

Industrial relations



The concept of 'unions' in the 1980s has given a great impetus to the employees to fight for their rights. The capability of unions to generate collective bargaining system through large scale membership within their unions has been a good measure against the monopoly of the big corporate houses. It gives a fair chance to the erred employee and the new HR strategy encourages the union to promote membership so that management can also resolve contentious issues with them.

The role of union leaders has become critical to the wider interest of the human capital employed across the organizations. The collective bargaining of the union has greatly facilitated the welfare of the workforce and has promoted their interest amongst the management. According to Claude Bernard, 'Art is I; Science is We' (Bernard). Indeed, the strategic leadership of the management and the union significantly promote better relationship to maintain smooth operation. Like science, the union leaders are much more informed and constantly make efforts to improve and improvise relationship between the employee and employer and ensure that workforce is not exploited. They strike hard bargain with the management in the interest of the working class.

Then again, one can broadly define art as a creative expression of oneself. It is individualistic and normally confined to the interest of one person, even though it might have significance for others. The science, on the other hand, is not exclusive and the outcome of scientific experiments has direct impact on people at large and applies universally. Indeed, in science, what affects one person, has the same concern for others also. This works best for labor unions because if the union fights for the injustice of one employee in an organization, the result of that negotiation applies for others also.

This has specially become significant in the contemporary times of recession when businesses are going in for large lay off of the workforce. The repercussion of loss of job for one person is as traumatic as for others. So the unions across the regions and nations are working hard towards coming come up with creative forms of negotiations to wards of employees lay off. A case in point is the role of unions in Virginia where ‘ unions have played a major role in local races, including making a \$50, 000 contribution to Fairfax County Supervisor Sharon Bulovas campaign for board chairman. And they are preparing to dedicate significant resources to this years hotly contested campaign for governor’ (Somashkhar & Craig, 2009).

That is why successful collective bargaining of the union leaders should no longer be viewed as an ‘ art’. It is far more appropriate today to refer to it as a ‘ science’ as the leaders not only equipped to think laterally but their negotiating skill heavily relies on effective communication that helps to resolve grievances and differences amicably. Indeed the very concept of collective bargain has emerged from the fact that ‘.. the act of successful conflict resolution begins with the way the problem is examined’ (Erickson) and negotiations are based on thorough evaluation of varying aspects of the issues and aspects of employee welfare.

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Reference

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