

Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



Baldev R. SHARMA : *Not by Bread Alone : A Study of Organizational Climate and Employer-Employee Relations in India*. New Delhi, Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources, 1987, 191 pp.

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Perhaps the most exciting part about teaching industrial relations is the opportunity to relate concepts to contemporary events. Clearly, no text will ever be 100% up-to-date; however students should be able to get a feeling of the vitality of the subject matter not only from their instructor but from the text as well.

On a more minor stylistic level one could argue that the lay-out of the text might be improved. The material is put forth in full 8 1/2 by 11 form although a break down of each page into two columns might make it somewhat easier for the student to absorb the material.

Finally, although this text focuses on U.S. labour relations it is unfortunate that there is no reference to certain Canadian experiments such as first contract arbitration, anti-strike breaking legislation, and choice of procedures impasse resolution in the Canadian federal civil service. Brief discussion of Canadian experience in each of these areas would highlight the fact that some of the industrial relations reforms proposed in the United States are already in practice elsewhere. Absence of Canadian examples, however should not be too surprising given that the texts' extensive bibliography fails to even list **Relations Industrielles** as a journal/serial.

Overall, **Collective Bargaining and Labor Relations** should serve as a useful supplement for students who already have the benefit of one of the more readable industrial relations texts.

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Not by Bread Alone: A Study of Organizational Climate and Employer-Employee Relations in India, by Baldev R. Sharma, New Delhi, India, Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources, 1987, xvi, 191 pp.

Organizational climate is an important subject in the study of employer-employee relations. However, this subject has not received much attention from industrial relations scholars. It is more so insofar as studies of organizational climate in developing countries are concerned. Hence there is a call for research on this topic. Professor Sharma has responded to this call on a grand scale by writing the book **Not By Bread Alone**.

Chapter 1 of the book presents a review of literature on organizational climate together with the author's personal note on how the present study evolved over a period of half a decade. The concept of organizational climate is subjected to a thorough examination with a view to establish an operational base for empirical work in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, the design of the study is described, and results of reliability and validity tests on the questionnaire are reported. Empirical results for supervisory-management relations and for labour-management relations are presented in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively. Chapter 6 reports results for psychological climate, obtained from a multivariate analysis of data where individuals are the unit of analysis. Major findings of the study have been summarized in the concluding chapter.

The book is about the effects of organisational climate on employer-employee relations in 51 manufacturing organisations in India. The sample is comprised of 23 public sector and 28 private sector organizations. Of the private sector, 15 are subsidiaries of multinational corporations, and 13 indigenous. The information on the organisational climate has been elicited by administering a 27-item questionnaire completed by 3785 first-line supervisors belonging to these 51 organizations. And the concept of organizational climate has been measured along nine dimensions — scope for advancement, grievance handling, monetary benefits, par-

ticipative management, objectivity and rationality, recognition and appreciation, safety and security, training and education, and welfare facilities. The employer-employee relationship has been measured through a single-item question requiring response on a 5-point scale where the assessment of the relationship ranges between poor and excellent for supervisory-management relations. For labour-management relations, the response to the same single-item question is sought from the first-line supervisors but on a 6-point scale with categories ranging from poor to excellent.

The major finding of the study is that the managers and employers of the 51 organizations studies have given adequate attention to safety and security, and monetary benefits to create a desirable organizational climate. But they have neglected such dimensions of the organizational climate as training and development, and participative management. That is to say, managers and employers of these organizations have not looked after social and psychological needs of their employees. The study is well designed and well executed. It is based on a representative sample of manufacturing organizations — public sector, private sector, subsidiaries of multinational corporations, and indigenous. The findings are well presented. It meets the initial expectation of the author to make the study 'a piece of basic research aimed at studying social reality with the help of a specially designed instrument' (p. 18) to a reasonable extent.

However, the study has some weaknesses. First, the information on labour-management relationship is elicited from the first line supervisors. The author justifies this by stating that the first line supervisors are more objective and better equipped to provide the data. Whether the actual perceptions of the workers can be accurately described by the first line supervisors is debatable. Secondly, the study contains a few contradictory statements. For example, the author says that «There is no attempt to test any hypothesis or model and, therefore, I have no desire to force facts into any particular conceptual box» (p. 18). However, does not an examination of the relationships between labour-management relations and the organizational climate as well as between the supervisory-management relations and the organizational climate entail hypothesis testing? On another occasion, the author states his general conclusion that «Employer-employee relations in India have worsened rather than improved over the years» (p. 163). He then writes on page 164 that «For the country as a whole, relations (a) between management and supervisors (SMR) as well as (b) management and labour (LMR) are reported to be fairly good». Thirdly, the study is based on information collected from first line supervisors of large 51 organizations. Whatever the findings of the study are, they may not be quite applicable to employer-employee relations in millions of small manufacturing organizations that populate the vast Indian industrial universe. This may render the author's generalization of the findings of the study for employer-employee relations in India as a whole questionable. Organization size matters in the study of organizational climate.

Despite the shortcomings noted above, Professor Sharma's book is a significant contribution to the organizational climate literature in a number of ways. It has provided an operationally sharpened definition of organizational climate. It has produced new empirical results using a new sample base. It has derived implications of organizational climate not only for some very important policy issues such as recruitment, development and maintenance of human resources, and an extension of industrial democracy to the workplace, but also for theories of management and motivation. Organization theorists, industrial relations specialists, and scholars and students of human resource management will greatly benefit by reading this book.

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