

Labor movement

[Business](#), [Employment](#)



Labor movements is a term that refers to a group of working people who have come together so as to fight for better working terms from their employers. Labor movements started as early as the 18th century and they were faced with a lot of resistance from both the government and other institutions who were opposed to the idea. Some people share experiences and share the same interests and as a result they tend to come against others whose interests are different from theirs. This leads to people with the same ideas coming and together and fighting for their own welfare hence leading to the creation of labor movements.

Formation of labor movements even in the early days was faced with several challenges. The major hindrance to these movements is their lack of power to negotiate properly for the workers. Once a workers union has been formed its main duty is to negotiate for better terms for its members but this is not usually an easy task. In America, there's a process through which a workers union can negotiate with employers for better terms and it's known as 'collective bargaining'. For a union to be recognized by the employer it must be an elected one or the employer may recognize it voluntarily.

This act requires the employer to bargain in what is known as 'good faith' and this clearly proves to be unfair and not friendly to the labor unions since the employer is not under any pressure to agree to the workers demands but the agreement reached must also be favorable to him. The terms of this process are not also friendly to workers as it provides that all workers including even those who are not members of the union must bargain through this union and at no time can the employer negotiate with individual employees.

Whenever negotiations are taking place and the two parties need to come to an agreement, it's usually a nightmare for the employees' representatives. This is the case mostly when there needs to be a written agreement between the employees and the employers because the employers bargain without any commitment or willingness to reach an agreement .

The employers engage in a hide and seek game with the labor unions . In most cases they cancel meetings with the employees unions and in some cases, they may agree to minor proposals or proposals that are of little importance to the employees while giving considerations to others that are of little importance to the union members . Another hindrance to the labor movement is the refusal by employers to offer counterproposals to the proposals of the unions and they sometimes come up with new ones just when it appears like the two parties are reaching an agreement also in some cases they take back on some agendas that had already been agreed upon.

These types of delays are only intended to frustrate the efforts of the unions and eventually force them to give up on their demands. The labor laws in many countries do not provide adequate restrictions or measures to stop these actions by the employers which can be said to be unethical and in bad faith. The labor unions some times become demoralized due to pressure they get from the employees who are always looking upon it to negotiate with the employers on their behalf.

A good example is a case where the union goes to court only for the ruling to take too long to pass the judgment and the employers takes advantage of this by putting the blame on the unwillingness or the lack of commitment

from the union. During these delays and other hindrances to the employee's justice, some of the union members may quit, get sick, or even die and this only serves to weaken the union. The law is mainly to blame for all the woes and problems facing workers unions in many parts of the world.

This weakness can be seen in cases where the court rules in favor of the employees because the employer is not ordered to pay any monetary fines but is just to go back to the negotiating table with the employees. Mostly, majority of the cases that are forwarded by employees to the courts are ruled in favor of the employers and this discourages new members from joining the union and all that the union gets from such cases is just recognition.

The growth of labor unions during the 19th century

The growth of unions during this time took a different direction from what was previously known. Before this time, only skilled laborers or workers were allowed to join unions hence locking their counterparts who were not skilled out of any workers union that could voice their grievances. Before this time too, most of the labor unions were made up of specific ethnic groups and they also allowed female employees to join the union unlike in the past where females were locked out of any unions.

The old tactics of applying militant like tactics so as to voice grievances were done away with and the new generation of labor unions embraced the new approach of using negotiations as a tool in fighting for their rights. This didn't work for long since soon afterwards, there rose the IWW (Industrial Workers

of the World) which didn't like the approach used previously and it advocated actions like mass actions and strikes to forward the workers grievances. This new union didn't discriminate anyone and it was made up of workers (skilled and non skilled) and it also didn't discriminate members on either race or gender.

This new union fought for the freedom of speech for workers which were not allowed there before. Later afterwards, there rose NLRA which came into an agreement with the government. The agreement saw both parties agree that, employees were to forward their complains through unions instead of taking direct actions.

In 1950s labor unions became more powerful and were able to negotiate with large companies through a small number of union officials and the members were notified later after the final details of the agreement had been reached. The workers desisted from mass actions and embraced this new idea. Anyway, the union could call strikes anytime the employers showed unwillingness to listen to them.

Since this union brought together almost all workers, the employers had little or no workers to replace those who were on strike and so they couldn't break it. Currently, things have changed in favor of the employers. This change can be attributed to slack labor markets and unfair legal setups. Many modern companies do not encourage labor unions and do not fear actions like strikes since they see them as opportunities to hire replacements. The advancement in technology has also played a role in collapsing of labor unions since machines have taken jobs that were previously done by people.

The most effective tool that the labor unions have been left with is negotiations. For good results to be realized, the union needs to establish unity among its members and prepare a document that outlines its goals, and a timetable for the actions it plans to take. These are essential in case the union is engaged by a potential employer over an employment contract. Modern labor laws, unlike the ancient ones, differentiate between mandatory and permissive subjects of bargaining. Lastly, when the terms of the contract between the labor union and the employer have been finalized, the two parties sign a collective bargaining agreement which serves as the law throughout the duration of the contract.

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