

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Transport plays a very significant and important role in the modern civilisation as well as in the economic development. The economic development of a country especially an underdeveloped country like India mostly depends upon its mode of transportation. In India, Railways are the most utilised means of transportation. Indian Railways is one of the biggest employers in the world who employs more than 17 lakhs of employees.

Industrial Harmony

No nation can survive without industry and technology in the modern technological age. Economic progress depends upon industrial harmony for the simple reason that, industrial harmony leads to co-operation between employers and employees, which result in more productivity guaranteeing all round prosperity of the country. In the interest of good and healthy management, relation between labour and management in the Railways should be peaceful and harmonious.

Labour Movement in India

The trade Union movement in India had been the child of Industrial development. Even though the labour force could not develop till the First World War, the employers, who were strong formed themselves chamber of commerce, to safeguard their interest and it could greatly influence the Government policies from time to time.

The first Industrial labour organisation was formed in 1918 among textiles workers at Madras, under the leadership of Mr. H.P. Wadia, the father of the Indian Labour Movement. Between 1919 and 1953 many unions were formed. In 1920 the AITUC (All India Trade Union Congress) came into existence, blessed by the Indian National Congress. In 1922, the All Indian Railway men's Federation was formed to which the Railway unions were affiliated.

As a landmark in the history of Indian Trade Union movement, Trade union Act was enacted in 1926, which gave legal recognition to the registered trade unions.

In 1947, there was a split in the AITUC, which resulted in the formation of another union, called Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC).

In 1947, the Govt. of India had enacted Industrial Dispute Act, to safeguard the interest of the working class. Simultaneously to the formation of INTUC, in 1947 INRWF was also formed in Railways. (Indian National Railway Workers Federation). In 1953 AIRF and INRWF joined together and formed NFIR (National Federation of Indian Railway men). But in 1956 AIRF came out and started functioning separately.

Trade Unions of Non- Gazetted

NATIONAL LEVEL	INDIAN RAILWAY LEVEL
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AITUC- 1920	AIRF 1922
INTUC – 1947	INRWF – 1947
HMS	NFIR –1953 (AIRF+ INRWF)
	NFIR and AIRF- 1950

Trade Unions of Gazetted Officers

- All India Officers Federation.
- Indian Railway Promotee Officers Association.

Recognition of Trade Unions

Chapter XXV of IREM lays down the following conditions for recognition of the Unions.

- The Unions must be registered under Indian Trade Union Act 1926.
- It must consist of a distinct class of Railway Employees and must not be formed on the basis of any caste, tribe or religion.
- All Railway Employees of the same class must be eligible for membership. It should not be sectional.
- Its membership should not be less than 30% of the total number of non-gazetted staff employed on the Railway concerned.
- It should not engage in subversive activities.
- Secret Ballot System

Facilities extended to Recognised Unions

Recognition entitles the trade union to discuss with the Railway Administration on matters of importance and right to negotiate across the table. Special Casual Leave is given to the representatives for attending meetings of Unions and federations and also for attending PNM, FNM Meetings. Other benefits given to them are-

- Complimentary Railway Passes to the office bearers and Passes for attending meeting of Unions and federations, PNM and FNM.
- Railway accommodation for Union Officials.
- Railway Telephone in union Offices.
- Allotment of Notice Boards for union purposes.
- Allowing employees on deputation to trade unions.
- Facilities for collection of subscription near the place of employment.

Unrecognised Unions

There are a large number of unrecognised Unions and Associations functioning in Railways. Majority of these are Sectional Unions functioning on individual Railways catering to the needs of a particular section of employees. Whenever representations are received from unrecognised unions they are given due consideration and appropriate action, as deemed necessary has to be taken. However it is the policy of the administration neither to enter into correspondence nor negotiate with these unions.

Salient Feature of Trade union Act 1926.

1. This Act was passed in 1926 and implemented on 1-6- 1927
2. Any seven or more can form an association and get registration.
3. The Registrar can withdraw or cancel the registration of Unions.
4. Legal protection can be given to the union office bearers against criminal proceeding but that must be for union work only.
5. The union may raise separate funds other than subscriptions on purely voluntary basis for promotion of social or political interest.
6. Union are to define their aim and objects for its constitution and maintain and get Audit accounts.
7. The registrar can inspect the accounts and the Union Books at any time.
8. If a Union indulges in unfair practices, go for irregular strike, submit false statement - punishment would be total withdraws of recognition.
9. If employer interferes is the working of union, influences against the union, discriminates with any officer of the union, Refuses to Negotiate or Deny Privileges to unions, he is liable to be find Rs. 1000.

Permanent Negotiating Machinery

PNM was set up in the year 1952 and came into force from 1.1.52. It aims to maintain contact with labour and to resolve disputes and differences, which may arise between Railway Labour and Administration. Collective bargaining, across the table negotiations and give and take policy are the main principles behind PNM.

Levels of Meetings

Railway level: The recognised Unions having access to the Divisional Officers and Officers at Zonal Head quarters including GMs.

Railway Board level: the Federations with the Railway Board take up Matters not settled at Railways level.

Tribunal level: Where agreement is not reached between the Federation and Railway Board in matters of importance, it is referred to an adhoc Railway tribunal comprising of representatives of Railway Labour and administration presided over by a neutral Chairman.

Periodicity of Meetings

Division and Extra Division	Once in two months
Zonal Railways and Railway Board	Once in three months

Subjects for Discussion

Disciplinary matters, individual cases of promotions, transfers etc. cannot be included for discussions. Questions relating to pay scales, allowances etc., will only be discussed between

Federations and Railway Board and not at lower levels. Subjects, which are within the powers of Officers, are only to be included. Matters not settled at any level may be raised in the next level. 30 new subjects are allowed for discussion in a meeting. It would be open to the Government to accept or reject or modify the decision of the adhoc tribunal. The Federations should not raise the same issue for two years where the Government has accepted the Tribunal's decision. But in case in which the Government have rejected or modified the decision of the tribunal the issue can be raised at the end of one year.

FNM

Fort-Nightly meetings are conducted at Head quarters by SPO/ Labour and by DPO or APO at Division and Extra Division. Issues affecting employees seniority, fixation of pay etc. are discussed and settled in these meetings. Union representatives not exceeding 6 can attend the meeting. SCL is granted to the Union representatives to attend FNM.

JCM & CA

On the recommendation of II pay Commission, the Central Government established a machinery for joint consultation and compulsory arbitration. JCM & CA came into force from October 1966. It started functioning in Railways from 1968. The objective of the machinery is to promote harmonious relation and for securing co-operation between the Government in its capacity as employer and its employees in matters of common concern for further increasing the efficiency in public service.

The machinery functions in three tiers.

- National Council deals with matters affecting all Central Government employees.
- Departmental Council deals with matters affecting the staff of a particular Ministry. The scope of the council will include all the matters relating to the conditions of service, work and welfare of employees and improvement of efficiency and standards of work. The scheme provides compulsory arbitration on three subjects viz. pay and allowances, Weekly hours of work and Leave.
- Regional Council is not functioning in Railways.

Generally outsiders are not permitted to participate in departmental council. But in Railways not more than two outsiders for each federation are allowed. Number of JCM meetings has been reduced in Railways since the PNM scheme continues side by side. The subjects discussed in the PNM Meetings are not to be discussed in JCM departmental council meetings and vice-versa.

National Council

Official side	5 to 10 members
Staff side	Up to 30 members

The Head of the respective Ministry will act as Chairman. CRB acts as Chairman in Railways.

Workers Participation in Management

Whitley Committee in UK during 1917 has recommended that workers should be given opportunity to participate in the discussion for-

- Promoting productivity for the general benefit of the organisation, employees and the community.
- Giving employees a better understanding of their role in the organisation in the process of production.
- Satisfying the workers urge of self expression, to achieve industrial peace, better relationship and cooperation.

In Railways, workers participation is in practice for a long time by associating the representatives of trade unions in different areas like-

1. Staff benefit fund committee.
2. Quarters committee.
3. Housing committee.
4. Running room advisory committee.
5. Canteen management committee.
6. Hospital visiting committee.
7. Labour advisory committee
8. Executive committees of Railway Institutes and clubs.
9. Workshop productivity councils etc.

In addition in the area of workers participation in management, corporate enterprise groups of management and labour have been formed at Railway Board, Zonal Railway and Divisions, which is now being called as Participation of Railway Employees in management.

PREM at Railway Board

1. Four representatives each from two Federations.
2. Two representatives of All India Officers Federations.
3. Two representatives of Indian Railway Promotee Officers Association.
4. On official side Chairman, Member, Additional members and Secretary, Railway Board.

PREM at Zonal Railway

Four representatives each from recognised unions affiliated to all India Railway men's Federation and National Federation of Indian Railway men.

1. Two representatives of the Association affiliated to the All India Officers Federation.
2. Two representatives of the Association affiliated to Indian Railway Promotee Officers Association.
3. GM and all Heads of Departments.

PREM at Division

It is constituted in the same manner as constituted in the Zonal Head Quarters.

Objectives of PREM

1. Evaluate the functioning of the Railway and exchange data, ideas, ways and means for improving the efficiency and viability of the organisation.
2. Apprise the investment programme particularly in regard to housing and welfare services.
3. Identify the areas and devise methods for maximising organisational effectiveness, use of technology and towards building up of the image of Railways as service organisation.

Joint Councils and Shop Councils

During 1975 the Ministry of Labour introduced Shop councils at Shop and department level and Joint council at organisational level in manufacturing and mining industries to function as a step towards workers participation in management. The Shop and Joint councils consist of equal representatives from management and the workers. In Railways these councils are functioning in Production Units with a view to maintain good relation among employees in production units.