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Trade Union

1. Meaning and Definition of Trade Union

2. Objectives of Trade Union

3. Functions

4. Benefits

Meaning and Definition of Trade Union

A trade union is an association of workers formed with the object of improving the conditions of workers. It is formed for protecting the interests of workers. Workers have little bargaining capacity when they are unorganized. The trade union movement began against the exploitation of workers by certain managements under the capitalist system. Labour unions or trade unions are organizations formed by workers from related fields that work for the common interest of its members. They help workers in issues like fairness of pay, good working environment, hours of work and benefits. They represent a cluster of workers and provide a link between the management and workers. The purpose of these unions is to look into the grievances of workers and present a collective voice in front of the management. Hence, it acts as the medium of communication between the workers and management. Regulation of relations, settlement of grievances, raising new demands on behalf of workers, collective bargaining and negotiations are the other key principle functions that these trade unions perform. **The Indian Trade Union Act, 1926**, is the principle act which controls and regulates the mechanism of trade unions. In India, political lines and ideologies influence trade union movements.

The trade union has been defined by different authors as follows

(1) Webb

Trade union may be defined as “a continuous association of wage earners for the purposes of maintaining or improving the conditions of their working lives.”

(2) Lester

“A trade union is an association of employees designed primarily to maintain or improve the condition of employment of its members

(3) Indian Trade Union Act 1926:

“Any combination whether temporary or permanent formed primarily for the purpose of regulating the relations between the workmen and employers”.

Objectives of Trade Union

The following are the objectives of trade union

- (1) To improve the economic lot of workers by securing them better wages.
- (2) To secure for workers better working conditions.
- (3) To secure bonus for the workers from the profits of the organization.
- (4) To ensure stable employment for workers and resist the schemes of management which reduce employment opportunities.
- (5) To provide legal assistance to workers in connection with disputes regarding work and payment of wages.
- (6) To protect the jobs of labour against retrenchment and layoff etc.

(7) To ensure that workers get as per rules provident fund, pension and other benefits.

(8) To secure for the workers better safety and health welfare schemes.

(9) To secure workers participation in management.

(10) To inculcate discipline, self-respect and dignity among workers.

(11) To ensure opportunities for promotion and training.

(12) To secure organizational efficiency and high productivity.

(13) To generate a committed industrial work force for improving productivity of the system.

Functions of Trade Unions

(1) Collective bargaining with the management for securing better work environment for the employees.

(2) Providing security to the workers and keeping check over the hiring and firing of workers.

(3) Helping the management in redressal of grievances of workers at appropriate level.

(4) If any dispute/matter remains unsettled referring the matter for arbitration.

(5) To negotiate with management certain matters like hours of work, fringe benefits, wages and medical facilities and other welfare schemes.

(6) To develop cooperation with employers.

(7) To arouse public opinion in favour of workers.

Benefits of Trade Union

Workers join trade union because of a number of reasons as given below:

1. A worker feels very weak when he is alone. Union provides him an opportunity to achieve his objectives with the support of his fellow colleagues.
2. Union protects the economic interest of the workers and ensures a reasonable wage rates and wage plans for them
3. Union helps the workers in getting certain amenities for them in addition to higher wages.
4. Union also provides in certain cases cash assistance at the time of sickness or some other emergencies.
5. Union organize negotiation between workers and management and are instruments for settlement of disputes.
6. Trade union is also beneficial to employer as it organizes the workers under one banner and encourages them follow to peaceful means for getting their demands accepted.
7. Trade union imparts self-confidence to the workers and they feel that they are an important part of the organization.

8. It provides for promotion and training and also helps the workers to go to higher positions.

9. It ensures stable employment for the workers and opposes the motive of management to replace the workers by automatic machines.

10. Workers get an opportunity to take part in the management and oppose any decision which adversely affects them.