CHAPTER 2
RESEARCHES ON INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN INDIA-A REVIEW

Industrial relations is an area which has attracted the attention of a number of researchers. It is necessary to evaluate critically the existing research on the subject, with a view to place in proper perspective the important contributions in the field, identify the gaps, deficiencies, and the comparative neglect of the important research areas, and thus provide an analytical framework for the future studies in the field of Industrial relations. A brief summary of the major studies, which are particularly relevant to the present study, together with a critical evaluation is presented here.

The literature review of the subject is classified and presented under five heads. First one is Industrial Relations in general. Second part of the literature survey highlights studies about job satisfaction. Third part of the literature analysis accounts for Industrial Disputes and dispute settling machinery. Fourth part reveals studies pertaining to trade unionism and workers participation in management. Last part of the literature review highlights various studies pertaining to industrial relations in Kerala.

2.1. Industrial Relations in General

Many researchers in the country have concentrated on the study of industrial relations at the national level on the basis of aggregate data. In his study Viramani (1995) has pointed out that the Indian industrial relations system has all along been adversarial with collective bargaining approach being its mainstay. He contented that collective bargaining and participation need different attitudes and hence cannot co-exist. In any new model of I R the adversarial approach and collective bargaining must give way to participative
structures or development of institutions which check the adversarial approach. He suggested various changes in the roles of management, union and Government for redefining Industrial relations.

Chellappa and Jhourney (1982) have attempted to identify the factors which have facilitated the development of harmonious industrial relations. They identified informal, open and uninhibited interpersonal relations between employees and the pressures of production, hierarchical status and day-to-day work problems did not reduce the communication between the individuals.

Datta (1990) analysed why employees oppose automation, what are the steps to be taken for its smooth introduction and how the staff and their unions can be involved in this task. The utilization and deployment of workforce in the context of automation has also been analysed. He emphasized the inalienable connection between automation and industrial relations and suggested that in their own interest both the managements and the unions must join hands for phased adoption of new technology.

Johri (1990) discussed several paradoxes of Indian industrial system and identified that the industrial relations system has now emerged as a major obstacle to technological progress and competition of Indian industries. He concluded that Indian industrialism does not reflect a natural stage of economic evaluation; it may be viewed as a sub-economic system created by the planning strategy of providing industrialization in a society which continues to be poor and technologically backward.

Ratnam (1998) pointed out that most of the laws pertain to the organized sector only and this comprises only 8% of the total workforce. He stressed that economic development should be the means and the human development, the goal. As regards labour, legislation needs be aligned with the overall shift in economic and industrialization policies. It under scanned the need to pay attention to the formulation of a timely, adequate and reliable database on labour upon which policy planning may be based.
Nath (1995)\(^6\) focused on the Indian Industrial law, its inadequacies for a growing industrial economy and its judicial interpretations and implications in the light of I L O’s conventions and universal practices. He strongly argued for pragmatic and practical industrial laws which meet the growing needs of a fast industrializing economy. While pleading for equality in enforcement of laws, he concluded that India can attain the universally acceptable objectives of industrial relations only after an overhaul of the existing industrial laws.

Johnnie (1992)\(^7\) has presented an account of Dunlop’s Industrial Relation System theory, critically examining and commenting on Dunlop’s methodology, and the theoretical contributions which have been used by other scholars to further develop the frontiers of knowledge in the study of Industrial Relations. Although Dunlop’s work attracted criticism from a good number of scholars, the author contended that Dunlop’s work still stands out clearly as a monumental effort in contemporary industrial relations analysis.

Nayar (1985)\(^8\) has attempted to develop a conceptual model of effectiveness of industrial relations at the enterprise level by building on two distinct streams of literature-organizational theory and industrial relations. The purpose was to develop an operationalizable model of industrial relations sub-system effectiveness. Her model was helpful in developing linkage between the variables, to assess any given system as to its effectiveness and to identify some of the characteristics of the internal system variables which contribute to effectiveness.

Sharma and Sundara Rajan (1983)\(^9\) reported the findings of an All-India survey of organizational climate and its influence on labour-management relations. They isolated two factors that together explain 58% of the variation in labour-management relations in India. Those are (1) grievance handling system and (2) scope for advancement.

Johri (1996)\(^10\) has analyzed several consequences of badly designed legislative controls over Indian industrial relations system. The failure of
tripartite consultations in producing the agreed outcomes has left the industrial relations system with only one anchor and it is the body of labour laws as administered by the Government machinery and interpreted by the courts. Various suggestions are offered for amending the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. He suggested that in accordance with the requirements of India’s more rapidly developing modern economic sector, all the actors, including the Government machinery, would learn to adapt and moderate the I R system to accommodate its main pressures and growth determined needs.

Reddy (1992) has approached the problem of industrial relations in the context of new economic realities, competitive environment and strategic quest. According to him, the reformation of the industrial relations climate to cope with the emerging strategic environment requires efforts from all the three parties to the system. He suggested that the trade unions need to play a complementary role in understanding the strategic directions, and in turn use their primary power of opinionating among their members to bring about greater human resource integration in the firms’ movement towards the future.

Ghosh (1995) observed that not all industrial restructuring exercises can be lumped together in one undifferentiated category. He identified three distinct patterns, which have been shaped as much by economic environment and market compulsions as by prevailing labour-management relations. He suggested some strategic choices available to labour and management as conventional responses like bargaining and casualisation are proving inadequate in the wake of fundamental changes in work practices and employment relations.

Khurana (1972) has tried to evaluate the industrial relations in the private and public sectors in India. He found that industrial relations in both the sectors had progressively deteriorated during 1962-68 and that public sector registered a better performance on the criterion of industrial conflict, but when viewed in the context of its performance in terms of the tripartite forums, the code of discipline, and the prevalent attitudinal climate it has been no difference
from the private sector. He concluded that it can’t be said with certainty that there exist any linear relationship between ownership and industrial relations.

Chander (1979) and Rao (1981) have analyzed the Gandhian philosophy of Industrial relations specifically related to minimum wages, labour strikes and trusteeship and advised to follow Gandhian values for a congenial industrial atmosphere.

Sharma (1988) argued that like employers, unions too have catered only to the physical well-being of the worker and have paid little attention to improve the quality of his work life. He argued that the bond between the worker and the union is not at all strong as the relationship is based on negative motivation. He suggested that employers and unions can co-operate and collaborate with each other if they come to agree upon some common goal like improvement of quality of work life.

Pandey (1999) has evaluated the role of IR managers in changing industrial scenario and concluded that collective action by individuals on issues of mutual interest shall lay the foundation for individual growth and freedom which shall be fostered by industrial relations managers of the organization.

Bhatnagar and Sharma (1984) studied about the role and effectiveness of labour welfare officer in industrial relations. They concluded that labour welfare officers, by and large, are not able to perform their duties faithfully. They suggested that the mode of appointments and service conditions of the labour welfare officers be suitably modified so as to accord them a reasonable degree of functional autonomy. They also suggested for periodic reports to the Government regarding the welfare activities so that the Government might proceed against the recalcitrant managements.

While studying the aftermath of Structural Adjustment Programme upon the labour standards, Palo et al (2000) pointed out that Structural Adjustment Programme has brought income gains to the working class despite their relative
job insecurity. Leelavathy (2000)\textsuperscript{20} examined challenges and strategies of industrial relations in India and suggested for integration and simplification of labour laws and greater autonomy for labour tribunals and conciliation committees. She advocated for modifying Government’s strategy based on Japan’s model of industrial relations.

Srivastava (2001)\textsuperscript{21} has given an analysis of changing power dynamics in the emerging industrial relations scenario and suggested to evolve a mechanism, which can facilitate business success in a market economy along with protecting the interest of the working class. He proposed a change in the I R Act which will help managements, workers and unions deal with each other like partners, not opponents.

In his study, Srivasthava (2004)\textsuperscript{22} pointed out that regular, open, two-way communication in the organization is an important prerequisite for promoting proactive I R. It would keep the workers updated with employers changing circumstances, constraints, strategies and plans and giving them an opportunity to adapt and reposition themselves. He advocated for formulating appropriate conduct and disciplinary regulations for the protection of employer’s rights.

Public sector has been the main focus of attention in most of the general and historic studies. Karim (1972)\textsuperscript{23} and Mathur (1986)\textsuperscript{24} have given a good analysis of the issues of industrial relations in public sector and have recommended various direct and indirect measures to bring about harmonious relations between the labour and the managements.

De (1973)\textsuperscript{25} analysed whether such state of industrial relations do exist in enterprises as will facilitate the continued fulfillment of its stated objectives and concrete goals. He suggested the basis for determination of and the role of the bargaining agent, establishment of integrative collective bargaining relationship, development of performance-based reward system as part of action plan for effective industrial relations in the public sector.
Patil (1998)\textsuperscript{26} studied about the changing industrial relations in different industries and organizations in Karnataka to determine the nature of changing relations and concluded that labour unions are becoming more defensive and more concerned with protection of jobs. He also found out that workers are positively responding to the demands of the managements for improvement in production, job flexibility and shop floor designing.

Gani (1990)\textsuperscript{27} studied about the factors that help or obstruct the maintenance and development of cordial and constructive relationship between labour and management in Jammu and Kashmir. He suggested that clear cut policies relating to promotion, reward system, training, working conditions and grievance handling should be formulated and implemented.

2.2 Job satisfaction

Gardner& Pierce (1998)\textsuperscript{28} and Mathieu, Hofman &Farr (1993)\textsuperscript{29} found that although a variety of factors might contribute to job satisfaction for most workers, the connection between such factors and job satisfaction may not be a direct link. Job satisfaction may be mediated by the perception of the individual workers. This is because different employees may perceive the same job differently, and it is those individual perceptions that determine whether or not an employee is satisfied with the job.

The study conducted in Japan by Kumara & Koichi (1989)\textsuperscript{30} found that supportive supervision as well as support from co-workers, was positively correlated with worker’s job satisfaction. According to them, support from co-workers and supervisors was especially important to employees who did not feel positive about the work they performed.

Takalkar & Coover (1994)\textsuperscript{31} conducted a study comparing the job satisfaction of white collar workers in the United States and India. They found remarkable similarity in the factors that contributed to these workers’ job satisfaction.
According to Porter and Lawler (1968) job satisfaction and performance are not directly linked. Instead, effective job performance leads to job related rewards, such as pay increases, promotions or a sense of accomplishment. If the process for offering these rewards is perceived as fair, receiving these rewards leads to job satisfaction and also to higher and higher levels of performance. This creates a situation in which job satisfaction and job performance are actually independent of one another, but are linked because both are affected by job-related rewards.

Judge, Thoresen, et al., (2001) suggested that job satisfaction might be more strongly related to job performance for individuals in complex jobs, such as managers, scientists and engineers, than in more structured jobs such as accounting and sales. Complex jobs, because they require creativity and ingenuity, might offer more opportunity for intrinsic reinforcement, and that may strengthen the connection between satisfaction and performance, in comparison to more routine jobs, where satisfaction may be more affected by the structure or conditions of work, or extrinsic rewards.

Miceli (1993) emphasized that the perception of fairness or justice in pay is the most important part of the link between performance and job satisfaction. That is, “relative deprivation” (a discrepancy between a worker’s expectation and rewards) and perceived fairness of pay may mediate the relationship between performance and job satisfaction, regardless of the actual rewards obtained.

Although it is conceivable that a worker could be quite satisfied with a job but have low feelings of commitment to the organization, or vice versa, the feelings tend to be positively related. Studies showed mixed results as to the direction of influence between these two constructs. O’Driscoll and colleagues (1992) found that job satisfaction may directly affect organizational commitment, whereas another study (Becker & Billings, 1993) indicated that organizational commitment leads to job satisfaction.
The studies of Mukherjee (1980)\textsuperscript{37} and Kathiresan (1987)\textsuperscript{38} confirmed the fact that poverty-stricken workers are more concerned with immediate and personal economic gains and their economic condition appear to be a central source of life satisfaction.

Srivasthava and Srivasthava (1983)\textsuperscript{39} and Narchal \textit{et al} (1983)\textsuperscript{40} found wage pattern, working conditions and job permanency as the most important factors in worker’s job satisfaction.

Rao and Ganguli (1971)\textsuperscript{41} and Chathopadyaya and Venkiteswara (1972)\textsuperscript{42} found that job satisfaction is correlated with certain personal attributes and background variables such as age, educational level, number of dependents, occupational level and marital status.

Mamta Panda (2004)\textsuperscript{43} examined the relationship between the industrial relations environment and work culture in a private and a public sector organization belonging to the same industry. She suggested intensive training programmes to be organized for making the employees aware of the need for adoption of normative approach, collaborative orientation, competency building and developing holistic perspective.

Srivastava (2004)\textsuperscript{44} studied the effect of welfare facilities on job satisfaction and attitude of workers towards management amongst the workers of public and private sectors. The results indicated that welfare facilities affect the workers’ attitude towards management and job satisfaction in both sectors. He concluded that public sector provide better welfare facilities to their workers and public sector workers are more satisfied with their jobs as compared to the private sector workers.

\textbf{2.3 Industrial disputes}

One of the grim threats to the efficient conduct of the modern industrial system seems to be the ravaging industrial disharmony characterized by embittered relationship between the employers and the workers. The causes of
industrial disputes in India were psychological, political and economic. Hence to secure industrial peace, changes in the attitude of the workers, employers, trade unions are required along with political and economic changes.

Strikes are the most visible and spectacular manifestations of industrial conflicts which in turn, arise out of bad industrial relations. A good number of studies undertaken to study the causes of industrial disputes have shown that several economic and non-economic factors have caused industrial disputes in the country. Papola (1972) and Varma (1978) concluded that inadequate pay, rising prices and other economic benefits or pressure might be considered as the major causes of industrial disputes in India.

Mahapathra (1977) and Srivasthava and De (1967) found the multiplicity of trade unions, inter-union and intra-union rivalries, indiscipline among union members, frustration of workers with the pattern of Industrial relations are the causes of disputes.

Siva Prasad and Murthy (1977) and Gani (1991) identified inadequate wages bonus issues, workers demand for higher cost of living allowances are the main causes of conflicts.

Verma (1972) was of the view that disputes relating to wages, allowances and bonus constitute approximately 40% of the industrial disputes whereas Singh (1968) opines that more than 50% of the industrial disputes are caused by wages, bonus and gratuity.

According to Nagaraju (1981), the wage issue has been the most important single issue among the several causes which have given rise to disputes.

Ramanujam (1979) studied about the reasons and remedies of disharmony in industrial relations and suggested that industrial relations have to be carefully and continuously nursed in order to retain it at the peak level of its health. Just as in the case of an individual’s health, so also in the case of the
health of industrial relations, the preventive aspect must receive adequate attention.

Reddy (1988) argued that the authoritarian and retrograde attitude and indecisiveness of the management; insensitive, indifferent and anti-labour attitude of the Government and the inter-union rivalries and competition—all together forced the trade unions to launch general strikes. While studying industrial relations in coal mining industry in Andhra Pradesh, he found that over a period of one and a half decades, (1969-70 to 1983-84) there was a thirteen fold increase in the number of strikes with an annual growth rate of 78.5%.

Mohanan (1999) analysed some aspects of industrial relations since New Economic Policy and concluded that it have improved considerably. He found that the strikes and lockouts leading to loss of man days reduced substantially and an atmosphere for the effective functioning of joint consultative machinery was created. He added that the trade unions have become more responsible in securing the welfare of workers and national integration.

After studying about the emerging trends of industrial relations in public and private sector industries in India, Sudama Singh and Binod Singh (1988) concluded that industrial unrest has deep rooted in the industrial relations realm of India. Industrial sector being a part of the whole economic system bears the impact of the type of administration prevalent in the country.

While studying about the nature and magnitude of industrial disputes in India in the post liberalization period, Jacob (2002) observes that the attitude of workers and trade union leaders to strike work for any thing and every thing has been changed on account of the globalised and liberalized mood of the economy. He identified that the man days lost due to lockouts is more than that of the strikes.
Disputes settling machinery

Machinery for the maintenance and promotion of industrial peace has widely been studied. The working of collective bargaining has occupied a greater part of studies of most of the researchers. Mehrotra (1966) and Rao (1961) described the practice and procedure relating to collective bargaining in various companies.

Guha (1959) and Bose (1967) focused the constraints in the operations of collective bargaining. The important among them being multiplicity of trade unions, outside leadership, political intervention and the problems of selective and representative unions.

Conciliation has been deemed to be the other legitimate forum for settling industrial disputes. Patil (1977) found the functioning of conciliation machinery in Karnataka as most unsatisfactory and largely ineffective.

Shroff (1953) and Kumar (1966) studied the functioning of conciliation machinery in Mumbai and Rajasthan respectively.

Singh (1968) and Nagaraju (1981) have assessed the functioning of conciliation machinery in Kanpur and Karnataka respectively. The functioning of conciliation machinery in Orissa and Punjab were studied by Murthy et al. (1986) and Ashdhir (1987).

All of them are critical of the working and effectiveness of conciliation machinery on the ground that the percentage of settlements through conciliation declined and that of withdrawal, failure and pending cases increased and have concluded that the machinery as a whole has failed to make any contribution in the sphere of industrial relations by lessening the strikes and by providing the adequate machinery for dispute settlement.

On voluntary arbitration, there have been only a few studies because of its limited use in India. Chatterjee (1966) and De (1977) identified the skill required by an arbitrator and the part he could play in building healthy industrial
relations. Like conciliation, arbitration has also been severely criticized for its poor performance.

The role of labour courts and tribunals for settling disputes has also received greater attention of various scholars. Banerjee (1963) reported that adjudication in India is prevalent because workers are poor and uneducated and trade unions are incoherently organized.

Giri (1972) was also opposite to “any court at all” as they retarded the growth of unions and favoured voluntary negotiation. Chowda (1971) also reported the delay in settlement of disputes through adjudication.

Murty (1980) observed that the adequacy and competence of a grievance procedure for the maintenance of good industrial relations depend to a large extent upon the good spirit with which the individuals concerned use it rather than a comprehensive and elaborate structure of grievance procedure. He suggested that it must subject to change to keep pace with the changing aspirations and interests of management and labour, and with the fluctuating needs and demands of the developing economy.

Ratna Sen (1988) observed that the effects of the political bias in union verification, in conciliation or adjudication or other political interventions, is apparent from the increasing recourse to court decisions. Both management and trade unions or workers have more faith in the judiciary than the Government machinery for dispute settlement. He found that both short–term and long-term strikes are increasing. It indicates less patience and greater obduracy on the part of both labour and management.

Most of these studies are mainly concentrated in wage issues and have suggested that unless suitable measures for the eradication of these problems are taken the cordial climate of industrial relations will only be a myth.
2.4 Trade unionism and Workers participation in management

Trade Unionism has been a popular field of research in the literature of industrial relations because the conflicts and co-operation between workers and management are influenced by the nature of workers organization. There have been a good number of research studies in different aspects of trade unionism such as their growth and development, organization and structure, leadership, politics, union involvement and participation in union activities etc.

While analyzing the changed dimension of industrial relations since new economic policy, Mohan (1999) observed that though there are more than 52,000 registered trade unions in the country, only 17 %of them are submitting returns and whose activities are on the record. Further, the density level of trade unions in India is as low as 9.1% as against 81% in Sweden, 54% in Norway, 39% in U. K., 32% in Germany, and 30% in Canada.

Mathur and Mathur (1962) and Padmanabhan (1980) traced the history of Trade Union movement in India and made suggestions for the improvement of trade unions.

Other studies include those of Nigam(1984) and Ratnam(1984) who have focused on some issues such as the process of unionism and its role in the context of economic development, the role and policy of the Government in promoting unionism, labour-management co-operation and conflict and other issues regarding trade union movement.

Attempts have also been made to analyze trade unionism in public services and white collar employment sectors. Goel (1968) and James and Rao (1972) reported on the unions of Government employees. These researches aim at studying the organization and strategies of unions.

These studies of Rao (1984) and Seth and Jain (1968), aimed at leadership efficiency, influence of legal aspects on union leaders, background,
role, status, and style of local trade union leaders, their political affiliation and its consequences etc.

Halder (1985) felt that the Indian unions are very sensitive politically and multi-unionism has become a fact of life in most of the industries. Ashraf (1974) and Ramaswamy (1973) also noted the relationship between union politics and management politics, relationship between political dependence and union weakness, political manipulations, transfer of union funds for political activities and vice-versa, consequence of outside influence, politicization of workers and their commitment to unions.

Choudhury (1980) and Foneseca (1965) studied the attitude of workers towards unions, their perception of union functions, degree of unionization and the union participation and its socio-economic variables. They concluded that the level of participation was low in Indian situation and reported considerable apathy or hostility among workers towards union works.

Pandey and Vikram (1969) and Sinha and Pai (1963) observed that economic and protective functions of the unions seem to appeal to the workers and the union is looked more as the guardian of their interest than as an agency for political power.

Based on the nature of bargaining and the contents of the agreement, Murty and Das (1988) concluded that steel industry bargaining involves all the four sub-processes of negotiation behaviour viz., distributive bargaining, integrative bargaining, attitudinal structuring and intra-organizational bargaining. So it has taken a good leap from distributive bargaining to integrative bargaining.

In his study, Patil (1998) pointed out that trade unionism and trade union movement in India and Karnataka continue to be politically oriented, divided, sub-divided and fragmented, failing to protect the interest of the labour, the industry and the economy.
Sodhi (1993) examined the response of the three main actors in I R, highlights the challenges and opportunities which have come up with the new economic policies. The analysis showed that the response of the management is positive and the trade unions have reacted against the policies. The State is announcing policies, but is showing a weak commitment to their implementation. He warns that with the introduction of various economic policies, the trade unions may not survive in their traditional role.

While comparing the industrial relations in Japan and India, Zachariah (1991) analysed that one of the major problems of the Indian trade union movement is the fragmentation of the unions. This multi-unionism has posed a serious threat to industrial harmony in India. It was argued that the Japanese model offer learning for the management, unions, workers and Government in India.

Das (1990) argued that trade unions are not really industrial organizations in the Indian situation. They are loosely –knit protest committees, with weak structure and finding themselves in very difficult situations relating to positive decision-making and needing to be bailed out either by the management, political parties or the Government. They enjoyed the vested interests in the “fruits of backwardness” which has dominated the stances of almost all the political parties in the country.

Sharma (1990) has tried to take a critical look at the move for managerial unionism and its implications for industrial relations. He argued that, in the industrial relations situation, the emergence of separate unions for managerial employees is bound to aggravate the I R problems still further.

Sodhi (1999) examined the role of the actors of the I R system in the changed economic scenario, highlighted some specific challenges and pressures for bringing about change in I R and HRM. He found out that the managements have taken positively to the changes and the unions at the macro level remain
opposed to the reform process. He said that the new economic scenario is also making various unions join hands.

Sen (1997)\textsuperscript{100} argued that unionization has been growing in the small, medium and informal sectors or even in the unorganized pockets of organized industry. He warned that the tendency to depoliticize workers require a response from unions to decentralize union structures and decision-making and much greater concern for plant level issues.

Mankidy (1993)\textsuperscript{101} observed that the new workforce have different orientation to trade unionism and may not be as loyal to unions as their earlier counterparts. He warned that unless management take a proactive stance and introduce greater industrial democracy, the new united front being formed by the unions may still lead to a return of the spectre of trade union militancy.

Singh\textsuperscript{102} explored the pattern of I R in Maharashtra and analyzed the inevitability and universality of the conflict in any industrial unit, between the employer and the employees. He stressed the need for the management of the conflicts and not the eradication of it. He put forward the suggestion that there should be a central trade union organization, to which all the unions should be affiliated.

Pandey (1998)\textsuperscript{103} exclaimed how the antiquated Trade Union Act of 1926, which was formulated by an alien Government permitting indiscriminate registration of trade unions in tune with its divide and rule policy, is still on the Statute Books of an independent democratic country. He criticized that the political overtones of Government decisions in labour matters and the unnecessary interference weakening the forces of collective bargaining.

Choudhury (1998)\textsuperscript{104} felt that in the western parts of India Trade Unions were dominated by the individual leaders, whereas, in the east, trade unions were dominated by the political party affiliation. The strength changes on the basis of
the party in power in the State. He put forward the following roles for an ideal Trade Union.

a) Organize worker education programme for better quality of work life of the workers, making them hygiene and safety conscious, organize small group activities for better team work and inter dependence.

b) Bargain with the worker-colleagues for the improvement of productivity and establishment of eight-hour work culture.

c) Protest against unfair management practices and social evils like AIDS, alcoholism, pollution etc. in the interest of the workers and the society at large.

Varma (1998) studied about the new roles to be played by different actors of industrial relations and suggested that each state Government should prepare a panel of arbitrators who must be experts (not necessarily judges) with practical knowledge and experience of industrial issues, ethos and work culture. There should be no scope or possibility of appeal against the arbitrator’s award.

Rath and Misra (1996) analysed the effects of economic environment change on the industrial relations scenario of our country and made an attempt to put forth a possible futuristic model of industrial relations in the years to come. They argued that with the specter of obsolescence on the horizon, the attention of the trade unions will be more to secure appropriate training and empowerment techniques from the management than to strive for short-term benefits of wages and welfare.

Rao and Patwardhan (1998) analysed how the trade unions see themselves and concluded that a vast majority of Indian employers are generally comfortable with unions and that non-unionism is not a priority item on their agenda. They also found out that external leaders drawn from political parties have lost their traditional charisma to inspire today’s workers.
Gani (1991) found that workers have shown relatively higher degree of interest and have positive attitudes towards unions in that they consider unions to be important and essential aspect of their working lives.

Das (1999) observed that the trade unions are exploited for political purposes and their legitimate functions are completely neglected and through this door, militancy in trade union arena is brought in.

Jhabvala (2003) observed that as production became decentralized, as the demand for flexible labour grew, and as capital and production moves to countries and areas where trade unions were weak or non-existent, the power and effectiveness of trade unions began to decline and weaken.

Bhangoo (2006) suggested that the new economic scenario demands that trade unions must function with alliances and coaliations at national, regional and global levels to achieve solidarity to mitigate the problems of the workers of the world.

While analyzing the important reason for the declining influence of trade unions, Srivastava (2006) felt that the profile vis-à-vis aspirations of new generation of workforce have changed drastically and there exist a mismatch between agenda of unions and expectations of new workers. Moreover, the volatile market, increasing competition and emerging business compulsions have diluted the needs of unions.

Ghosh (2008) noticed a perceptible change in the union’s strategy and approach to labour problems although some pockets of resistance still exist in certain industries. He pointed out that the unity of the workers brought forward by the formation of joint forums of major trade unions at different levels has also contributed to the rise of concern for common and untouched issues of trade union struggle.

From the above it can be concluded that though considerable efforts have been made to study some vital aspects of trade unionism, yet some other wider
questions have been left out of analysis. A closer and systematic analysis of the contribution of the outside leaders to the growth of movement and in directing industrial disputes, within the national concern, still continues to be unexplored.

**Workers participation in management**

In today’s labour relations, worker’s participation is one of the widely debated issues. Intensive research has been carried out in the past to examine the impact of participation on productivity, performance, and job satisfaction, morale of workers, industrial peace and organizational effectiveness. Underlying all these studies is the assumption that workers have a desire to participate in management decision-making and by satisfying that desire organizational objectives can be effectively achieved to a varying extent.

Research works of Saini (1983) and Indira and Harigopal (1985), have shown that participation of workers in various decision-making processes increases their job satisfaction and decreases their work apathy, reduces industrial tension and conflict, and works as a positive instrument for the promotion of productivity and creativity.

Sahu’s (1981) work has pointed out that the majority of the workers favour the idea of giving them a right to influence the process of management, particularly in those areas, where their interests are involved.

The studies of Sinha and Sinha (1974) have brought to light the relationship between the worker’s desire for participation and their background variables such as education, skill, length of service, interest on job and aspiration etc.

Very few studies have focused on the attitude of management personnel towards the worker’s participation, though some research has tried to elicit the thinking and belief of the managers about participation. Indira and Harigopal (1985) and Mehta (1977) found that the management in general displayed
positive attitude towards various dimensions of participative pre-disposition, indicating thereby, their strong faith in the scheme.

The findings of Warrior (1978)\textsuperscript{120} and Lal (1984)\textsuperscript{121} have revealed that in Indian context, the experience of participative forums are to a great extent encouraging as most of the schemes of workers participation have functioned successfully. Joseph (1987)\textsuperscript{122} concluded that participative management has failed in India. Sharma (1987)\textsuperscript{123} was confident that the future of participative management is bright, but considerable amount of groundwork is necessary.

Mukherjee (1984)\textsuperscript{124} and Viramani (1978)\textsuperscript{125} suggested that participative forums and practices to be effective need favourable attitude among the parties, sincerity of the purpose, sound trade unionism and industrial relations climate. Biswas (1994)\textsuperscript{126} suggested that, for successful working of participative system, Transactional Analysis Approach will be very useful.

According to Reddy (1990)\textsuperscript{127}, the concept of participation was not directly linked to the socio-political and economic development of the country. Mohanan (1999)\textsuperscript{128} said that the simple launching of new economic policy alone could not bring about such social, cultural, and economic changes in the required magnitude to facilitate successful participation of workers in the management. The worker as a partner of management in joint bodies, is not an equal partner in reality. He can’t be so because he is subordinate to management by the entire system of responsibility, duty, control, and obligation.

Choudhury (1998)\textsuperscript{129} suggested that worker’s participation forums (WPF) should be under an Integrated Labour Relations Act. (i.e., Industrial Dispute Act and Trade Union Act combined together).

Workers’ participation in management has still many vital aspects which have not been explored completely. The issues that need to be studied include the attitude and approach of workers and management towards participation,
workers’ commitment to participate, levels of participation desired and the impact of socio-economic factors on participation.

2.5. Studies about Kerala Industrial Relations

With the highest level of literacy rate in the country and the consequent high degree of general awareness even among the rural mass, the militant nature of trade unions and the presence of communist political movement, Kerala industrial relations has always been an area of interest to social researchers all over the country. The major contributions in this regard are noted below:

Pillai, (1994)\textsuperscript{130} while investigating into the industrial strike activities in Kerala, suggested to separate trade union interest from political interest. He also suggested for avoiding external leadership to trade unions as this is the means through which political influence generally gets into trade union activities. He suggested that management should be more responsive to the needs of the workers taking into account the latter’s higher educational and aspirations level.

The study conducted by Nair (1972)\textsuperscript{131} revealed that the multiplicity of unionism and outside leadership in Kerala have in no way reduced the capacity of the Kerala workers to get good bargains in his industrial life. The study shows that in Kerala, union movement is a stepping stone to political leadership. In Kerala the union leadership never subordinates the union interest to political interest.

According to Nair (1972)\textsuperscript{132}, the age of union movement, instability of employment, threat to retrenchment and frequent lay-off, leadership conflicts and political factors were the relevant factors influencing the level of industrial strike activity in Kerala.

According to George (1993)\textsuperscript{133}, industrial relations in the textile mills of Kerala showed a consistent tendency towards greater worker involvement in the management of labour welfare related issues, and though multi-unionism and politicization of union activities have to a certain extent reduced the bargaining
power of the workforce, they are still a force to be reckoned with in maintaining proper industrial relations.

While examining the collective bargaining experiences in Kerala, Nair (1982)\textsuperscript{134} observed that the flexibility and broad minded realism in management approach, the remarkable degree of trade union unity, and constructive role played by the State in employment relationship are unique features of industrial relations in Kerala, that have positively contributed to the growth of a variety of collective bargaining situations in the State at the plant and industry levels.

Paulson’s (1999)\textsuperscript{135} study revealed that the innumerable labour laws covering the various facets of industrial relations are full of loopholes, not comprehensive and not helpful to improve our existing work culture. The study also showed that though the interest in and inclination of workers towards trade unions are declining, trade unions can regain their faith through proper remedial measures.

While studying the industrial relations in Kerala State Electricity Board, Nair (1993)\textsuperscript{136} concluded that the nature of industrial relations system depends to a great deal on the power context. According to him, the intervention of Government, the style of the management, the degree of unionization, extent of membership, availability of adequate funds, political ideologies etc. are the factors which exert great influence on industrial relations.

Remesh (2003)\textsuperscript{137} described how the bad image of the trade unions among masses enabled the Government of Kerala to withdraw some of the deserved rights of the employees including those with full salary and permanency in job.

Thomas (2003)\textsuperscript{138} found that an indigenous class of entrepreneurs never emerged in Kerala and the savings mobilized in Kerala have been channeled to investment in real estate, house construction and some service sector establishments.
Patrick (1995)\textsuperscript{139} concluded that given the paternalistic and highly traditional character of Indian management, and the wide availability throughout the country of less organized and less politicized workers, it follows that Indian capital would shy away from Kerala.

Gopalakrishnan (2008)\textsuperscript{140} revealed that political parties have utilized trade unions in Kerala not as institutions with an independent existence of their own, but as potential vehicle for power. In the matter of militancy or violence in strike activity no trade union is distinct from another. He concluded that the kaleidoscopic view of the Kerala trade union management reveals that though there are more than 11000 registered trade unions in the State, only 4 to 8 percent of them are submitting returns and whose activities are on the record.

While thinking about Kerala’s development and failures, Raghavan (2004)\textsuperscript{141} observed that the ideological musings of the left wing politics disfavouring the capitalist development has created an anti-industrial climate in the state from the very beginning of the formidable stage of its development. He criticized Kerala society for failing to accomplish the prime truth that one has to create wealth first before mesmerized by socialist ideals.

Jacob (2005)\textsuperscript{142} identified the main issues leading to grievances relate to wages and amenities, service matters, working conditions and disciplinary actions. The faulty handling of grievances leads to work stoppages and strikes. He found out that trade union leaders are satisfied with the working of grievance procedure in Kerala.

Vasanthagopal and Venugopalan (2009)\textsuperscript{143} compared the involvement of employees in trade union activities in the public and private enterprises in Kerala. They found that job security, protection against victimization, and unity of workers were the major reasons for joining unions. Union participation appeared to be higher among the employees in the private sector, as compared with their counterparts in the public sector.
2.6 Conclusion

Despite the above studies, no serious attempts have ever been made to make an up to date assessment of the industrial relations situations in Kerala especially after the implementation of the new economic policy and the consequent changing scenario. The present study is mainly intended to make a thorough scan of industrial relations in Kerala by making a comparative analysis of public and private enterprises in selected areas of the State. The results of the study are expected to be of immense use to the administrators, personnel policy makers, industrial employers, trade union leaders and the community as a whole.

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