

## P R E F A C E

The present study seeks to explore in depth the role of Railway Unions and their impact on administrative decision-making process, with special reference to North-East Frontier Railway, in the context of labour-management relationship. It is generally admitted that the trade unions usually adopt the means and methods of pressure groups for the realisation of their demands. The present study highlights this aspect.

For this purpose, due emphasis has been given to the question of specific techniques and strategies employed by the Railway Unions for the fulfilment of their demands and assess the effectiveness of these techniques and strategies. With a view to making the discussion a complete one, special attention has been given to the analysis of the nature and style of the functioning of the Permanent Negotiating Machinery and the Joint Consultative Machinery as well as the Staff Councils both as grievance-redressing mechanisms and as policy-influencing agencies.

As the biggest public undertaking of the country run on departmental management principles, the Indian Railways occupy a crucial position in the Indian economic life. Hence an attempt has been made to find out

the interaction between the Employees' Unions and the political process within the framework of the Indian political system.

The study has been divided into ten chapters. Chapter I gives a general introduction of the study contemplated, and contains ten sections dealing with the objectives of the study, the theoretical framework, research questions and hypotheses, research design and methodology, the variables, the universe of study, the content of the questionnaire for field work/survey, justification for the present study, limitations of the present study and definitions of some concepts used in the study. In Chapter II, a brief overview of the existing literature, foreign and Indian, dealing with the theoretical and operating aspects of Railway management and labour-management relations, has been sought to be made, in order to emphasise the specific ways in which the present study has been attempted to fill a huge research-gap. Chapter III gives a short introduction to the Indian Railways, in a brief historical perspective, and its organizational structure, while the next chapter deals with the industrial relations and role of trade unions in this organizational context. In the same pattern, Chapter V projects the organizational structure of the N.F. Railway, and in three different sections, highlights all organizational matters,

while the succeeding Chapter (VI), in seven detailed sections, discusses the different aspects and issues of industrial relations, trade unions and machineries for workers' participation in management in this Zonal Railway. One such machinery, the PNM, by far the most important machinery the Zonal level, has been taken up for a detailed and comprehensive treatment in Chapter VIII, with an appendix containing the proceedings of PNM meetings to focus attention on the nature of the subjects for negotiation and the role played by the Unions in the decision-making process. In Chapter IX, analysis has been made of the results obtained from the survey based on face-to-face interviews with Railway officials and Union office-bearers, on the basis of prepared and pre-coded questionnaires, to ascertain the nature and degree of influence of the Unions on the administrative process and related matters. The perceptual data obtained from this survey will supplement the hard data obtained from official records and other source-materials. The concluding Chapter (X) summarises the findings of the survey and the earlier study and examines these findings in the light of the hypotheses and research questions outlined in the introductory chapter, and ends with some concluding observations in a diagnostic spirit, containing, as a natural corollary, some specific

suggestions for the future. Needless to say, all attempts have been made to prepare a thorough, comprehensive and original treatise in a neglected area.

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( Sisir Guha )