

Industrial Discipline

Discipline is the regulation and modulation of human activities to produce a controlled performance. The real purpose of discipline is quite simple. It is to encourage employees to conform to established standards of job performance and to behave sensibly and safely at work. Discipline is essential to all organized group action.

Industrial discipline refers to orderly working of the employees of an industrial undertaking in accordance with established rules, regulations and conventions. Discipline is a force that prompts an individual to observe rules, regulations and procedures to attain an objective. In the broad sense, discipline means orderliness - the opposite of confusion. In an organization, discipline is the orderly conduct of its members.

Discipline is essential for any successful activity and, where it refers to industrial discipline, it essentially gets an added value. In industrial organizations, discipline is a must. The condition of complete peace and harmony as opposed to chaos is a very important factor for the success of an industrial unit.

Maintenance of Industrial Discipline

The maintenance of industrial discipline is a difficult and highly complicated task and needs very efficient handling.

Varied are the ways that can be adopted, but a few of them are outlined below:

1. Workers are to be consulted while framing rules and regulations.
2. Rules and regulations should be properly framed.
3. There should not be any communication gap between the management and the workers.
4. New workers should be given proper orientation.
5. Where necessary, charts, graphs and other methods should be used so that the workers may understand them.
6. Penalty for breaking rules should be used only where it is absolutely necessary.
7. Victimization should not be the aim of punishment.
8. Favoritism, nepotism and casteism should be avoided.
9. Managerial staff should never be breakers of law which they themselves have framed for enforcing discipline.

10. Code of conduct or discipline should be framed and followed.
11. A disciplinary committee should be formed.
12. Suitable machinery should be set up to listen to the appeals made by the aggrieved party.

The ways of maintaining discipline are broadly discussed above. Where indiscipline actually takes place, some measures must be taken to enforce discipline.

Grievance Handling

A grievance is any dissatisfaction or feeling of injustice having connection with one's employment situation which is brought to the attention of management. Speaking broadly, a grievance is any dissatisfaction that adversely affects organizational relations and productivity. To understand what a grievance is, it is necessary to distinguish between dissatisfaction, complaint, and grievance.

1. Dissatisfaction is anything that disturbs an employee, whether or not the unrest is expressed in words.
2. Complaint is a spoken or written dissatisfaction brought to the attention of the supervisor or the shop steward.
3. Grievance is a complaint that has been formally presented to a management representative or to a union official.

A grievance is a formal dispute between an employee and management on the conditions of employment. - **(Glueck, 1978)**

Grievances are complaints that have been formally registered in accordance with the grievance procedure. - **(Jackson)**

In short, grievance is a state of dissatisfaction, expressed or unexpressed, written or unwritten, justified or unjustified, having connection with employment situation.

Features of Grievance

1. A grievance refers to any form of discontent or dissatisfaction with any aspect of the organization.
2. The dissatisfaction must arise out of employment and not due to personal or family problems.

3. The discontent can arise out of real or imaginary reasons. When employees feel that injustice has been done to them, they have a grievance. The reason for such a feeling may be valid or invalid, legitimate or irrational, justifiable or ridiculous.
4. The discontent may be voiced or unvoiced, but it must find expression in some form. However, discontent per se is not a grievance. Initially, the employee may complain orally or in writing. If this is not looked into promptly, the employee feels a sense of lack of justice. Now, the discontent grows and takes the shape of a grievance.
5. Broadly speaking, thus, a grievance is traceable to be perceived as non-fulfillment of one's expectations from the organization.

Causes of Grievances

1. Economic

Employees may demand for individual wage adjustments. They may feel that they are paid less when compared to others. For example, late bonus, payments, adjustments to overtime pay, perceived inequalities in treatment, claims for equal pay, and appeals against performance-related pay awards.

2. Work environment

It may be undesirable or unsatisfactory conditions of work. For example, light, space, heat, or poor physical conditions of workplace, defective tools and equipment, poor quality of material, unfair rules, and lack of recognition.

3. Supervision

It may be objections to the general methods of supervision related to the attitudes of the supervisor towards the employee such as perceived notions of bias, favoritism, nepotism, caste affiliations and regional feelings.

4. Organizational change

Any change in the organizational policies can result in grievances. For example, the implementation of revised company policies or new working practices.

5. Employee relations

Employees are unable to adjust with their colleagues, suffer from feelings of neglect and victimization and become an object of ridicule and humiliation, or other inters- employee disputes.

6. Miscellaneous

These may be issues relating to certain violations in respect of promotions, safety methods, transfer, disciplinary rules, fines, granting leaves, medical facilities, etc.

Procedure of Grievance Handling

At any stage of the grievance machinery, the dispute must be handled by some members of the management. In grievance redressal, responsibility lies largely with the management. And, as already discussed, grievances should be settled promptly at the first stage itself. The following steps will provide a measure of guidance to the manager dealing with grievances.

1. Acknowledge Dissatisfaction

Managerial/supervisory attitude to grievances is important. They should focus attention on grievances, not turn away from them. Ignorance is not bliss; it is the bane of industrial conflict. Condescending attitude on the part of supervisors and managers would aggravate the problem.

2. Define the Problem

Instead of trying to deal with a vague feeling of discontent, the problem should be defined properly. Sometime the wrong complaint is given. By effective listening, one can make sure that a true complaint is voiced.

3. Get the Facts

Facts should be separated from fiction. Though grievances result in hurt feelings, the effort should be to get the facts behind the feelings. There is need for a proper record of each grievance.

4. Analyze and Decide

Decisions on each of the grievances will have a precedent effect. While no time should be lost in dealing with them, it is no excuse to be slipshod about it. Grievance settlements provide opportunities for managements to correct them, and thereby come closer to the employees. Horse-trading in grievance redressal due to union pressures may temporarily bring union leadership closer to the management, but it will surely alienate the workforce away from the management.

5. Follow up

Decisions taken must be followed up earnestly. They should be promptly communicated to the employee concerned. If a decision is favorable to the employee, his immediate boss should have the privilege of communicating the same