

Worker Participation in Management

Workers participation in management refers to the participation of non-managerial employees in the decision-making process of the organization. Workers participation gives employees the mental and psychological satisfaction and thereby increases their involvement in the affairs of the organization. Workers participation in management is the most accepted principle of industrial relations in modern industry throughout the world and in India too.

According to Keith Davis, “Workers’ participation refers to the mental and emotional involvement of a person in a group situation which encourages him to contribute to group goals and share in responsibility of achieving them”.

According to the British Institute of Management Workers participation in management is the practice in which employees take part in Management decisions and it is based on the assumption of commonality of interest between employer and employee in furthering the long term prospects of the enterprise and those working in it.

Participation has to be done at different levels of management:

- a) At the shop floor level.
- b) At the department level and
- c) At the board level.

The decision making at these different levels would assume different levels would assume different patterns in regard to policy formulation and execution. When workers participate in decision-making and they have to commit themselves for the implementation of decisions made. They become more responsible and involved.

Workers participation in management is a humanitarian approach to the labour class giving them new set of values giving them a social status, base and a place in the industrialized society.

Objectives of Participation

1. To prevent workers from exploitation by the management or by the owners of the organization.

2. To have democracy in the organization.
3. To have proper development of the working class.
4. To resolve conflicts and differences between management and employees in a democratic manner.
5. Increase in productivity for the benefit of all concerned to an enterprise, i.e., the employer, the employees and the community at large.
6. Satisfaction of worker's urge for self-expression in the matters of enterprise management.
7. To make employees better understood of their roles in the organization.
8. To encourage suggestions from employees.
9. To improve the working and living conditions of employees.

Accordingly, the objectives of WPM in India are to:

1. Promote mutual understanding between management and workers, i.e., industrial harmony.
2. Establish and encourage good communication system at all levels.
3. Create and promote a sense of belongingness among workers.
4. Help handle resistance to change.
5. Induce a sense among workers to contribute their best for the cause of organization.

In ultimate sense, the objective of WPM in India is to achieve organizational effectiveness and the satisfaction of the employees.

Needs of Worker Participation in Management

1. **Reduced industrial unrest:** Industrial conflict is a struggle between two organized groups which are motivated by the belief that their respective interests are endangered by the self-interested behavior of the other. Participation cuts at this very root of industrial conflict. It

tries to remove or at least minimize the diverse and conflicting interests between the parties, by substituting in their place, cooperation, homogeneity of objects and common interests. Both sides are integrated and decisions arrived at becomes “ours” rather than “theirs”.

2. **Reduced misunderstanding:** Participation helps dispelling employee’s misunderstanding about the outlook of management in industry.
3. **Increased organization balance:** If worker are invited to share in organizational problems, and to work towards common solutions, a greater degree of organizational balance occurs because of decreased misunderstanding of individual and group conflict. Participation leads to increased understanding throughout the organization. People learn that others have problems beside themselves.
4. **Higher productivity:** Increased productivity is possible only when there exists fullest co-operation between labor and management. It has been empirically tested that poor ‘labor management relations’ do not encourage the workers to contribute anything more than the minimum desirable to retain their jobs. Thus, participation of workers in management is essential to increase industrial productivity.
5. **Increased Commitment:** An important prerequisite for forging greater commitment is the individual’s involvement and opportunity to express himself. Participation allows individuals to express themselves at the work place rather than being absorbed into a complex system of rules, procedures and systems. If an individual knows that he can express his opinion and ideas, a personal sense of gratification and involvement takes place within him. This, in turn, fortifies his identification with the organization resulting in greater commitment.
6. **Industrial democracy:** Participation helps to usher in an era of democracy in industry. It is based on the principle of recognition of the human factor. It tends to reduce class conflict between capital and labor. It also serves as a support to political democracy.
7. **Development of Individuals:** Participation enhances individual creativity and response to job challenges. Individuals are given an opportunity to direct their initiative and creativity towards the objectives of the group. This facilitates individual growth.
8. **Less resistance to change:** when changes are arbitrarily introduced from above without explanation, subordinates tend to feel insecure and take counter measures aimed at sabotage of innovations. But when they have participated in the decision making process, they have had an opportunity to be heard. They know what to expect and why. Their resistance to change is reduced.