

Discipline in Industrial Relations

Learning Objectives

To understand

- the meaning & definition of discipline
- the aims & importance of maintaining discipline in any organization
- the causes of disciplinary actions & the need for discipline maintenance
- the causes of disciplinary violation, approach to discipline enforcement & code of discipline in industry.

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Structure

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Meaning & Definition
- 4.3 Aims & Objectives
- 4.4 Discipline Maintenance System
- 4.5 Causes of Disciplinary Violation
- 4.6 Approach to Discipline Enforcement
- 4.7 Disciplinary Action
- 4.8 Code of Discipline in Industry.
- 4.9 Summary

Discipline in Industrial Relations

4.1 Introduction

Discipline = restraint + orderly behaviour + respect & willing obedience of authority.

Discipline improves & stabilizes the personality of workers.

Industrial discipline is essential for
running an organization
increasing production & productivity
maintenance of industrial peace
prosperity of industry & nation

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4.2 Meaning & Definition

Discipline means

training that corrects, moulds, strengthens or perfects individual behaviour

control gained by enforcing obedience

punishment or chastisement

Discipline is a product of

culture

value system

environment

basic part of employee or management attitude

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4.2 Meaning & Definition

Positive Discipline

connotes state of order in organization

assumes certain degree of self discipline

uses constructive force to secure compliance

is more effective in business management

Negative Discipline

application of penalties

fear used to secure compliance

results in low morale

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4.3 Aims & Objectives

- 1] to obtain a willing acceptance of rules, regulations etc. of the organization
- 2] to develop spirit of tolerance & adjustments
- 3] to give & seek direction & responsibility
- 4] to create an atmosphere of respect
- 5] to increase efficiency and morale
- 6] to impart an element of certainty in spite differences in behavioral patterns.

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4.4 Discipline Maintenance System

System needs to be maintained to ensure that discipline is always +ve. To maintain the system, it should

- ✓ be formulated with participation from all
- ✓ be geared to organizational needs & pervade through its hierarchy
- ✓ be appraised to ensure they are appropriate, sensible, & useful
- ✓ be flexible to suit every category of employees
- ✓ be uniformly enforced

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4.4 Discipline Maintenance System

- ✓ be embodied in company's manual or standing orders
- ✓ be implemented by line authority in consultation with personnel function

Further

- ✓ disciplinary action should be taken in privacy
- ✓ Punitive action must satisfy the principle of natural justice.

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4.4 Discipline Maintenance System

✓ while determining the quantum of punishment management must consider, in addition to the nature of violation,

a] past record,

b] time lapsed since last incident,

c] mitigating factors, if any,

d] decisions in similar cases.

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4.4 Discipline Maintenance System

Responsibilities of industrial relations administrator in discipline maintenance are

- 1] assist in establishment & promotion of positive discipline
- 2] assist in formulation of effective discipline policy & arrange communication
- 3] ensure the policy rules are in conformity with local laws
- 4] organize regular training in discipline handling for employees & supervisors

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4.5 Causes of Disciplinary Violation

These are classified into causes related to

- 1] the worker.
- 2] the sub-cultural factors
- 3] the work environment
- 4] the management practices

The style of supervision as perceived by employees is an important factor. Unsupportive style can result in employee alienation which is passively reflected in absenteeism, inattention, tardiness. If ignored is aggressively expressed in sabotage, strikes etc.

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4.6 Approach to Discipline Enforcement

Broadly speaking approach to discipline is classified into human resource or judicial.

The first human approach involves development of knowledge, skill & attitude for specific jobs; & creation proper organizational climate for discipline enforcement. The aim is to correct the behavior & not to punish the violator.

This approach treats discipline as an attitude of mind and requires persuasion on moral plane

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4.6 Approach to Discipline Enforcement

The second judicial approach involves punishment of the erring employee, subordination and obedient & orderly behaviour.

It undoubtedly is a time consuming process and often results bitterness among employees.

Many managers even today see discipline primarily as a means to execute partly deterrent & partly retributive justice.

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4.7 Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary Action is taken against misconduct by an employee. Such misconduct arises out of terms and conditions of employment.

Due to changes in political, social & economic conditions employment gradually came to be regulated by the state.

Deplorable working conditions, unrestricted use of strikes & lock outs and norms evolved by courts coupled with socialistic pattern of society & welfare state contributed to state regulation.

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4.7 Disciplinary Action

All establishments follow either certified or model standing orders. They stipulate that

A workman guilty of misconduct may be a) warned, b) fined, c) suspended or d) dismissed.

Fine can be imposed only after workman has been informed in writing about the alleged misconduct & given an opportunity to explain. Enquiry against the worker has to be held prior to dismissal.

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4.8 Code of Discipline in Industry.

was formally adopted by Indian Labour Congress in 1958. The code is comprehensive & ethical and includes

[I] a just recognition of rights & responsibilities of workers & employers as defined by the laws & agreements ; including bipartite & tripartite agreements at all levels, to maintain discipline in industry.

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4.8 Code of Discipline in Industry.

2] Agreement between Management & Unions that

- ☺ no unilateral action to be taken in industrial matter
- ☺ existing machinery for settling disputes to be utilized
- ☺ no strike or lockout without notice
- ☺ settlement of disputes by mutual negotiation, reconciliation & arbitration
- ☺ no recourse to coercion, intimidation, victimization, or go slow.

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4.8 Code of Discipline in Industry.

2] Agreement between Management & Unions that

- 😊 avoidance of litigation, sit down & stay in strikes and lock outs
- 😊 constructive cooperation at all levels
- 😊 grievance procedure established that investigates all disputes for their settlement
- 😊 both abide by the above procedure and refrain from bypassing it at any stage
- 😊 workers & management are trained regarding their obligations to each other

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4.8 Code of Discipline in Industry.

3] Management agrees

- 😊 not to increase work loads unless agreed upon by parties concerned
- 😊 not to support any unfair labour practice
- 😊 to take prompt action to arrive at entitlement of grievance & implement settlements, awards or decisions.
- 😊 to display this code in local languages in the organization

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3] Management agrees

- 😊 to distinguish between actions justifying immediate discharge & those that need prior warning, reprimand, suspension etc.
- 😊 to allow workers to appeal against such decisions
- 😊 to take action against members of management if it is revealed that they were responsible for precipitate action by workers that lead to indiscipline.
- 😊 to recognize the union as per criteria of the ILC

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4.8 Code of Discipline in Industry.

4] Union [s] agrees

- 😊 not to in any form of physical duress
- 😊 not to permit demonstrations that are not peaceful or cause rowdyism.
- 😊 members will not permit any union activity during working hours, unless provided by law or agreement
- 😊 to take prompt action to implement awards, agreements, settlements, & decisions.

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4.8 Code of Discipline in Industry.

4] Union [s] agrees

☺ discourage unfair labour practices such as a] negligence of duty, b] careless operation, c] damage to property, d] interference with or disturbance to normal work & e] insubordination.

☺ to display this code in local languages in the union offices.

☺ to disapprove & take action against union members for indulging against the spirit of this code.

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4.8 Code of Discipline in Industry.

This code did not have a legal sanction only certain moral sanctions. But it worked well on introduction, there after it did not sustain over a long period.

It was not an answer to industrial relations problems.

Part of the code relating to recognition of unions, grievance procedure, unfair labour practices was provided a legal form and then the balance of the Code lost its importance.

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4.9 Summary

Importance of discipline has to be realized by all concerned and maintenance of discipline should be joint responsibility of both workers and management. The approach to managing discipline depends upon managerial philosophy, culture, & attitude towards employees.

A negative approach relies on heavily on punitive measures, hire & fire outlook and obedience to orders.

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4.9 Summary

On the other hand constructive stresses on modifying forbidden behaviour by taking positive steps like training, counseling & the like.

It aims to generate a sense of self discipline instead of discipline imposed by force.

The approach to disciplinary action should be corrective rather than punitive. Further, the positive discipline maintenance should form an integral part of human resource development efforts of an organization.

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The End!

In the next session we cover chapter five on

**“Industrial Disputes
Prevention & Settlement.”**

Good Luck!