
CHAPTER - IV

Role of Trade Unions in MSRTC

CHAPTER FOUR / ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS IN MSRTC, SANGLI DIVISION.

4.1 Role of Trade Unions in Wage Determination:

Wages are the most important factor on the part of the employees as well as the management. The employees always demand more wages while the management denies to pay higher wages on certain grounds. Wages are regarded as an important reason for dispute between the employees and the management. As regards the MSRTC, wages are determined by its Central Office in consultation with the recognized trade unions. The Trade Unions in the MSRTC control wages and the determination of the dearness allowance through the means of collective bargaining. It cannot be denied that Unionisation, with its impact upon wages, has tended towards preventing the wage rate from being lowered, if not raised.

Two important settlements were made for this purpose. The first settlement was effective from 1.4.1980 and the second one was effective from 1.4.1980. Under these settlements, various benefits were granted, including the revision of pay-scales, increase in dearness allowance, medical facilities, provident fund, gratuity, various other allowances, leave travel concessions, free-pass concessions, etc. Settlement takes place after every four years.¹ The next settlement would be effective from 1.4.1984-31.3.1988.

In early 1989, negotiations with different Unions were held during the year, mainly for a new settlement, and

it was signed on 21.7.1989. The settlement is for the period from 1.4.1988 to 31.3.1992 in respect of Class-III and IV employees.²

In order to ensure that various settlements are observed and the real benefits are given to the employees, a 'Joint Committee' is appointed to deal with all matters and disputes arising out of these settlements. The Committee has to ensure that cordial relations are maintained between the employees and the management. The decisions taken in these meetings are binding on both the parties.³

4.2 Role of Trade Unions in Labour Welfare:

Labour welfare is an essential part of the social welfare. It includes providing of opportunities for workmen and their families for healthy life in a broad sense. Labour welfare includes several schemes adopted by the employers and also by the trade unions for the health, safety, education and general upliftment of the employees, which create real motivation to work.

The trade unions are expected to play a vital role in the field of labour welfare. Unfortunately, only a few unions like the Maharashtra State Transport Employees Union (INTUC) and the Maharashtra State Transport Kamgar Sanghathana have done some work in this field.

The Maharashtra State Transport Employees Union (INTUC) has organized co-operative credit societies, housing

societies, consumer co-operative societies, etc. The Union provides funds for contingencies like sickness, death, etc., upto the value of Rs.500/- from its funds for meeting these contingencies. This Union also organizes social and cultural gatherings.

The Castribe Karmachari Sanghathana and the Chalak-Wahak Sanghathana have done very little in this field.

Though the trade unions in the MSRTC have not provided much welfare facilities on their own, they have obtained several labour welfare facilities through settlements. In short, the welfare facilities enjoyed by the employees are the result of the collective efforts of the trade unions.

The following labour welfare facilities are provided by the MSRTC to its employees, mainly through the efforts of the trade unions:

1. Staff Institutes:

Five staff institutes equipped with the facilities of indoor- and outdoor-games are functioning satisfactorily at Central Workshops, Dapodi (Pune), Dhule, Solapur, Ratnagiri and Nasik. In addition to this, there are recreation halls provided in the central office, Bombay, Kurla Stores and the Divisional Office, Thane. The facilities in these recreation halls and the staff institutes are indoor and outdoor games. The facilities of film projector have been provided at Pune, Aurangabad, Kolhapur, Nagpur and the Central Office, Bombay.

2. Labour Welfare Centres:

Labour welfare centres are functioning at 21 different places.

The following major activities are undertaken at these Welfare Centres by a Lady Welfare Instructor, who is in-charge of the Welfare Centre:

1. Montessory classes for the children of the ST employees;
2. Sewing and Embroidery classes for ladies;
3. Cooking demonstrations,
4. Sports events for children of the ST employees;
5. Arranging two picnics in a year for the family members and children of the ST employees.

3. Rest-Rooms:

Rest-rooms have been provided at bus-stands, bus-depots and at the divisional workshops to enable the workers to relax during their rest periods.

4. Medical Facilities:

Medical facilities are provided to the employees of the Corporation. In all, 154 medical dispensaries are functioning under the Honorary Medical Officers assisted by full-time compounders at the divisional headquarters and part-time compounders at depots. The number of cases attended in various dispensaries at Divisions/Units is 1,48,411. The total expenditure on the medical facilities was to the tune of Rs.377.13 lakhs, which is inclusive of the amount of contribution paid to the Employees' State Insurance Scheme, reimbursement of medical expenses, consultation fees, etc. The medical facilities are given to the employees who are not getting medical allowance of Rs.35/- per month. A pathological unit is also functioning at the dispensary at the central office,

Bombay. To encourage family planning, the Corporation paid an amount of Rs.0.88 lakhs to 1396 employees or their spouses who underwent sterilization operations.

5. Housing Facilities:

All efforts are made by the Corporation to provide housing facilities to as many employees as possible. The tenements are constructed under the subsidized industrial housing scheme and allotment of tenement is entrusted to the tenement committee. In all, there are 2,037 tenements. Out of these, 1,274 tenements are occupied by the industrial workers and 763 tenements are occupied by the non-industrial workers.

6. Co-operative Canteen and Co-operative Societies:

Co-operative canteens are functioning in Amravati and Kurla Stores, Nagpur Central Workshop, Yavatmal and Sangli.

The co-operative credit societies are running satisfactorily in Satara, Parbhani, Kolhapur, Wardha, Beed, Pune, Solapur, Sangli, Bhandara, Amravati, Nagpur, Chandrapur, Jalgaon, Raigad, Aurangabad, Yavatmal, Ratnagiri and the Central Office, Bombay.

7. Prizes and Scholarships:

In accordance with the prize scheme, 50 prizes are awarded in the order of merit to the children of the ST employees who secure 60% or more marks in the SSC or equivalent examinations as follows:

1. 10 prizes of Rs.150.00 each,
2. 10 prizes of Rs.120.00 each,

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3. 15 prizes of Rs. 90.00 each,

4. 15 prizes of Rs.60.00 each.

An amount of Rs.4,950.00 has been awarded as prizes to the children of the employees.

8. Holiday Homes:

During the year 1987-88, 111 employees with their families have taken the advantage of the holiday homes provided by the Corporation at Mahabaleshwar Hill Station.

9. Free Travel Passes:

a) Duty free passes:

During the year 1987-88, 22,240 monthly duty free passes from the place of residence to the place of duty were issued to the employees.

b) Family free passes:

The facility of free travel by ST buses to the places wherever the buses are operated by the Corporation is granted to the employees and their families twice a year. The number of such passes issued to the employees during the year 1987-88 was 2.36 lakhs.

10. Advances:

The Corporation grants advances to its employees for purchasing bicycles, cars, etc. as well as for purchasing or constructing residential houses. Festival advance is also given once in a year.

11. Best Worker Award:

The best worker's Welfare Award has been received by 12 ST employees from the Maharashtra Labour Welfare Board.

The Maharashtra Welfare Board has awarded Rs.500/- each to these best workers who have also been given cash prizes of Rs.75/- each by the Corporation.

12. Inter-Divisional Drama Competition:

The 17th Inter-Divisional Drama Competition was completed successfully. 27 Division/Units participated in this Competition during the year 1987-88. The drama staged by the Raigad Division was judged as the Best Drama during the year.

13. Sports:

Sports are conducted by the Association of the State Road Transport Undertakings. The Association organizes tournaments of table-tennis, badminton, athletics, cricket, kabbadi, etc. The MSRTC has conducted the ASRTU Kabbadi Tournaments at Sangli from 16th to 18th February 1988.

14. Ex-gratia Payments:

The Corporation pays ex-gratia amount to its employees in lieu of bonus, at the rate of 8.33% with a ceiling of Rs.1,600/- to all eligible employees of the Corporation.

15. Allowances:

Under various settlements, the employees are granted various allowances like line-allowances, night allowance, washing allowance, night-shift allowance in addition to the normal allowances.⁴

In short, it can be said that there are some welfare activities such as medical facilities, housing facilities, free passes etc., are provided by the MSRTC, for the promotion

protection of employees' interests. Most of the welfare facilities are provided as a result of trade union efforts.

4.3 Role of Trade Unions in Productivity:

Productivity is an aspect of crucial importance in every industrial concern. It is important because it is the only way of lowering the production cost of transport services and thereby lowering the fares. Higher productivity is a key to higher living standards. Higher productivity helps to reduce the cost of production and thus results in increased profits, which help for the expansion of the transport services by expansion of investment. Wages or salaries paid to the workers are generally based on the productivity of the workers. Increased productivity means increased wages. It leads to shorter working hours, improvement in working conditions, more leisure to enjoy the goods and services and greater work satisfaction.

Productivity does not aim at harder work, but more productive work. It is not through increasing the workloads, but it is a multi-pronged attack on wages and it takes, in its stride, the objective of improvement of working conditions, avoidance of fatigue and affording greater job satisfaction. There is always a better and easier way of doing a job and it is the task of productivity drive to seek that way.⁵

So far as productivity is concerned, trade unions in the MSRTC are helpful in increasing the productivity. Trade unions are an important weapon to maintain smooth and healthy relations between employees and the management. With the

collective efforts of trade unions and management, spread of education, spirit of co-operation, etc., can be cultivated, which ultimately leads to increased productivity.

In the MSRTC, a number of regular meetings are held at Division, Workshop and Depot level, with the Union leaders and the managerial persons to understand the problems in the working and how to solve these problems. The trade Unions are contributing towards increasing the productivity. All the Unions are attempting to develop a spirit of co-operation among the employees, irrespective of the Union rivalry.

In Sangli Division of the MSRTC, meetings are conducted among the Union representatives and the managerial persons to discuss the problems in work and the methods to remove the problems. Normally, meetings with every Union are held once in two months. This system certainly helps to attain higher productivity.

In short, it can be said that if the trade unions play their role effectively and efficiently, higher productivity can be attained certainly.

REFERENCES

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3. Shelke, K.B., op.cit., p.103.
4. Administration Report of MSRTC, 1987-88.
5. Bhagoliwal, T.N. - "Economics of Labour and Social Welfare", p.453.