is used.

The unit of study is an organisation, namely, Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation. Information about the research has been
collected through interviews with employees, trade union leaders and management.

a) **Source of Data**

The study involves the data collected from the primary as well as secondary sources. The primary data were collected from the employees, trade union leaders and management representatives. The secondary data on strikes - industrial disputes, unions, etc., were collected from the files, records and annual administration reports of the organisation. Records of Trade Union leaders are another source of information.

Other sources of secondary data were collected from reports of the Government of India on matters relating to Industrial Relations, Office of the Transport Commissioner, Government of Karnataka, Labour Department, Government of Karnataka, journals, monographs published by Central Institute of Road Transport, Pune, Books and other unpublished research materials having a bearing on the present study.
b) Questionnaire Development and Administration

The primary data has been collected from workers, trade union leaders and management personnel, constituting the major source of data for the study. For this purpose 3 comprehensive questionnaires, intended to be the principal instruments for obtaining necessary information were prepared for 1) Workers, 2) Trade Union Leaders and 3) Management Personnel in the organisation. The questionnaires were pre-tested with workers, Trade Union leaders and management personnel in the organisation. The questions which were reported as inappropriate and difficult to understand and which had poor responses, were revised and reframed to meet the requirements.

The interview schedule for workers consisted of 5 parts. The first part dealt with personal data, the second part dealt with the existing industrial relations, the third part of the questionnaire dealt with workers participation in management, fourth part dealt with the trade union activities and fifth part dealt with the strikes and welfare facilities.

The schedules for management personnel and the Trade Union leaders were similar in content to the schedule for workers. They were also asked about trade unions, workers' participation in decision making, industrial disputes, settlement of disputes etc.
c) Sample Design

For the convenience of collecting data, stratified random sampling technique was used. In this study 150 workers constitute 0.31 per cent of the total staff, 50 trade union leaders constitute 0.10 per cent of the total staff, 45 managerial personnel constitutes 8.6 per cent of the management (includes Chairman, Board of Directors, Class I and Class II Officials).

Workers for the sample were taken from different categories of workers engaged in Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation. They are: Drivers, Conductors, Traffic Supervisors, Mechanical staff, civil engineering personnel, Administrative assistants and from printing press, Assistant Artisan, Assistant compositor, Assistant Binder, Assistant Machine Operator, ticket checker, packer, etc., were taken.

Trade union leaders for the sample were taken from the existing federations/unions in KSRTC. Among 50 leaders, 20 belong to the KSRTC Staff and Workers Federation at depot level, division level and at Corporate level. Similarly 20 leaders belong to the Akila Karnataka Rajya Rasthe Sarige Nowkarara Mahamandali at Depot level, Division level and at corporate level. Remaining respondents are from KSRTC,
Janata Dal Staff and Workers Federation, SC/ST Union and other unions at depot level.

Out of about 45 managerial personnel for the sample, 15 were taken from higher managerial staff consisting of Chairman, Managing Director, Board of Directors and Class I super scale officials, 15 were from middle managerial, consisting of Class I junior officials, remaining 15 were from lower managerial consisting of Class I Senior and Class II officials.

d) Data Analysis (Techniques of Analysis)

The enquiry is essentially in the nature of qualitative study. Statistical techniques like averages, percentages and tables etc., are used.

Annual growth rates are used to trace year to year changes in respect of growth of staff, growth of strikes, industrial disputes, etc. The annual growth rates are calculated by using the following formula:

\[
\text{Annual growth rate (per cent)} = \frac{Y_t - Y_{t-1}}{Y_{t-1}} \times 100
\]

where \(Y_t\) - present year

\(Y_{t-1}\) - previous year
Karl Pearson's Correlation technique has been used to know the job satisfaction of workers in KSRTC. Correlation co-efficient $r$ with frequencies of both the variables $X$ and $Y$ is given by this formula.

$$
\frac{\sum f_{x} f_{y}}{N} = \left( \frac{\sum f_{x}}{N} \right) \left( \frac{\sum f_{y}}{N} \right)
$$

$$
\sum f_{x}^2 - \left( \frac{\sum f_{x}}{N} \right)^2 \times \sqrt{\sum f_{y}^2 - \left( \frac{\sum f_{y}}{N} \right)^2}
$$

where $dx = \frac{x - a}{c}$ and $dy = \frac{y - b}{d}$

1.9. LIMITATIONS OF DATA AND STUDY

In any study of social science nature, the results are having a tendency to change depending on various factors. During the study a number of limitations and constraints were faced and it is necessary to point them out at the very outset.

1. The formidable difficulty the researcher faced was with regard to the availability of organized and upto-date data. Statistics have not always been complete. Office records and files of the organisation and files and records of trade union leaders being important sources of data, some of the data are not available in the Annual Administration Reports of the Organisation.
2. Due to the time and financial constraints, the researcher has limited the size of the sample. Hence the results cannot be generalised.

3. The primary data collected through questionnaire contained the responses of workers, trade union leaders and managerial personnel. In some situations the workers and trade union leaders might have overstated their grievances and problems, whereas the managerial personnel might have understated the problems of the workers.

4. Though the data is taken for a period of 10 years (1988-89 to 1997-98) for analysis, it is sometimes restricted to the period from which the data is available because of the non-availability of data for some years.

5. In addition to the above, the case study suffers from all general limitations that are inherent in the case study method.

Despite these limitations, the overwhelming response of the management representatives, workers and trade union leaders, their uninhibited co-operation, willingness to provide ready access to all the records and above all, their hospitality have enabled the researcher to make the best out of the situation.
1.10. CHAPTERISATION OF THE STUDY

For the sake of clarity and vivid presentation the study is divided into 7 chapters.

The first chapter deals with the Research Problem and Methodology. It includes introduction, statement of the problem, review of literature, objectives, hypotheses, scope of the study, period of study, methodology, limitations and presentation of the study.

The second chapter deals with the Theoretical base and concepts of Industrial Relations. It includes conceptual clarifications, theoretical perspectives, factors, objectives and approaches to industrial relations.

Third chapter deals with the industrial relations in India with reference to Karnataka. It includes industrial relations during planning period, industrial relations in public sector industries in India and industrial relations in Karnataka.

Fourth chapter deals about the profile of Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation.

Fifth chapter deals with the analysis of industrial relations in KSRTC based on secondary data in Section A and B. In Section ‘A’
strikes, growth, causes and its impact on KSRTC has been discussed in detail. In Section ‘B’ Industrial disputes, its extent, growth rate and the Break-down Rate are discussed.

Sixth chapter deals with Evaluation of Industrial Relations in KSRTC based on primary data. It includes workers’ participation in management, role of trade unions and other perceptions of the respondents.

Last chapter is about summary conclusions and major findings. It includes constraints/problems confronted by KSRTC, verification of hypotheses and suggestions.