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STRIKE

A strike is a very powerful weapon used by trade unions and other labour associations to get their demands accepted. It generally involves quitting of work by a group of workers for the purpose of bringing the pressure on their employer so that their demands get accepted. When workers collectively cease to work in a particular industry, they are said to be on strike.

According to Industrial Disputes Act 1947, a strike is “a cessation of work by a body of persons employed in an industry acting in combination; or a concerted refusal of any number of persons who are or have been so employed to continue to work or to accept employment; or a refusal under a common understanding of any number of such persons to continue to work or to accept employment”.

This definition throws light on a few aspects of a strike. Firstly, a strike is referred to as stoppage of work by a group of workers employed in a particular industry. Secondly, it also includes the refusal of a number of employees to continue work under their employer.

In a strike, a group of workers agree to stop working to protest against something they think is unfair where they work. Labours withhold their services in order to pressurize their employment or government to meet their demands. Demands made by strikers can range from asking for higher wages or better benefits to seeking changes in the workplace environment. Strikes sometimes occur so that employers listen more carefully to the workers and address their problems.

Causes of Strikes:

Strikes can occur because of the following reasons:

1. Dissatisfaction with company policy
2. Salary and incentive problems
3. Increment not up to the mark
4. Wrongful discharge or dismissal of workmen
5. Withdrawal of any concession or privilege
6. Hours of work and rest intervals

7. Leaves with wages and holidays
8. Bonus, profit sharing, provident fund and gratuity
9. Retrenchment of workmen and closure of establishment
10. Dispute connected with minimum wages

Types of Strikes:

- i. Economic Strike:** Under this type of strike, labours stop their work to enforce their economic demands such as wages and bonus. In these kinds of strikes, workers ask for increase in wages, allowances like traveling allowance, house rent allowance, dearness allowance, bonus and other facilities such as increase in privilege leave and casual leave.
- ii. Sympathetic Strike:** When workers of one unit or industry go on strike in sympathy with workers of another unit or industry who are already on strike, it is called a sympathetic strike. The members of other unions involve themselves in a strike to support or express their sympathy with the members of unions who are on strike in other undertakings. The workers of sugar industry may go on strike in sympathy with their fellow workers of the textile industry who may already be on strike.
- iii. General Strike:** It means a strike by members of all or most of the unions in a region or an industry. It may be a strike of all the workers in a particular region of industry to force demands common to all the workers. These strikes are usually intended to create political pressure on the ruling government, rather than on any one employer. It may also be an extension of the sympathetic strike to express generalized protest by the workers.
- iv. Sit Down Strike:**

In this case, workers do not absent themselves from their place of work when they are on strike. They keep control over production facilities. But do not work. Such a strike is also known as 'pen down' or 'tool down' strike. Workers show up to their place of employment, but they refuse to work.

They also refuse to leave, which makes it very difficult for employer to defy the union and take the workers' places. In June 1998, all the Municipal Corporation employees in Punjab observed a pen down strike to protest against the non-acceptance of their demands by the state government.
- v. Slow Down Strike:**

Employees remain on their jobs under this type of strike. They do not stop work, but restrict the rate of output in an organized manner. They adopt go-slow tactics to put pressure on the employers.

vi. Sick-Out (Or Sick-In):

In this strike, all or a significant number of union members call in sick on the same day. They don't break any rules, because they just use their sick leave that was allotted to them on the same day. However, the sudden loss of so many employees all on one day can show the employer just what it would be like if they really went on strike.

vii. Wild Cat Strikes:

These strikes are conducted by workers or employees without the authority and consent of unions. In 2004, a significant number of advocated went on wild cat strike at the City Civil Court premises in Bangalore. They were protesting against some remarks allegedly made against them by an Assistant Commissioner.