

What is employee relations?

The term 'employee relations' was conceived as a replacement for the term 'industrial relations' but its precise meaning in today's workplaces needs clarification.

Our more recent report *Managing employee relations in difficult times* concluded that dealing with the trade union relationship remains an issue in many workplaces but is not widely seen as problematic. Trade union influence is still an everyday reality for some, but continues to decline across the wider economy. The report also found that the main focus of employee relations is not on collective machinery but on individual relationships. In the face of tough economic conditions, there is a new emphasis on helping line managers to establish trust-based relationships with employees.

The decline of 'industrial relations'

'Industrial relations' is generally understood to refer to the relationship between employers and employees collectively. The term is no longer widely used by employers but summons up a set of employment relationships that no longer widely exist, except in specific sectors and, even there, in modified form.

The decline can be measured on a number of different dimensions. From a peak of some 12 million plus, union membership has fallen to around 7 million today. Between 1980 and 2000, the coverage of collective agreements contracted from over three-quarters to under a third of the employed workforce. At the same time, the range of issues over which bargaining took place decreased massively. The Workplace Employment Relations Survey (WERS) 19981 showed that union officials spent most of their time not on negotiating pay and conditions but in supporting grievances on behalf of individual members. Even where collective bargaining continued, its impact on the exercise of management discretion was greatly diminished.

The shift in the coverage and content of collective bargaining has been reflected in a dramatic reduction in industrial action since 1980. The number of working days lost per 1,000 union members decreased from an annual average of 1,163 in the 1970s to 76 in the 1990s. They remain low and are below the levels in many other developed countries.

Role of employee relations

Every individual at the workplace shares a certain relationship with his fellow workers. Human beings are not machines who can start working just at the push of a mere button. They need people to talk to, discuss ideas with each other and share their happiness and sorrows. An individual cannot work on his own, he needs people around. If the organization is all empty, you will not feel like sitting there and working. An isolated environment demotivates an individual and spreads negativity around. It is essential that people are comfortable with each other and work together as a single unit towards a common goal.

It is important that employees share a healthy relation with each other at the work place. Let us find out why employee relations are important in an organization:

- **There are several issues on which an individual cannot take decisions alone.** He needs the guidance and advice of others as well. Sometimes we might miss out on important points, but our fellow workers may come out with a brilliant idea which would help us to achieve our targets at a much faster rate. Before implementing any plan, the pros and cons must be evaluated on an open forum where every employee has the right to express his opinions freely. On your own, you will never come to know where you are going wrong, you need people who can act as critic and correct you wherever you are wrong. If you do not enjoy a good relation with others no one will ever come to help you.
- **Work becomes easy if it is shared among all.** A healthy relation with your fellow workers would ease the work load on you and in turn increases your productivity. One cannot do everything on his own. Responsibilities must be divided among team members to accomplish the assigned tasks within the stipulated time frame. If you have a good rapport with your colleagues, he will always be eager to assist you in your assignments making your work easier.
- **The organization becomes a happy place to work if the employees work together as a family.** An individual tends to lose focus and concentration if his mind is always clouded with unnecessary tensions and stress. It has been observed that if people talk and discuss things with each other, tensions automatically evaporate and one feels better. Learn to trust others, you will feel relaxed. One doesn't feel like going to office if he is

not in talking terms with the person sitting next to him. An individual spends around 8-9 hours in a day at his workplace and practically it is not possible that one works non stop without a break. You should have people with whom you can share your lunch, discuss movies or go out for a stroll once in a while. If you fight with everyone, no one will speak to you and you will be left all alone. It is important to respect others to expect the same from them.

- **An individual feels motivated in the company of others whom he can trust and fall back on whenever needed.** One feels secure and confident and thus delivers his best. It is okay if you share your secrets with your colleagues but you should know where to draw the line. A sense of trust is important.
- **Healthy employee relations also discourage conflicts and fights among individuals.** People tend to adjust more and stop finding faults in each other. Individuals don't waste their time in meaningless conflicts and disputes, rather concentrate on their work and strive hard to perform better. They start treating each other as friends and try their level best to compromise and make everyone happy.
- **A healthy employee relation reduces the problem of absenteeism at the work place.** Individuals are more serious towards their work and feel like coming to office daily. They do not take frequent leaves and start enjoying their work. Employees stop complaining against each other and give their best
- **It is wise to share a warm relation with your fellow workers, because you never know when you need them.** You may need them any time. They would come to your help only when you are nice to them. You might need leaves for some personal reasons; you must have a trusted colleague who can handle the work on your behalf. Moreover healthy employee relations also spread positivity around.

It is essential that employees are comfortable with each other for better focus and concentration, lesser conflicts and increased productivity.

Difference Between Industrial Relations and Employee Relations

Industrial Relations vs Employee Relations

Most of us think we know what industrial relations are. The study of employment and labor market is what makes the subject matter of this vast area of research. It is a field that analyzes the factors that affect the workplace. However, it is the workplace that directly affects our style of living and even our culture in a lot of ways. There is another related concept called employee relations that confuses many because of its similarities with industrial relations. It is a fact that looking at a workplace from the perspective of workers unions is no longer relevant in these times. Let us see if there is any difference between these two related concepts.

Industrial Relations

The field of study that covers employment relationships in their entirety is called industrial relations. In general, it is believed to be the study of relations between the employees and employers. There are a multitude of factors at play at the workplace that shape up the relations between workers, employers, and the government. The field of industrial relations came into existence with the advent of the industrial revolution as an important tool to understand the complex relations between employers and employees. There are many different ways to look at industrial relations as there are the perspectives of workers, employers, government, and the perspective of the society. If you are a worker, you would obviously associate industrial relations with better wages, safety at workplace, job security, and training at workplace. On the other hand, industrial relations for an employer are all about productivity, conflict resolution and employment laws.

Employee Relations

‘Employee relations’ is a concept that is being preferred over the older industrial relations because of the realization that there is much more at the workplace than industrial relations could look or cover. In general, employee relations can be considered to be a study of relations between employees as well as employer and employees so as to find ways of resolving conflicts and to help in improving productivity of the organization by increasing motivation and morale of the workers. The field is concerned with providing information to employees regarding the goals of the organization so that they have a better understanding of the aims and policies of the

management. Employees are also informed about their poor performances and ways and means to correct performance. Employee relations also take care of grievances and the problems of the employees and let them know all about their rights and what to do in case of discrimination.

What is the difference between Industrial Relations and Employee Relations?

- Though it was industrial relations that came into existence earlier, it is employee relations that is increasingly being used to refer to workplace relations these days.
- Falling union memberships around the world have made people realize that relations between employers and employees are more important than the focus given to these relations by industrial relations.
- It is human beings called employees that form the backbone of all operations in an organization and the study of relations between employees and employers are more important than the laws and institutions that govern relations at the workplace.

Joint consultation

Joint consultation, or cooperation between employers and employees, is prescribed either in the **Act on Co-operation within Undertakings**, in sectoral agreements between the central confederations or in sectoral agreements, depending on the industry.

Purposes

- To **further co-operation** between the employer and the personnel and among members of personnel
- To provide personnel with the opportunity to **influence matters** relating to their work and workplace and
- To **develop the operations** of companies and corporations and their working conditions

Joint consultation aims **to promote a positive atmosphere** at work, **enable change** and increase the personnel's **readiness to accept change**. These objectives are best achieved by **continuous negotiation** between the employees and the employer.

Joint consultation is **an essential part of successful management**. Providing information and communicating the objectives and achievements of joint consultation to the personnel is vitally important – before and after the cooperation procedure.

Matters discussed

The purpose of joint consultation is to allow personnel to **participate in decision-making** before the matter is settled, that is, already at the preparatory stage. At this stage, it is still possible to **discuss the grounds** for and **effects** of the matter in question, and any **alternatives** there may be.

According to the **Act on Co-operation within Undertakings** and the joint consultation agreements, **the employer must inform the personnel** of issues such as the company's development perspectives and economic situation and provide sufficient information to enable the matter to be dealt with. The Act and the central and sectoral agreements contain more detailed information on what additional matters are to be settled by means of the joint consultation procedure.

Parties

The parties to joint consultation are **the employer and the personnel**. Joint consultation can be either direct or representative.

Direct joint consultation

Issues about work and the work community may be discussed by the supervisors and personnel. Joint meetings are arranged at the workplace for this purpose. Direct joint consultation is also a part of daily routines, management and good supervisory work.

Representative joint consultation

Instead of direct communication, joint consultation may be carried out by a separately appointed cooperation body, to which the personnel elect their own representatives. Personnel representatives are usually shop stewards and occupational safety ombudsmen.

Worker Participation in Management Decision Making A draft prepared for Conference on International Evidence Commission on the Future of Worker-Management Relations prepared by Haruo Shimada Professor, Keio University Tokyo, Japan February 6, 1994

I. Introduction This draft paper explains the structure and types of worker participation in Japanese industry and corporations briefly and discusses benefits of such a system to workers, management, industry, and economy as a whole.

II. The structure of worker participation Worker participation in Japanese companies is practiced most visibly and formally through the scheme of joint consultation. This is the system where representatives of both employees (usually union representatives) and management participate. The main objective of the joint consultation system is to share information between workers and management on a relatively broad range of issues relating to corporate management and working conditions. This is the place to share information and discuss issues and not the place for bargaining. The joint consultation system is instituted in many companies. In fact, the majority, more than 70 percent, of Japanese companies are said to have this system in some form or other. The system is spontaneous, and neither required or prescribed by the law. This system coexists in many companies side by side with collective bargaining. The frequency of this system tends to vary with the size of the firm: the larger the firm the greater the likelihood of joint consultation. The coverage of this system seems to be greater than the collective bargaining system. Even in small companies, where no union exists, this system tends to exist although in a somewhat informal form of worker representation. The joint consultation system (JC) is organized at various levels of corporate organization, and beyond to the industry level. In a large corporation which has a number of plants, the JC is organized at the corporate level, plant level, and workshop level. At the workshop there usually are informal groups, which also perform de facto function of worker participation in an informal way. Beyond the level of individual corporations, there often exist some form of joint consultation for industry and economy, often involving the government.

./•> The historical background of the JC may deserve attention. The JC was proposed in 1950s, most notably by some progressive labor scholars and more systematically the Japan Productivity Center, which started in 1955. Japanese labor management relations in the previous period, the decade in the wake of the end of World War II, was highly conflictive and adversarial. Most major companies suffered from bitter labor strife and losses due to strikes. Labor movements in those days were dominated by militant leaders who were encouraged by the liberal policy of the occupation

authority led by General Douglas MacArthur in the first place, and later by the influence of Communists. Labor management relations were regulated by the Trade Union Law, and Labor Management Relations Adjustment Law, both of which were modeled after the Wagner Act. Having suffered from bitter struggles, both management and some union leaders sought to create some form of communication and information sharing between labor and management, aside from the system of collective bargaining. Professor Fujubayashi Keizo, of Keio University, a pioneering scholar of labor-management relations, described that the JC represents a cooperative aspect of labor-management relations, while collective bargaining represents a confrontational aspect of labor-management relations. The Japan Productivity Center promoted this system because they thought that productivity improvement could be attained most effectively on the basis of better mutual understanding of the goal and methodology of productivity improvement by labor and management.

III. Types of worker participation

There are as many types of worker participation as organizational levels where worker participation is practiced in some form. Let me explain first three basic forms of joint consultation system within a typical large manufacturing firm, and then proceed to explain more informal systems of de facto worker participation at the workshop, and a formal joint consultation at industry or economy level.

Corporate level worker participation: In a large Japanese corporation, there usually exists a formal system of joint consultation, where union leaders and top corporate executives participate and discuss a broad range of issues relating economy, industry, and management prospects sharing relevant information. The JC is held regularly, say monthly or several times a year.

Plant level worker participation: The system and the way it operates are basically comparable to the one at the corporate level, except that in this case, representatives of both labor and management are from within the plant, and the scope of issues discussed is more geared to plant specific topics.

Workshop level worker participation: The system of worker participation tends to be less formal, but more closely related to issues of the workshop. Topics to be discussed are more closely tied to day-to-day problems such as transfer, job assignment, training, holidays, shift systems, etc. Workshop union committee men and first-line supervisors play critical roles in resolving workshop issues through de facto joint consultation. There are more informal forms of worker participation at the workshop. Workers voices are heard and reflected in day-to-day decision making at the workshop. This kind of function is played through a variety of channels: sometimes through informal groups, other times through QC (Quality Circle) activities, and still

other occasions through interactions among workers, first-line irregular small meetings and personal consultations at the workshop. Through such activities, many problems-ranging from working conditions to production methods which directly affect individual workers are consulted, discussed, and resolved. On the other side of the organizational ladder, namely, at the level of the industry or economy, there often exist relatively formal schemes of joint consultation or "worker participation. Industry association representatives often meet labor union representatives to discuss various matters relating to industry performance, prospects, and policy issues. The government offices in charge of particular industries often organize formal meetings where both management and labor representatives attend and discuss various issues of common interest. This kind of conference or meetings are also organized at the level of total industry or economy, either with or without government representatives. They discuss and share information on more macro economic and industry issues and also macro labor conditions.

IV. Benefits

Productivity and quality improvements: Worker participation of various forms at various levels as described above has contributed greatly to promote productivity and quality improvements at the workshop, company and industry. Productivity improvement has been attained through both cost cutting and introducing new technologies. Quality improvement has been attained by increasing care and control of workers and also implementing new production methods. In either case, the most critical was the understanding, sharing of goals, and active and responsible involvement of workers. Increased productivity and improved quality of products contributed not only to management ³ but also to workers in the form of higher wages and security of employment.

Labor adjustment: With changes in business conditions, changes in production structure, and introduction of new technology, work loads and work assignments need to be altered. The consequent labor adjustment may require transfer of workers to new jobs, new workshops or to new plants somewhere else, if not dismissals. Such labor adjustment plans are normally discussed first at the table of joint consultation before actually put into practice. Usually, the total plan of adjustment is presented and discussed at the corporate level joint consultation, and after reaching agreement, broken down plans more specific to plants or workshops are discussed at joint consultation of relevant levels. These adjustment plans are often negotiated at collective bargaining. However, these plans are almost always disclosed, explained and discussed at joint consultation tables prior to be picked up at collective bargaining. Through this process, relevant information is shared somewhat more in advance and more in detail also

with contextual information so that both workers and employers can prepare and adjust for changes more smoothly. Adaptation to economic changes: The complex system of worker participation and information sharing of various forms and at various levels, as described above, has served the purpose of moderating shocks of economic changes and provided more room for both management and workers to prepare to adapt such changes. With cooperation of workers, companies, and industries have been able to adjust wages and working hours more flexibly, thereby maintain employment more stably. This has been beneficial both to industry and economy with a long-term perspective, and to workers in the sense of assuring them employment security.

Employee Involvement And Participation Management Essay

The key commercial asset for business enterprises is their staff, since all staff needs to take some active part in developing, marketing, delivering products or services.

Employee involvement is informing and consulting employees about aspects of decision making.

Employee participation is involving employees (often via their representatives) in the decision making machinery of the organization.

Employee involvement and participation in organization leads good outcomes for the organization. When any management take decisions they have to involve the participation of employee in it because by doing this management come to know deeply about the outcomes of their decision that how far decision they are going to have good or bad effect on organization. If workforce is happy and committed towards the work, that organization can never bankrupt. By involving employees in decisions show not only how important employees are for organization but also motivate employees by making them the part of the decisions.

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The purpose of this essay is providing evidences that show how far involvement and participation of employees in organization is important and how this leads good outcomes both for organization and individuals.

In this essay we will discuss the importance of employee's participation in organization. In last we will summaries the key point of the essay and will draw a conclusion.

Define

According to the Gennard & Judge employee participation is "concern the extent to which employees, often via their representatives, are involved in the decision making machinery of the organization. This includes joint consultation, collective bargaining and worker representation on the board."

"Employee involvement describes a wide range of policies and techniques for informing and consulting employees about or associating them with, one or more aspects of running an organization." By John Marks

Employee

Participation &

Involvement

Employee

Involvement

Employee

Voice

Employee

Participation

Empowerment

Employee

Involvement

Techniques

Industrial

Democracy

Consultation

Employee's involvement concentrates mainly on individual employees and the degree to which they can be encouraged to identify with the goals of the organizations. Employee participation which concern the extent to which employee's are involved (via their representatives) in management decision making.

Here are some evidences which clearly show how employee involvement and participation is important for both employee and an organization.

this generate commitment to the organization

When employees will be involved in all activities of the organization they will be more committed towards work and organization. Because this will make them feel that how important they are for the organization and now it's their duty to give their best to the company.

this help the organization improve performance, especially in the face of the change

Employee involvement plays a major role in to improve the organization performance. When employees are involved and participated in the organization they come to know all about the organization like what are the strength and weakness of the organization. When employees will be involved in the decision making process they may bring new and fresh ideas which help the management to solve the problem. A productivity of the motivated employees is always very high so when all employees will be committed and motivated the performance of the company will be increased

This enable the organization to better meet changing customer requirements.

This is very important in organizations who directly deal with customers like call centers or retailing stores like Asda, Tesco. Rather than top management employee of these organization remain in contact with customers so they what customers want in different time and in different

areas. By involving employees in their decision making process, management of the company know widely about the changing requirements of customers towards company and who can they full and can deal with customers expectations more effectively.

this improve challenge and satisfaction of the work experience

When employees are asked to tell their problems or recommendations about their work, not only lead motivation among employees but also develop their opinions and potentials which make their work experience more satisfy and effective.

this aid organization in attracting and retaining skilled labor

An organization can retain and attract skilled labor by involving them in their activities. An employee always want work in that particular organization where they find democracy at work place and they are free to explore their potentials and can resist any thing wrong or what they don't want. In this way not only skilled employees will be remain in company but also this will attract skilled employees more.

this develop the business awareness of labor at all levels

By participating in organization activities like decision making employees come to know all aspects of the company. They come to know what is financial condition of the company or is company is going in profit or loss. In short words, employees become more aware about the company which is good both for employees and company.

Employee's involvement and participation increase the employee incentives and accountabilities through tying rewards to company performance and profitability and this also marginalize trade unions.

There are many ways to get employees involved in an organization-

By changing the structure and arrangements of the work

By changing the incentives

By changing the relationship, through more participative leadership and informality.

Types of employee's involvement

There are three types of participation in which employee participate which are representative participation, quality circle, and employee's stock ownership plans.

What is Counselling?

Many people will, at some point in their lives, find themselves in the role of a counsellor without having a true understanding of the concept of counselling or what the role of the professional counsellor entails.

There is a big difference between a professional counsellor and a person who uses some counselling skills as part of their role, for example their role as a friend or colleague. A professional counsellor is a highly trained individual who is able to use a different range of counselling approaches with their clients.

This page defines and introduces the concept of counselling and the role of a counsellor.

'Counselling' can be a confusing term - it often has different meanings for different people.

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (9th Edition) gives at least two definitions of counselling, which appear to be conflicting, adding to potential confusion:

“give advice to (a person) on social or personal problems, especially professionally.”

and

“the process of assisting and guiding clients, especially by a trained person on a professional basis, to resolve especially personal, social, or psychological problems and difficulties.”

Counselling is:

- The process that occurs when a client and counsellor set aside time in order to explore difficulties which may include the stressful or emotional feelings of the client.
- The act of helping the client to see things more clearly, possibly from a different viewpoint. This can enable the client to focus on feelings, experiences or behaviour, with a goal to facilitating positive change.
- A relationship of trust. Confidentiality is paramount to successful counselling. Professional counsellors will usually explain their policy on confidentiality, they may, however, be required by law to disclose information if they believe that there is a risk to life.

Counselling is Not:

- Giving advice.
- Judgemental.
- Attempting to sort out the problems of the client.
- Expecting or encouraging a client to behave in a way in which the counsellor may have behaved when confronted with a similar problem in their own life.
- Getting emotionally involved with the client.
- Looking at a client's problems from your own perspective, based on your own value system.

Counselling and Psychotherapy

Both '*psychotherapy*' and '*counselling*' are terms that are used to describe the same process. Both terms relate to overcoming personal difficulties and working towards positive changes.

Counselling is a **helping approach** that highlights the emotional and intellectual experience of a client, how a client is feeling and what they think about the problem they have sought help for.

Psychotherapy, however, is based in the **psychodynamic approach** to counselling - it encourages the client to go back to their earlier experiences and explore how these experiences effect their current 'problem'.

A psychotherapist, therefore, helps the client to become conscious of experiences which they were previously unaware of. Counsellors, however, are less likely to be concerned with the past experiences of the client and are generally trained in a **humanistic approach**, using techniques from client-centred therapy.

See our page: [Counselling Approaches](#) for more information about psychodynamic, humanistic and behavioural approaches to counselling.

The Role of the Counsellor

First and foremost the counsellor is aware that no two people are alike. No two people understand the same language in the same way; their understanding will always be linked to their personal experience of the world. Therefore, during the counselling process, it is important that the counsellor does not try to fit clients into his/her idea of what they should be and how they should act.

The role of the counsellor is to enable the client to explore many aspects of their life and feelings, by talking openly and freely. Talking in such a way it is rarely possible with family or friends, who are likely to be emotionally involved and have opinions and biases that may be detrimental to the success of the counselling. It is important that the counsellor is **not** emotionally involved with the client and does not become so during counselling sessions. The counsellor neither judges, nor offers advice. The counsellor gives the client an opportunity to express difficult feelings such as anger, resentment, guilt and fear in a confidential environment.

The counsellor may encourage the client to examine parts of their lives that they may have found difficult or impossible to face before. There may be some exploration of early childhood experiences in order to throw some light on why an individual reacts or responds in certain ways in given situations. This is often followed by considering ways in which the client may change such behaviours.

Effective counselling reduces confusion, allowing the client to make effective decisions leading to positive changes in their attitude and/or behaviour. Effective counselling is not advice-giving

and is not acting on someone else's behalf (these are more the roles of a life coach). The ultimate aim of counselling is to enable the client to make their own choices, reach their own decisions and to act upon them accordingly.

Counselling Skills

Communication skills are obviously of utmost importance to counsellors, we have lots of further pages covering these skills including: **active listening**, **clarification**, **reflection** and **effective questioning skills**.

The counsellor will attempt to build a certain amount of **rapport** with their client, but not to an extent that would allow them to become emotionally involved.

Counsellors need to be empathetic, seeing things from the client's point of view, rather than sympathetic (feeling sorry for their clients). Empathy can help the counsellor to ask appropriate questions and lead the client to positive conclusions. See our page: **What is Empathy?** for more.