

**V. Janardhan:** *Industrial Relations in India: Towards a new socio-political approach.* Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2016, xxiv+199 pp., Price not listed (hb). ISBN 978-81-250-6232-2

The relationship within industrial settings plays significant role in industrial production, development and benefits to all stakeholders (employer and employee). A sound human resource policy and trust between two stakeholders is essential. Any deviation in this trust leads to various forms of conflicts- strike, lockout, Gherao and above all loss of man days. The present book has nicely depicted, explained and critically evaluated these relations in Indian context. It comprises six chapters including the concluding commentary and specially focuses on three chapters with numerous empirical case studies in Indian context. First two chapters tell about the concepts and existing theories related to industrial relations.

There are many books on industrial relations in India but this book is finely crafted, eloquently argued and fits theory to practice that makes it distinct and useful to subject like management particularly human resource, industrial sociology and other related areas. It explores the existing industrial relation encompassing agrarian, industrial and service sectors in Indian context and unravels how multi-disciplinary links influence the industrial relation. Industrial relation had passes through different phases after independence in India, from few manufacturing industries to diverse industrial growth, massive growth in size, unskilled labour to highly skilled labour force and most important the integration of global market with globalization. Review of literature covers a wide array of studies, western theories and thinkers view on the role of trade unions, their collective strategies and its indispensability, union challenges to management control, workplace bargaining and trade union power, and most important about MNCs- industrial relations in multinational companies. The change in industries has influenced the change in Industrial relations owing to many legal safeguards having been enacted, active labour unions and consciousness of rights often lead to conflict in many industrial settings. Therefore it becomes a very important area to study the relations between employer and employee for higher industrial growth and development.

V. Janardhan, the author of this book, describes how social relationship and norms becomes contract and law in industrial society. In this way he tries his best to analyze the foundations of law and its relevance in maintaining a sound industrial relation. This book discusses how the existence of ethics plays a significant role and becomes the bases of contractual society without which no legal and other conventional safeguard and protective mechanism could readdress the industrial relations. It also deals a detailed account of historical perspective of law and labour issues in Indian context and cited many important case studies pertaining disputes and outcome. This detailed analysis is very important for entrepreneurs, managers and labour unions to understand the historicity of Indian labour laws, case and important decisions. We find very few books which combine both theory and practice with empirical case studies that attracts wider readers. Hence it covers wide variety of readership base human resource managers, labour unions, policy makers, academician, researchers students as it deals beyond social and political aspects.

Termination and retrenchment faced by large number of employees due to various reasons creates disastrous impact due to sudden loss of employment results to conflicting industrial relationship. Indian employers have responded to the restrictive retrenchment laws in several

ways including the greater use of contract, temporary and/or casual labour, the use of golden handshakes, and setting up production in states where labour is not organized. Any anomaly in retrenchment laws, which addresses the basic functioning of companies, needs the immediate attention of lawmakers. Special attention has been given to these issues in this book. The author describes the existing industrial laws; a variety of important cases of retrenchments with detailed analysis provides a important sources for different stake holder of industries. It's unfortunate that many times loss of labour/employment is supported by judicial rationalization or reasoning with some social safeguards. The author has cited important court's decision with case studies on termination of services due to loss of confidence in an employee, inefficiency or misconduct does not amount to retrenchment.

Similarly, he describes termination for unauthorized absence from duty, discontinuance of service of casual, daily employees, invalid initial appointment, compulsory retirement, and closure or transfer of business have been held to be retrenchment. After economic liberalization and globalization such cases were more visible in India and abroad owing to withdrawal of the Trade Union and the Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 1988 and introduced a Bill on Workers, Participation in Management in 1990, failure of trade union leaders and employer's response. Many studies reveal the decreasing trends in disputes; the number of disputes caused by indiscipline is the highest among various reasons. The book covers these aspects since beginning and detailed analysis given in chapter four and five.

The book discusses in depth the relationship in industrial society and special focus has given to bilateral/ trilateral relations. Between employer and employee many agencies are directly and indirectly involved like state (legislature, executive and judiciary), other concerned trade union leaders act as facilitator, however, state never intervenes directly. This is a good source for many such case studies depicting these relations. Apart from these, it also includes the success stories of sick industries where management has lost any hope of recovery and workers' collective effort has revived the sick industries. All case studies indicate with year, only few case studies specially court cases may not find year in chapters but are given in the reference with heading court cases.

The author seems to have a long association with the subject of industrial relations of more than 25 years, which has reflected through his initial research (both pre-doctoral and doctoral research) and continuous dedication through teaching and research in the subject. The book is a brilliant exposition of existing industrial relations among labour unions, management and state. It argues two perspectives to visualize

industrial relations – one of social scientist and other is managerial practice which resulted in a good mix of theory and practice.

*Pradeep Kumar*

School of Extension and Development Studies,  
Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi  
<email-pradeep@ignou.ac.in>