

An Evaluation of Participative Management in Public Sector Undertakings (A Case Study of NTPC Ltd., Dadri)

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Abstract

Participative Management is an extension of this political process to work place relations. Keeping in view the democratic way of working, Participative Management has become a mandatory situation in developed and developing countries. The concept of Participative Management is based on Human Relations approach to Management which brought about a new set of values to labour and management. Traditionally the concept of Participative Management refers to participation of non-managerial employees in the decision-making process of the organization. The scheme of Participative Management was implemented in the first instance in manufacturing and mining industries whether in the public, private or co-operative sectors. These included factories where there was no manufacturing and only the unit was departmentalized. The scheme applied to those industries where 500 or more workers working on rolls. The concept of Participative Management is viewed by people differently. "There are people who feel that participative management is the tool for solving most industrial relations problems, and that it will even become the underline concept of the future society. So people use the term as the synonym for what they call Industrial Democracy". It is now agreed that genuine Workers' Participation in day to day working of the organization can lead to harmony and higher productivity besides being able to bring out hidden talents in employees and giving the employees an acceptable status. A combination of powerful social, cultural, political, economic and industrial pressures has created world-wide demand for greater participation and democracy. Participative Management is only one of the outcomes of this global trend. In this research paper, evaluated participative management in NTPC Ltd. Dadri has been study. This is a unique power plant of NTPC group which has both coal based thermal plant and gas based thermal plant. Also evaluated various committees form in NTPC, Dadri for effective participation management has also evaluated in this paper.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Participative Management is an essential ingredient of Industrial democracy. Participative Management is also known as 'labour participation' or 'employee participation' in management. In Germany it is known as co-determination while in Yugoslavia it is known as self-management. The International Labour Organization has been encouraging member nations to promote the scheme of Participative Management. The contents and structure of Participative Management is more important and is being debated in all industries to make it a 'best fit' as per their own working conditions. In other words, it can be said that it is a total involvement of people in the organization to bring a democratic culture at the work place. To begin with, the scheme will have to be flexible so as to allow variations to suit local conditions and hence has to be implemented through executive action. Various forms of Participative Management are already in practice in certain units of different industries, particularly in the public sector. Government is, therefore, of the view that the matter should be left to the initiative of the management to evolve a suitable pattern of participation depending upon the nature of each unit. Legislation will be considered after adequate experience is gained. Some of the critics of this scheme say that the participative management policy may not bring the desired results. The present system of management is more appropriate. The workers are not competent to take decisions on a day to day basis. But some other thoughts are also prevailing that 'Participation' in management should be for specific purposes like negotiations on critical issues of wages, settlement of industrial disputes and profit sharing, etc. Workers' participation however can be defined as the method through which workers are able to collectively express their views on the functions of the industry. "The participation results from practices which increase the scope of employees' share of influence in decision making at different tiers of the organizational hierarchy with concomitant assumption of responsibility."

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

Objective of the Research are as under:

- Explain in detail meaning, important factors and various schemes of participative management
- Participative management scheme adopted by Government of India,
- Evaluation of Participative Management in NTPC, Limited.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Both Primary as well as secondary data have used for the purpose of analysis. For primary data, questionnaire is prepared and take personal interviews of the employees and secondary data are collected from books, journals, annual reports and web site of NTPC Limited.

4. IMPORTANT FACTORS INFLUENCING PARTICIPATION

The intensity of participation depends on four factors:

- a) The subject matter of participation.
- b) The level of participation.
- c) The personal characteristics of the individuals who are asked to participate in the decision making and
- d) The extent of participation.

- a) **The subject matter of participation-** By and large, the workers' interest in participation varies with the nature of issues involved in participation. Broadly speaking, there can be two types of issues: Work related and interest-related. Examples of work-related issues are safety, welfare - such as canteen, sports, water-supply, housing, etc. These are the simplest issues. Examples of interest-related issues are wages and sharing of productivity gains. These are the most difficult issues. Workers show greatest interest in the second type of issues.
- b) **Level of participation-** Level of participation is another factor which determines the interest of workers in participation as such. Participation can take place at three levels in an organization-floor level, plant level and corporate level. In big organizations there may be a fourth level also, i.e., the department level, in between the shop floor and the plant. Studies have revealed that most workers want participation at the shop floor level and not at higher levels because they feel that with their knowledge of the work place they can contribute best at that level only.
- c) **Personal characteristics-** Workers' interest in participation is also influenced by certain personal or group characteristics. For example, several research studies have shown that both very low and very high levels of maturity discourage participation. Participation by extremely immature workers is like the blind leading the blind. It is pooling of ignorance. On the other hand, extremely mature workers rarely participate. They resist "group think" because they prefer only the expert in an area to make the decisions. Thus, the effectiveness of Participative Management increases as one moves from low to moderate levels of maturity and then begins to stabilize and finally to decline as workers become high in maturity.
- d) **Extent of participation-** There are four degrees of participation. These are as follows:
 - Communication, i.e., sharing of information with the management about all decisions taken by it.
 - Consultation, i.e., exchanging the opinion and the views with the management before the decisions are taken.
 - Co-determination, i.e., taking joint decisions with the management.
 - Self-management, i.e., enjoying complete autonomy right from decision-making to execution.

5. PARTICIPATIVE MANAGEMENT SCHEME OF 1975 IMPLEMENTED BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Government of India on 30th October, 1975 announced a scheme of workers participation in management which consisted of establishment of Joint Councils and Shop council as part of its 20 point economic programs. The scheme envisages for the establishment of joint councils and shop councils in manufacturing and mining industries employing 500 or more employees in public, private and co-operative sectors. The scheme contemplated participation of workers in the decision-making process in the matters relating to production, productivity, absenteeism, safety measures, general discipline, working conditions and welfare, and overall efficiency of the shop/department.

5.1 Main Features of this Scheme: All decisions of a Shop council as well as of the Joint council shall be on the edifice of the Consensus and not by process of voting. It is non-statutory like JMCs and there is a clear-cut function of these councils. Consensus and time-bound implementation are the tools for arriving at decisions. Thus, the scheme tries to eliminate the chances of direct

interference by outside elements. The decisions are required to be implemented within one month. The scheme provides for participation of workers at the shop floor level; otherwise the framework is not materially different from that of WCs and JMCs. It provides for a two-way communication and an exchange of information between the management and the workmen. The very change in the nomenclature of the scheme from participation of workers in management to that of participation of workers in industry makes it more acceptable to employees as the latter are likely to offset some of their misgivings and apprehensions caused by the former. The scheme hits three principal objectives to which the reform of industrial democracy is directed, viz, recovery of individual human rights at the work place; consolidation of social and political freedom (to join a particular union of his own choice without any coercion; and the framing of new industrial system functionally suitable to the country's economy.

- (a) **Joint Council:** The joint council is formed for the whole unit and its membership remains confined to those who are actually engaged in the organization. The tenure of the joint councils is for two years. The Chief executive of the unit becomes its Chairman. Workers members of the council nominate the Vice Chairman. The joint council appoints the Secretary. The Secretary is responsible for discharging the functions of the council. The joint councils will meet once in four months, but the periodicity of the meeting varies from unit to unit, it may be once in a month, quarter etc. The decisions taken at the joint council meetings are by the process of consensus and the management shall implement the decisions within one month. The scheme was implemented by the major units of the central and State governments. The government enlarged the functions of the councils in 1976.
- (b) **Shop Council:** The shop council represents each department or a shop in an unit. Each shop council will consist of an equal number of representatives of employers and workers. The employers representatives will be nominated by the management and must consist of persons from within the unit concerned. The workers representative will be from among the workers of the department or shop concerned. The number of members of each council may be determined by the employers in consultation with the recognized union. The total number of members however, may not generally exceed twelve. The decisions of the shop council are to be taken on the basis of consensus but not by voting. Management has to implement the decisions within one month. The tenure of the shop council is for a period of two years. Members of the shop councils meet at least once in a month. Management nominates the Chairman of the shop council whereas workers members of the council elect the Vice-chairman of the council. The numbers of shop councils to be established in an organization are determined by the employer in consultation with the recognized trade unions/workers of the organization. The decisions of a shop council which have a bearing on another shop will be referred to joint council for consideration and approval.

6. NATIONAL THERMAL POWER CORPORATION, LIMITED

NTPC is India's largest power utility with an installed capacity of 46,653 MW, plans to become a 128,000 MW company by 2032. Established in 1975, NTPC aims to be the world's largest and best power major. The company is committed to generating reliable power at competitive prices in a sustainable manner by optimising the use of multiple energy sources with innovative eco-friendly technologies thereby NTPC is contributing to the economic development of the nation and

upliftment of the society. At NTPC, it begins and ends with people. The company is deeply passionate about ensuring the holistic development of all its employees as distinct individuals and good citizens. Currently approximately 24,546 Employees are working at NTPC. The HR system of NTPC is based on four pillars: - Competence building, Commitment building, Culture building and Systems building. This company believe in the philosophy of 'Grow your own timber'. Their 'Executive Trainee' programme was introduced in 1977 with the objective of raising a cadre of home grown professionals. First Division Post Graduates and Graduate Engineers are hired through nation-wide open competitive examinations and campus recruitments. NTPC is committed to provide the best available work life for its employees. In addition to ensuring safe and aesthetically pleasing work places, NTPC actively encourages a culture of mutual respect and trust amongst peers, superiors and subordinates.

National Capital Power Station (NCPS) Or NTPC Dadri, is the power project to meet the power demand of National Capital Region (India). It has a huge coal-fired thermal power plant and a gas-fired plant and has a small township located in Uttar Pradesh, India for its employees. It is located in Gautam Budh Nagar district of Uttar Pradesh about 25 km from Ghaziabad and about 9 km from Dadri. It is nearly 48 km from New Delhi towards Hapur. The township has an area of about 500 acres over all. NTPC Dadri is a branch of National Thermal Power Corporation, which is a public sector now. It is about 20 km from Ghaziabad via **Badalpur**. NTPC Dadri plant and township are property of NTPC Ltd and were built around 1988-1990.

NTPC Dadri is a unique power plant of NTPC group which has both coal based thermal plant and gas based thermal plant of 1820 MW and 817 MW respectively along with this 5 MW solar plant totalling 2642 MW capacity.

The **coal for the power plant** is sourced from Piparwar Mines, Jharkhand. Source of water for the power plant is Upper Ganga Canal.

The **gas for the power plant** is sourced from GAIL HBJ Pipeline, it also supports HSD as alternate fuel. Source of water for the power plant is Upper Ganga Canal.

- ▶ **Vision:-** To be the World's Leading Power Company, Energizing India's Growth.
- ▶ **Mission:-** Provide Reliable Power and Related Solutions in an Economical, Efficient and Environment Friendly Manner, Driven by Innovation and Agility.

6.1 Importance of the Scheme, Participative Management in NTPC Limited, Dadri

Labour is a very important part of the organization, hence they should be encouraged to participate in decision-making. The participation might occur through various forums and methods. It could be formal or informal. It could be at shop floor level or at board level. The involvement of worker in management decision making is beneficial in the following manner:-

- Effective communications upwards are essential to sound decision making of the top;
- Workers may accept decisions better if they participate in them;
- Workers may work more intelligently if, through participation in decision making, they are better-informed about the reasons for and the intention of the decision;
- Workers may work harder if they share in decisions that affect them;
- Workers' participation may foster a more co-operative attitude amongst workers and management, thus raising efficiency by improving team work and reducing the loss of efficiency arising from Industrial Dispute.

- Workers' participation may act as a spur to managerial efficiency.

6.2 Committee form of Participation at NTPC Limited, Dadri: The NTPC Limited has various Participative Committees for practice of Participative Management which are functioning in the unit. The various committees are as under:-

- (a) Canteen Service Improvement Committee:** The objective of this committee is to check the quality of the food materials that is given to the employers at subsidized rates. In all there are 6 members in this committee, three are management nominees and three are nominated by the recognized union. The committee invites the tenders for the supply of items, approves the quality and settles the price. They also make budget and the prices of the various commodities are fixed by this Committee. The Committee maintains the expenses Register and prepares a profit and loss account every month. Responsibilities are divided among the members for procuring the materials etc. Total inventory of food stock as well as furniture is being maintained by this Committee.
- (b) Labour Welfare Committee:** The Welfare Committee is composed of eight members. Two of them are nominated by the management and six by the recognized trade union. Chief Labour Welfare Officer is the convener of the committee. The scope of the Committee is to provide hygienic conditions in the Labour colony. Books are distributed for children. They manage a school/dispensary and a co-operative store for the welfare of the Labour. The members are responsible for each of the activities.
- (c) Cultural and Sports Committee:** The function of the sports wing is to promote a health environment in the organization. Sports wing provides facilities to the employees interested in sports. There are 14 members in the cultural and sports committee having equal number of representatives from both the management and the recognized union. They organize sport on January 26, August 15 and October 2 every year as well as organizing Ram Lila. The workers participate with full enthusiasm. Picnics or outings are also organized. The funds for all these activities are allocated by the Management.
- (d) Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability Committee:** This Committee has been reconstituted as per the requirements of Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013. This Committee is constituted to formulate and recommend to the Board, Corporate Social Responsibility Policy as per Schedule VII of the Companies Act, 2013 as amended from time to time; to recommend the amount of expenditure to be incurred on the activities specified in the CSR Policy; to monitor the Corporate Social Responsibility Policy of the company from time to time; and any other matter as the Board may delegate from time to time. This Committee formulates and recommend to the Board CSR Policy (including sustainable development) from time to time.
- (e) Remuneration Committee For PRP:** This committee decides the annual bonus/variable pay pool, performance related pay and policy for its distribution across the executives and non-unionized supervisors, within the prescribed limits.
- (f) Safety Committee:** The Committee Comprise of 15 members, seven from management's side and eight from workers' side. The objective of this committee is not only to prevent accidents but also to provide health and security to the employees. The employees working in hazardous and accident prone areas are provided with safety equipment and given the

necessary safety training for developing safety skills and safety education which increases the employees' knowledge about preventing accidents. It also imparts training regarding the basic first aid steps to be taken in case of an occurrence of an accident. Every year "Safety Day" is celebrated by the committee. On this day various competitions like Essay Writing, Poster Making, etc. are held. Prizes are awarded to the winners of these competitions. Safety booklets, badges, calendars are provided to workers on this day.

- (g) **House Keeping Committee:** This Committee was constituted to develop the feeling of keeping the machines and the Shop clean amongst the workers. It consists of 6 members in all. Every year 15 days before Diwali, every department, shops and machines are cleaned by the employees and white washing is done. On Annual Day, 'Best House Keeping Department' is awarded with a cash prize. There can be more than one department eligible for this prize. The decision of the Committee is final.
- (h) **E.S.I. Committee:** Nearly 75% of the total employees are the members of this committee. The employees under the E.S.I. Scheme are known as insured person and are supposed to take their treatment from this scheme in case of illness. In case of accidents, if the insured person is disabled and is unable to perform his routine job, the committee looks after the welfare of such a person and gives compensation to him. The E.S.I. Committee comprises of four members, two from each side i.e., the management and the workers.

6.3 Evaluation of the Scheme in NTPC Limited, Dadri: Participative Management cannot be successful until there are strong, well-knit trade unions, willing to take a responsive view. Then, workers are mostly illiterate and have only vague notions about the participation in management. The management of modern industrial establishments requires expert knowledge and skill in technical, administrative and financial fields, which the workers do not possess at present. If the outsiders represent the workers in the joint-management councils, they will be worse, because an outsider may understand trade unionism and industrial relations, but he cannot understand the management and know the problem of industry which only a worker who works inside the factory or establishment, can do.

The employers do not repose full faith in the workers and may not let them know the 'secrets of trade' without the knowledge of which the workers cannot take effective part in management. Many employers are unwilling to surrender their powers and privileges and where they have adopted the schemes, it is more to hoodwink the workers than any genuine interest in them. Many Labour unions are also afraid that by helping the management, the workers may undermine the class-war ideology, of which many unions are wedded. The question of representation of workers on the Board of Directors has also been sometimes discussed. But such representation will not be helpful. The Board of Directors is generally occupied with questions in which the worker's representatives may not feel much interested and may only be passive observers in the meetings. It has also been alleged that in some units where the experiment has been tried, the employers have dominated the working of the Councils and on account of this experiment; the workers have been denied access to the existing industrial relations machinery of the Government for the redress of their grievances.

On analyzing the primary data collected, compiled and presented in the following tables, it has been proved that the present type of workers' participation in management does not serve the

purpose of achieving its purpose of industrial democracy nor does it help in ensuring the spontaneous involvement and interest of the workers. This has enabled some of the trade union leaders to enjoy a portion of the fruit of the entrepreneur as well as the working class. Most of the workers are not interested in the present type of workers participation, while section of workers is not even aware of it.

Table - 6.1: Table showing the Attitude of Workers towards the Present System of Participative Management

Attitude of Workers	W1	W2	W3	W4	N
No. of Workers	12	15	18	105	150
No. of Workers in %	8	10	12	70	100

Variables

W1: The present system of participative management is effective to maintain cordial labour management.

W2 : Indifferent.

W3 : Not aware of the concept.

W4 : The present system of participative management is not effective to maintain cordial labour management.

On analysis of the data collected (as represented in the table above), only 8% of the workers (i.e. 12) are of the opinion that the present system of participative management is effective for maintaining cordial labour management, while 70% (105 workers) feel that the present form of participative management is not effective to maintain cordial labour management. Similarly, 12% (18 workers) were not at all aware of the concept and 10% (i.e., 15 workers) had an indifferent attitude towards the whole thing.

Table - 6.2 as given under shows the age group wise classification of the attitude of workers to participative management.

Table 6.2: Table showing the Age Wise Classification of the Attitude of Workers to Workers' Participation in Management

Age Group	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6
Upto 30	16	20	2	22	18	21
30-40	35	38	1	35	19	39
40-50	48	69	11	79	42	80
50 & above	6	8	4	11	11	10
Total	105	135	18	147	90	150
%(Out of 150)	70	90	12	98	60	100

Variables

X1 Participation is not acceptable because the deserving workers are not involved at any level.

- X2 Happy to be consulted.
- X3 Indifferent at being consulted.
- X4 Pessimistic about participation. They are sure that they will not get any opportunity to participate in the present situation.
- X5 Do not wish to be on Director Board.
- X6 Aspire for better working conditions.

Since the deserving workers were not involved in any way at level, the present system was not acceptable to 70% workers, while on the other hand 90% felt proud to be consulted by the management. The percentage of workers being indifferent to being consulted was a low 12%. However, all the 100% workers were pessimistic about participation for they felt sure that they will not get any opportunity to participate in the decision making process of management in the present situation. Though all the workers (100%) aspired for better working conditions, more than half of them (i.e. 60%) did not wish to be on the Board of Directors.

Table - 6.3: Table showing Preference for Union Leaders to be appointed in Management Board

Age Group	Z1	Z2	Z3	Z4
Upto 30	-	4	7	22
30-40	-	7	10	33
40-50	-	27	9	63
50 & above	-	-	3	15
Total	Nil	38	29	133
(%) Out of 150	Nil	19	14.50	66.50

Variables

- Z1 Any Union Leader is welcome.
- Z2 His particular Union Leader should be appointed, if one is appointed.
- Z3 Indifferent as to who should be appointed.
- Z4 No Union Leader need be appointed to the Managing Board.

As a part of the survey, several managers were also interviewed. Not even one of them showed any enthusiasm towards accommodating a union leader on the Managing Board. The reason for this disinterest was firstly there would be unnecessary interference by the union leader in the day to day working of the enterprise and secondly, they would get a share in the authority, power and prestige that have been acquired by the managers by continuous hard work, risk and initiative.

Table - 6.3 depicts the preferences of workers for union leaders to appointment to the Board of Directors. It can be clearly seen that the workers who welcome this idea also have biased preference because 38 workers (19%) were partial for a particular union leader, in case one was appointed to the Managing Board. Also, not even one person was of the opinion that any union leader on the Board is welcome. Although 14.50 % (29 workers) have a very indifferent attitude

towards the concept of appointing union leader to the Board of Directors, majority of them, almost 66.50% feel that there is no need appoint any union leader to the Board.

7. CONCLUSION

From this evaluation, it has also been concluded that the present system of Participative Management is not accepted by either the workers or the management. The workers aspire for a mechanism through which they can express themselves before management. They do not want to share the authority, but they wish to hear and to be heard. The union leaders use it to demand more than what is intended in the Scheme. Management reacts negatively to the term Participative Management thus both parties are disappointed by the scheme. In this research paper it is found that in NTPC there must be a strong, democratic administrative representative unionism for the success of Participative Management. Proper communication of formulated objective is very important for effective Participative Management policy. There should be a feeling of participation at all levels. Too much emphasis on hierarchical structure and close supervision is not conducive to participation. The working environment must be congenial enough to inspire the worker to give their best to the enterprise. Consultation of the workers with management is very essential for Participative Management so there should be effective consultations of the workers' by the management to inculcate enthusiasm in them in the formulation of policies that affect them directly. They should have a say in all the issues affecting them. Both the management and the workers must develop a favorable attitude and outlook, and must have full faith in the soundness of the philosophy underlying the concept of Participative Management. As said earlier role of trade unions are very important for effective Participative Management so employers and trade unions can play a major and meaningful role in organising and conducting training programmes and in developing necessary skills in the representatives of workers and employers. Although Participative Management Scheme was introduced in NTPC Limited as a part of the 20 point Economic Programme. During the study it was observed that in the opinion of both the workers and the management group, the existing level of participation of workers' in management levels of the organisation is mainly for issues like welfare, safety, housing, etc. This is nowhere adequate for fulfilling the objectives of Participative Management. The working results of Participative Management far from being encouraging have ended up in creating tensions between the labour and the management.

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