

UNILATERAL AND COOPERATIVE PARTICIPATION

MODULE 5

INTRODUCTION

- The concept of employee participation is common to many different discipline areas in the social sciences. The form participation takes varies considerably depending on the discipline. On the one hand, it can relate to trade union representation through joint consultative committees and collective bargaining, to worker cooperatives or to legislation designed to provide channels for employee representatives to engage in some form of joint decision making with employers. On the other hand, it can encompass myriad mechanisms that employers introduce in order to provide information to their staff or to offer them the chance to engage in joint problem-solving groups or use their skills at work via job-enrichment programmes. This article examines the dynamics of participation, illustrating how different forms have come to prominence at different periods in recent history. It looks at how these specific practices might interact with one another.
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MEANING OF EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

- Whether labelled employee participation, high-involvement HRM, voice or any other of the aforementioned descriptors, each of these is a somewhat elastic term with a considerably wide range of definitions rather than a single uniform definition (Bar-Haim, [2002](#); Budd, [2004](#); Marchington and Wilkinson, [2005](#); Poole, [1986](#); Wilkinson [1998](#), [2008](#)). Indeed, the definitions may be as broad and all-inclusive as 'any form of delegation to or consultation with employees,' or as narrow as a 'formal, ongoing structure of direct communications, such as through a team briefing' (Gallie et al., [2001](#): 7). Stated differently, the extant literature has often treated different forms of participation as if they were synonymous, and there has not been sufficient distinction between the different forms that employee participation in decision making can take. As Heller et al. ([1998](#): 15) observe in this regard.

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COOPERATIVE FORM OF MANAGEMENT

- Participation is a sort of involvement of individual in group activities to contribute to group goals. In organizational context, participation refers to involvement of employees as representatives of the employees' community in the decision making process of the management. Stevens (1990) believes that 'participation is about employees playing a greater part in the decision making process'.
- The concept of workers' participation in management is a sort of industrial democracy which gives the rights to the employees' representatives to participate in decision making process. The term 'participation' is also extended to forms of financial participation such as profit sharing.
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CONCLUSION

- The concept of workers' participation is based on the principle of co-partnership in industry as opposed to master-servant relationship. Participation should mean co-functioning, playing one's part in an integrative unity, contributing all that one is capable of to the good of the organisation. It signifies workers' identification with the progress and development of business to work in a collective way of it.

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