

Raju: Look! Balbir you are a responsible union official. You should not have created the scene. After all a supervisor has to ensure discipline. I am sorry you have set a bad example for other workers. How do you want me to proceed? Madan is very sore at being insulted in the presence of so many workers. I have to do something so that such incidents do not occur again.

QUESTIONS

1. Who is at fault and why?
2. Do you think unionised employees require a different kind of treatment on matters relating to discipline?
3. What should Raju do now to check both Madan and Balbir from going to the street in future?

CASE STUDY – I

BALBIR: THE UNION MAN

CHIEF ENGINEER RAJU

Raju has been with the company for the last 15 years. He is considered to be very competent in his job. Raju always greeted people with a smiling face and never lost his temper on the shop floor. Workers had considerable regard for him. In union circles Raju enjoyed a good reputation for his fairness. He had a unique style of his own when it came to personnel matters. He advocated patience and restraint while dealing with people. He would often say "gone are the days when one could deal with employees strictly. Now you have to be flexible, considerate and fair".

SUPERVISOR MADAN

A young man of 25, Madan is always keen on meeting production targets. He took genuine interest in his job and handled all his assignments carefully. He is of the view that top management and specially the HR manager more often than not, might fail to back up supervisors in their efforts to bring about some discipline in the plant. He believed that complaints from supervisors are ignored by management and as a result, workers get encouraged to indulge in disruptive activities, adversely affecting production.

BALBIR SINGH

Balbir, a skilled worker, has recently been elected as the Joint Secretary of the Union. He holds leftist political views, though he is not a member of any political party. He is ambitious and wants to reach the top levels in union circles as quickly as possible.

On Monday, Raju has hardly entered his office when the supervisor Madan rushes in.

Madan: Sir, there is a great commotion in the section. No one is working. Even after repeated requests, workers have not stopped the shouting and hooting. Sir, please come to the shop and see for yourself the extent of indiscipline that has become rampant.

Raju: Madan, take your seat. Tell me the truth. I will come to the shopfloor if you so desire. But first tell me why are you so much upset.

Madan: Sir, you know, Balbir, the joint secretary of the union, was loitering around and not attending to his machine. I called him and told him to go to his machine and start it.

Raju: Then what happened?

Madan: Balbir retorted quickly, "Do not shout at me. Your lung power does not work here. Even your bosses cannot order me about like that. What are you, after all?" Many workers gathered around and witnessed the scene.

Raju: O.K. Now please go to your section. I will ask Balbir to come immediately.

Balbir: Sir, you wanted to see me? What is the purpose?

Raju: Please sit down. What would you have? Tea or coffee? (Presses the buzzer). Bring two cups of tea. (After the tea has arrived) – Do you need more sugar? Balbir, tell me now why are you after Madan? He is a sincere and hardworking young supervisor and you should cooperate with him.

Balbir: Sir, first listen to me and then decide. This Madan has run amok. Kal Ka Chhokra, he thinks he is Hitler. This morning the security staff did not allow two workers of my section in. Somehow I came to know. I left the section and went to see the security officer. With great difficulty I managed to get the two workers punch their cards and join duty. On my return I saw Madan fuming and fretting. In a derogatory tone he started shouting at me. When I could stand it no longer I also raised my voice and told him to go and report against me.