

does not live upto the claim of the author that, "The present work is an end product of my long experience and research in this field. I have tried to give a definitive shape to thinkings on Personnel Management and Industrial Relations in India, which till now, has a nebulous contour. An attempt has been made to integrate fragmentary ideas, isolated concepts and sporadic materials into a theoretical framework and a meaningful building block'. (p. VII).

Throughout the book the author provides tips as to what a manager should or should not do in order to become effective. He however, does not say anything about one important issue — how personnel managers should manage their relationships with line managers who really bear the actual brunt of managing people. I think this is a very important problem which Personnel Managers face in their job situation and would therefore, like to get some help and guidance to solve it.

**Impact of Economic Development on Industrial Relations : An Empirical Analysis.** Pramod Verma, Ahmedabad, Academic Book Centre, 1979. 166p.

The book under review is a collection of studies by the author (some of them are revised versions of the papers published earlier) on some significant aspects of industrial relations of this country and is organised around nine chapters. The studies have been inspired by the "serious doubts about the neo-classical propositions in respect of the interaction between economic development and industrial relations" and the consequent "urgent need for an empirical verification of

the many assumptions and policy prescriptions from the received theory."

The author has taken up for examination a battery of hypotheses and they relate to the characteristics of managers and workers, trade unionism, wage differentials (occupational, industrial and regional), wage trends and industrial conflicts. He has generally subjected the concepts and data to a multiple regression model and has, in interpreting results, "placed emphasis on the sign and significance of the regression coefficients in those computed equations where the coefficients of determination has been fairly high." This is because of the fact that the available data are imperfect and "an exact measurement of the influence of one variable on another could prove meaningless." In fact the author has forewarned the reader more than once that the "statistical conclusions are indicative rather than definitive."

The main conclusion of the book is that many direct and indirect variables influence industrial relations. Thus though the proximate causes for conflict are the inflationary trends in the economy and the declining share of wages in the value added, there are other equally critical problem areas: alienation of Indian worker, social needs of the labour, disparity in wage rates, lag between productivity and wages and stagnation of real wages.

The conclusions, however, are by no means novel or revealing. In fact the utility of the book does not extend beyond mere confirmation of 'known facts' on the basis of quantitative analysis: it hardly enhances one's understanding of the pattern and trends of industrial relations in the country. This is mainly due to the fact that the author's sole emphasis has been on statistical exercise and

that too in more or less complete isolation from the socio-political and economic context of the country in which the Industrial Relations system operates and which strongly influences its character. In a sense the title of the book is somewhat misleading. This is notwithstanding the author's claim that the "attention is focussed on the explanation of .....problems in terms of the institutional and market variables, within the framework of social and economic conditions and economic development in the country" (p.3).

For the same reason much of the policy prescriptions advanced by the author for the improvement of the industrial relations climate of the country such as job enrichment and improvement in the quality of working life, Likert-type system-4 management style, national wage policy, industrial democracy and so on (these prescriptions are also by no means novel) are also not illuminating. In fact one could raise a number of important questions practically with regard to all his major recommendations. For example, even though the participative movement has begun in this country quite sometime back, yet the question is why it has failed to make much headway. On the other

hand, notwithstanding the author's apparent dislike for state intervention, intervention of the state in the labour relations field has been steadily increasing over the years and it is very likely that it will increase further because of economic and political compulsions. The prospect of remedying the situation through such methods as job enrichment, improvement in the quality of working life and similar other methods also does not appear to be very bright. Moreover even in the West where these movements began in order to combat the alienating tendencies in the work situation, question has been raised as to what extent the capitalistic industrial structure could be reformed by such methods.

The author does not even touch upon these and other important issues while making his recommendations. In fact despite claims to the contrary by the author, it is unlikely that people interested in industrial relations problems of this country will find the book to be very useful.

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