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## "WORKERS' PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MANAGEMENT AND WORKERS"

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### ABSTRACT :

**Manuscript Type:** Empirical

**Research Question/Issue:** The article provides answers to the most fundamental questions that are yet to be explored with the reference to WPM viz. comparing the attitude and perceptions of the management and workers with reference to WPM in public and private sector from all types of industries namely; financial, technology, services, consumer, manufacturing and health.

**Research Findings/Insights:** The empirical edifice of the study rests on the two sets of researcher-designed survey instruments, one targeting the management and the other towards the workers. A wide gap in the perception of workers and management about the awareness level of WPM among themselves is observed. WPM is not only extension of industrial democracy but the present study has established that WPM is instrumental in increasing factors like production and productivity, job satisfaction, working conditions/welfare and improving industrial relations as well. On comparing the responses of workers with that of management, it is found that workers had less awareness and agreeability to concepts of WPM as compared to management.

**Theoretical/Academic Implications:** The article emphasizes the importance of Workers' Participation in Management to provide unique motivational power and great psychological value as it establishes peace and harmony between workers and management.

**Practitioner/Policy Implications:** The findings may also unfold new insights for policy makers in India. The data from the study will facilitate the Ministry of labour to take up policy decisions with reference to WPM. The study provides an analysis of the reasons for inadequate performance of existing schemes of participation. The government can use this analysis to plug the loopholes in the present system of WPM.

**KEYWORDS:** Management and Workers, services, consumer, manufacturing and health.

### INTRODUCTION

Workers participation provides motivational ability and psychological value as it establishes harmony between workers and management. Workers also tend to view the decisions as 'their own' and feel more enthusiastic during carrying out the operations. This makes them more responsible towards their work, thus bringing out cost cutting solutions and growth orienting ideas. With this, workers get to see how their actions would contribute to the overall growth of the company. It is believed that an organization needs capital and labour to create wealth; and the most important need for an organization to be successful was capital. However, in this ever changing business environment, the need has extended beyond capital and now also includes labour as well. Corporates in this 21st century understand that people and the knowledge they create are most valuable



assets for an organization. In fact when a company goes for Mergers and Acquisitions they value human capital more than the physical assets acquired.

**RATIONALE OF STUDY**

The concept of participation is vital for an organization in this modern era of cut throat competition. India being part of the new economic order, public and private sector organizations have to improve their participative mechanisms to withstand the rat race. In the words of Edgar H.Schein “as organizations evolve, the complexity of environments within which they operate will cause increased dependency upon the very people making up the organization.” Thus, in the present context, participative management is the key ingredient to organizational success. However, the most fundamental aspect of WPM such as the attitude and perceptions of managers and workers of public and private sector from all industries have not been explored. Unless data on these key areas is available, it is difficult for the Government and policy makers to make a definitive policy resolution about the concept and practice of WPM.

The present study contributes to the work of the Ministry of labour. Since, the study provides answers to the most fundamental questions that are yet to be explored with the reference to WPM viz. the attitude and perceptions of the management and workers with reference to WPM in public and private sector from all types of industries namely; Financial, technology, services, consumer, manufacturing and health. The data from the study will facilitate the Ministry of labour to take up policy decisions with reference to WPM. The study provides an analysis of the reasons for inadequate performance of existing schemes of participation. The government can use this analysis to plug the shortcomings in the present system of WPM.

**OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

*HO1: There is no significant relationship between Awareness\_WPM, Working conditions\_welfare, Industrial\_relations, Production\_Productivity, Job\_Satisfaction and Role\_Need\_WPM between worker and management respondents.*

*HA1: There is significant relationship between Awareness\_WPM, Workingconditions\_welfare, Industrial\_relations, Production\_Productivity, Job\_Satisfaction and Role\_Need\_WPM between worker and management respondents.*

*HO2: There is no significant correlation between WPM, Workingconditions\_welfare, Industrial\_relations, Production\_Productivity, Job\_Satisfaction and Role\_Need\_WPM for all the respondents taken together i.e. workers and management.*

*HA2: There is significant correlation between WPM, Workingconditions\_welfare, Industrial\_relations, Production\_Productivity, Job\_Satisfaction and Role\_Need\_WPM for all the respondents taken together i.e. workers and management.*

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**Sample Size**

Total sample size of 661 employees was selected for the study out of which 138 were Management respondents and 523 Worker respondents, which were based on Convenience sampling.

Table 1		
Sample Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Management	138	20.9
Employees	523	79.1
Total	661	100.0

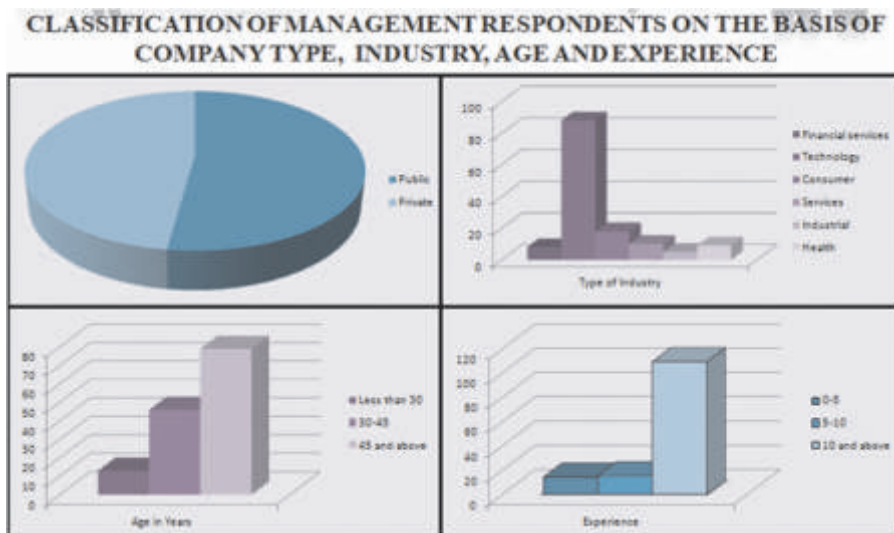


Figure 1

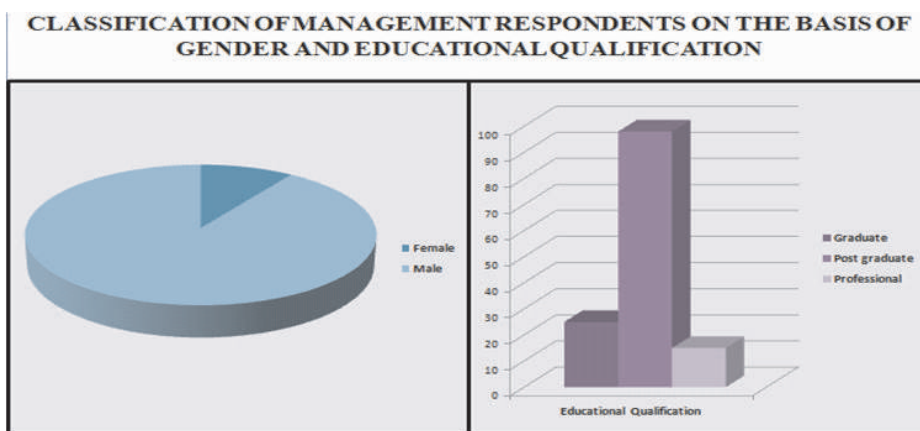


Figure 2

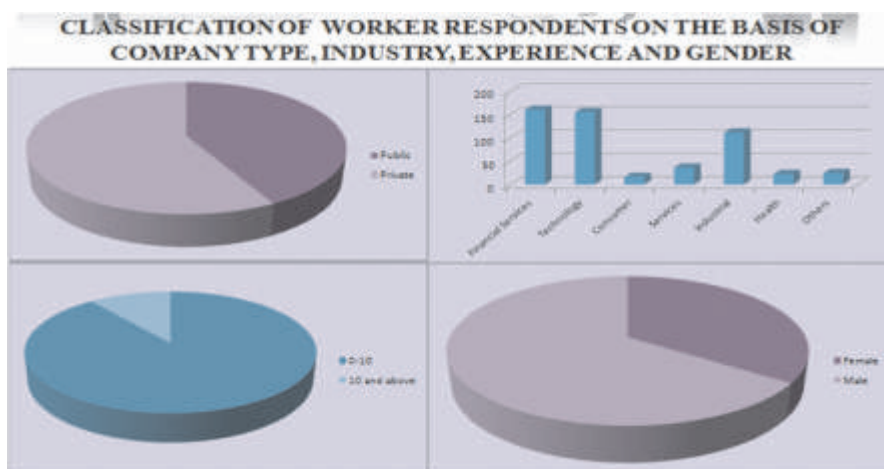


Figure 3

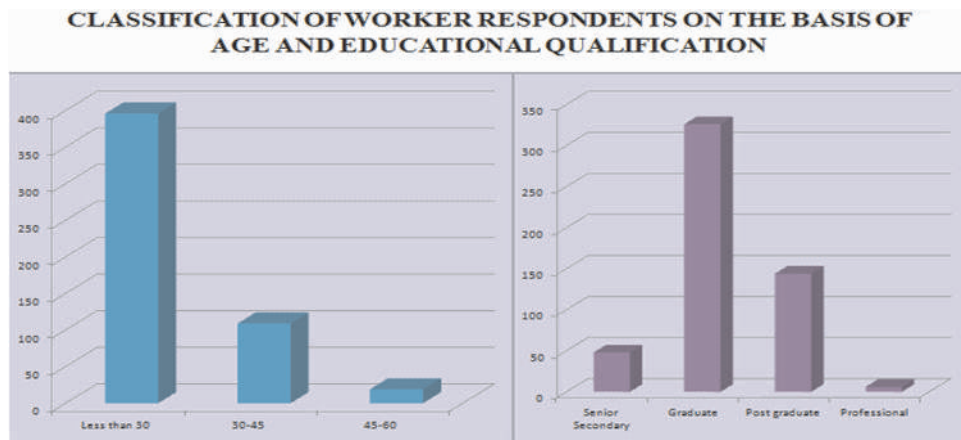


Figure 4

### QUESTIONNAIRE AND STATISTICAL TESTS

Two structured questionnaires were developed to collect the information based on review of literature from both management and workers of public and private sector companies.

#### KEY VARIABLES:

**WPM:** The success of WPM schemes depends largely upon the level awareness of the employees (management and workers). As the awareness enhances the member's commitment to and involvement in the organizational meetings. To make any WPM scheme successful, it is necessary that those who are involved in it should have a right idea about the concept of participative management and are aware about the respective functioning and objectives. This enables the conduct of systematic meetings. The workers' and managements awareness and interest in WPM schemes is a must for its success. Training the workers and management are stressed to involve them in the process of participation. The working of PM can be assessed on the basis of effective preparation of agenda, conduct of meetings, encouraging members to attend meetings, conducting proceedings of the meeting sincerely, following participative approach in discussing of various issues, making consensus decisions and implementing decisions taken timely. Agenda plays very important role in PM. Agenda preparation to be effective should be based on issues proposed by members and non-members, finalization should be done by mutual consultation of members. Once the agenda is finalized, it should be communicated to all the members timely along with the notice of the meeting. Members of the various councils are generally required to supply adequate information on each of the issues of the agenda in the form of explanation or note to the agenda. Thus, it helps both the workers and management to discuss the issues, minimize conflicts and conduct the proceedings smoothly and effectively. Training plays a vital role in effective conduct of meeting, opinion of workers and management is taken regarding training sessions given or not. Satisfaction with the working of participative forums in the organization is evaluated from both workers and management's perspective.

**Company Culture and Practice:** For the purpose of the study the variable 'company culture and practice' has been defined with the help of 24 statements catering to aspects like clarity on the mission, vision and objectives of an organization and various HR practices impacting the WPM level of the organization.

**Working Conditions and Welfare:** Labour welfare means anything done over and above the wages for the workers. The intension behind this is that by providing welfare facilities, labour force in the company shall be healthy, loyal, efficient and satisfied. Working conditions and welfare includes physically safe place to work with adequate lighting, ventilation, temperature etc; basic amenities like drinking water, cafeteria and sanitation; health benefits like medical insurance and other medical services; administration of welfare funds; educational and recreational facilities; encouragement of thrift and savings etc. Certain facilities are part of legal obligations while others are social obligations. One of the objectives of PM is to improve the working condition and welfare facilities. Thus, the working conditions and welfare are influenced by factors like Governments statutory

obligation, social obligations, demand by employees via collective bargaining, WPM meetings etc. An attempt is made to find out the opinion of workers and management regarding impact of WPM on working conditions and welfare.

**Industrial Relations:** Industrial democracy largely depends on establishing and sustaining healthy relations between workers and management and thus can be achieved to a great extent through WPM. The purpose of WPM, as stated in the second five year plan are satisfying the workers urge for self expression which leads to industrial peace and co-operation. The aim behind maintaining sound industrial relations is to attain industrial harmony, for equitable treatment to workers and to achieve greater production etc. Industrial relations are influenced by attitude and organization of trade unions, socio economic atmosphere in the country and relation between price, wages and profits etc. Thus, the four areas to find out the impact of WPM on industrial relations are:

- Improvement in general discipline.
- Resolution of grievances and dispute
- Improvement in communication between workers and management and
- Improvement in relations between workers and management.

**Production and Productivity:** According to the second five year plan, the purpose of WPM is to increase productivity for the general benefit of an organization, the employees and the community. Thus, the main aim of WPM scheme in India is to achieve higher levels of production and productivity. The impact of WPM on production and productivity are measured on the basis of following seven aspects:

- Improvement In quantity and quality of output
- Reduction in cost of production
- Elimination of wastage/spoilage/pilferage
- Optimum utilization of resources
- Reduction in absenteeism
- Reduction in employees turnover and
- Customer satisfaction

**Job Satisfaction:** The worker's participation in management is an indispensable tool to boost psychological and emotional feelings of the workers for attaining due status in the decision making process of the enterprise thus having an overall feeling of job satisfaction. Participation gives worker a feeling of self-importance and achievement; it gives him freedom and opportunity for expression, a feeling belonging to the workplace and a sense of workmanship and creativity. It provides for the integration of his interests with that of the management by making the worker a joint partner in the enterprises. In order to identify the impact of WPM on Job satisfaction following five aspects have been identified:

- Feeling of Achievement
- Recognition
- Advancement
- Work itself
- responsibility

**Suggestions for WPM:** In order to develop recommendations for the Policy makers, a participative approach has been used by taking both workers and management opinions on the following areas:

- Level of WPM like informative, consultative, associative, administrative and decisive.
- Criteria for nominating representatives in participative forums i.e. hierarchy in designation, seniority in service, member of elected union, discretion of nominating authority etc.
- Areas in which participation is required in an organization such as rules, production scheduling, and welfare schemes, training and HRD, incentive schemes, manpower plans, approval of leaves, remuneration and rewards etc.

- Areas where management has to provide information to the workers periodically such as company mission and objectives, financial position of the company, sales turnover, rejects and wastages, market image of products and services, public image of the company, absenteeism, personal turnover, market trends, new product and services, consumer preferences etc.
- Areas where management has to solicit co-operation of the workers i.e. introduction of new technology, modernisation and expansion, organizational development, new challenges and threats to the company, major changes in the products, services and geographic areas etc.

Benefits of WPM: It's been observed that WPM has always proven to be beneficial to both workers and management. Following are some of the major advantages that have been identified through the study:

- Feeling of belongingness
- Sense of satisfaction by taking decisions jointly
- Checks irrationality and one sided approach in taking decisions
- Smooth implementation of decisions
- Controls unproductive activities in the organization and
- Ensures monetary and non monetary incentives to the members

**Roadblocks of WPM:** Following factors have been identified through this study that hinders WPM.

- Lack of mutual trust and confidence between representatives
- Top Management of company is not interested in WPM
- Lack of knowledge about WPM
- Lack of proper law on WPM
- Conflict of interest between Labour and Management leads to failure of WPM
- Trade unions oppose WPM
- Workers resent participation in managerial work

**Supporters of WPM:** For the purpose of study workers and management opinion is sort on the following identified supporters of WPM:

- General harmony in the company
- Atmosphere of trust between management and workers
- Informal participative culture
- Established practices of information sharing
- Time bound implementation of decisions taken at participative forums.
- Adequate preparation by management and workers, before discussion at participative forums

**RELIABILITY**

**Questionnaire for workers:** The questionnaire was tested for reliability using Cronbach  $\alpha$ . It indicates if the items are measuring the same construct. An alpha of 0.8 or above is regarded as highly acceptable for homogeneity items while 0.7 is the limit of acceptability (Burns and Burns 2008). The reliability analysis indicated Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.919 as shown in Table 2.

Table 2	
Reliability Analysis	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.919	92

**Questionnaire for management:** The questionnaire was tested for reliability using Cronbach  $\alpha$ . It indicates if the items are measuring the same construct. The reliability analysis indicated Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.955 as shown in Table 3.



Table 3	
Reliability Analysis	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.955	84

**EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS**

A comparative analysis of the respondents of management and workers is done for all the variables.

**Independent T-Test of all the variables on the basis of respondents i.e. workers or management.**

A. As shown in Table 4 by the result of Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, accept the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the variances between the management and worker respondents view with respect to variable Workingconditions\_welfare and reject the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the variances between groups. Looking at the t-statistic, in these variables, accept the alternative hypothesis and accept that there is a statistically significant difference between means of management and worker respondents on the variable of Workingconditions\_welfare [t (651) =5.196, p=0]. Therefore, this study found that

i. Management respondents had statistically significantly higher agreeability to the impact of WPM on Workingconditions\_welfare (4.13 ± 0.35) as compared to worker respondents (3.93 ± 0.4)

B. As shown in Table 4 by the result of Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the variances between the management and worker respondents view with respect to all variables except for Workingconditions\_welfare and accept the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the variances between groups. Looking at the t-statistic, in this variable, accept the alternative hypothesis and accept that there is a statistically significant difference between means of management and worker respondents on the variable of WPM[t(149.895)=46.548,p=0], Industrial\_relations [t(307.232)=20.896,p=.0], Production\_Productivity [t(299.27)=6.764, p=0], Job\_Satisfaction [t(235.221)=3.748, p=0], Role\_Need\_WPM[t(360.7)=12.397, p=0], Benefits\_WPM[t(157.493)=-14.007, p=0], Roadblocks\_WPM[t(167.81)=-16.825, p=0], Supporters\_WPM [t(150.468)=-17.075, p=].Therefore, the study found that:

i. Management respondents had statistically significantly higher awareness and interest in WPM (4.01 ± 0.69) as compared to worker respondents (1.19 ± 0.29)

ii. Management respondents had statistically significantly higher agreeability to the impact of WPM on Industrial\_relations (4.60 ± 0.32) as compared to worker respondents (3.88 ± 0.46)

iii. Management respondents had statistically significantly higher agreeability to the impact of WPM on Production\_Productivity (4.02 ± 0.33) as compared to worker respondents (3.79 ± 0.47)

iv. Management respondents had statistically significantly higher agreeability to the impact of WPM on Job\_Satisfaction(4.00 ± 0.43) as compared to worker respondents (3.84 ± 0.48)

v. Management respondents had statistically significantly higher agreeability to the impact of WPM on overall Role\_Need\_WPM (4.19 ± 0.13) as compared to worker respondents (3.86 ± 0.38)

vi. Management respondents had statistically significantly lower agreeability towards Benefits\_WPM (2.7 ± 1.09) as compared to worker respondents (4.06 ± 0.57)

vii. Management respondents had statistically significantly lower agreeability towards Roadblocks\_WPM (2.7 ± 0.78) as compared to worker respondents (3.8 ± 0.5)

viii. Management respondents had statistically significantly lower agreeability towards Supporters\_WPM (2.5 ± 1.1) as compared to worker respondents (4.2 ± 0.48)

**Table 4: Independent Samples Test for management and workers**

Variables		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
WPM	Equal variances assumed	113.676	0	71.91	659	0
	Equal variances not assumed			46.548	149.895	0
Workingconditions_welfare	Equal variances assumed	0.317	0.574	5.196	651	0
	Equal variances not assumed			5.621	242.439	0
Industrial_relations	Equal variances assumed	5.353	0.021	17.051	647	0
	Equal variances not assumed			20.896	307.232	0
Production_Productivity	Equal variances assumed	15.305	0	5.573	651	0
	Equal variances not assumed			6.764	299.27	0
Job_Satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	10.901	0.001	3.528	653	0
	Equal variances not assumed			3.748	235.221	0
Role_Need_WPM	Equal variances assumed	16.847	0	9.485	639	0
	Equal variances not assumed			12.397	360.7	0
Benefits_WPM	Equal variances assumed	314.999	0	-19.756	646	0
	Equal variances not assumed			-14.007	157.493	0
Roadblocks_WPM	Equal variances assumed	126.978	0	-21.574	659	0
	Equal variances not assumed			-16.825	167.81	0
Supporters_WPM	Equal variances assumed	544.131	0	-26.175	659	0
	Equal variances not assumed			-17.075	150.468	0

**Correlation**

A set of Pearson’s correlation were computed to determine if there were significant relationship between WPM, Workingconditions\_welfare, Industrial\_relations, Production\_Productivity, Job\_Satisfaction and Role\_Need\_WPM for all the respondents taken together i.e. workers and management.

A. Table 5 Shows that a significant level of correlation exists between all variables at 0.01 levels of significance.

**Table 5 Correlations for all employees**

		WPM	Working conditions_welfare	Industrial_relations	Production_Productivity	Job_Satisfaction	Role_Need_WPM
<b>WPM</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.189**	.561**	.268**	.180**	.381**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	661	653	649	653	655	641
<b>Working conditions_welfare</b>	Pearson Correlation	.189**	1	.581**	.516**	.454**	.767**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	653	653	647	650	650	641
<b>Industrial_relations</b>	Pearson Correlation	.561**	.581**	1	.610**	.537**	.855**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	649	647	649	644	646	641
<b>Production_Productivity</b>	Pearson Correlation	.268**	.516**	.610**	1	.574**	.829**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	653	650	644	653	650	641
<b>Job_Satisfaction</b>	Pearson Correlation	.180**	.454**	.537**	.574**	1	.792**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	655	650	646	650	655	641
<b>Role_Need_WPM</b>	Pearson Correlation	.381**	.767**	.855**	.829**	.792**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	641	641	641	641	641	641
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

**Multiple Regression**

Before applying the Multiple Regression all the assumption have been tested. Coefficient correlation for the WPM and independent variables like type of company, age of organization, type of industry, experience in the organization, gender, age, educational qualification is determined. The correlation is significant for all the variables. Thus, regression analysis can continued for the same variables.

**Table 6 Multiple Regression- Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.660 <sup>a</sup>	.436	.428	.99771	1.994
a. Predictors: (Constant), WIX4, WI4, WIX2, WI3, WI2, WI5, WIX3					
b. Dependent Variable: WPM					

The Multiple regression models as shown in Table 6 depicts value of Durbin-Watson as approximately 2 showing no serial correlation, which again meets the assumption and thus Multiple regression can be continued square value of 0.436 depicts that 43.6 % of WPM is estimated with these variables. The F-ratio in the ANOVA table (Table 7) tests whether the overall regression model is a good fit for the data. The table shows that the independent variables statistically significantly predict the dependent variable, F (7, 513) = 56.697, p < .0005 (i.e., the regression model is a good fit of the data).

**Table 7: Multiple Regression-ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	395.061	7	56.437	56.697	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	510.653	513	.995		
	Total	905.715	520			
a. Predictors: (Constant), type of company, age of organization, type of industry, experience in the organization, gender, age, educational qualification						
b. Dependent Variable: WPM						

**Table 8: Multiple Regression-Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.767	.416		1.843	.066
	Age of organization	.017	.065	.009	.262	.793
	Type of company	-.124	.091	-.047	-1.365	.173
	Type of industry	-.110	.025	-.149	-4.433	.000
	Experience	.239	.065	.175	3.692	.000
	Gender	-.099	.098	-.036	-1.009	.313
	Age	.877	.083	.508	10.621	.000
	Educational Qualification	-.037	.075	-.017	-.500	.617
a. Dependent Variable: WPM						

**ESTIMATED MODEL COEFFICIENTS**

The general form of the equation to predict WPM from type of company, age of organization, type of industry, experience in the organization, gender, age, and educational qualification is:

$$\text{Predicted WPM} = 0.767 + 0.017 (\text{Age of organization}) - 0.124 (\text{Type of company}) - 0.110 (\text{Type of Industry}) + 0.239 (\text{Experience}) - 0.099 (\text{Gender}) + 0.877 (\text{Age}) - 0.037 (\text{Educational Qualification}).$$

This is obtained from the Coefficients table (Table 8), as shown above: Unstandardized coefficients indicate how much the dependent variable varies with an independent variable, when all other independent variables are held constant.

Thus, A multiple regression was run to predict WPM from type of company, age of organization, type of industry, experience in the organization, gender, age, and educational qualification, These variables statistically significantly predicted WPM,  $F(7, 513) = 56.697, p < .0005, R^2 = 0.436$  All four variables added statistically significantly to the prediction,  $p < .05$ .

**CONCLUSION**

Workers participation in management is expected to play a vital role not only in the maintenance of harmonious industrial relations but to the successful achievement of goals of an individual worker, organization and the country at large. Though the philosophy and practice of WPM varies slightly from county to county its basic objective is to involve the workers in the process of decision making and management with a view to securing their contribution to the development of organization and individual. There is no evidence to show that workers' participation in management has in any way weakened an enterprise financially or otherwise. In fact there is an overwhelming evidence to suggest that wherever the system has been introduced the enterprises and the economy as a whole have shown tremendous growth. It is therefore felt that a legal base should be provided for institutionalizing workers' participation in management, particularly in the context of liberalization and globalization in India. Workers and management should join hands together to sort out their day to day problems. Also it helps them in achieving improved work culture, access to new technology, improved

production processes and to achieve higher production targets. These objectives can be achieved only through mutual understanding. Mutual dialogue and workers participation are therefore, the need of the hour as it ensures that the workers' welfare is taken care of and their interests are safeguarded too.

On comparing the responses of workers with that of management, it is found that workers had less awareness and agreeability to concepts of WPM as compared to management. This is possibly due to lack of clarity about the role of WPM and inability of the workers to view the current system, which can be attributed to the inability of the successful function of the schemes of WPM. Hence, it is suggested that the importance of WPM should be realised by management not only in words but should be reflected through their actions. Extensive training and education should be provided to the workers about the entire process of WPM.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

A. The concept and practice of WPM and the experience available from organizations in India clearly calls for a new approach based on organization specific participative schemes. Government should institutionalize the idea of WPM by providing participation through statutory enactment. It is suggested that the Government and Management should take necessary steps to modify the structure of WPM in such a way that the basic structural defects are rooted out.

B. After the initial lead by the Government, the management of both public and private organizations must seize to promote WPM. All existing "Political Bureaucratic models of Participation" should be abandoned and organization specific schemes should be designed and implemented.

C. Management should develop the right kind of attitude and skills to enable them to practice participative styles. The leadership technique has to be changed from authoritarian to participative. This will require carefully designed schemes of organizational development through suitable techniques.

D. Seminars, conferences and legal literacy programmes should be conducted more emphatically for the workers and managers in the organization. Management must solicit employee cooperation on key issues such as adoption of new technology and modernization of business. Level of participation should be decided as per the organizations needs. One policy fits all is not possible.

E. The most appropriate criteria for nominating representative should be on the basis of members of elected union. Management should implement an effective documentation system, particularly for its grievance procedure, to increase trust in the system and to motivate workers to participate.

F. In order to successfully implement participative management schemes in the organization; immediate steps should be taken to strengthen the trade unions. They should be strong, representative and recognized trade unions at the enterprise and industry level.

G. Workers should actively participate in training programs which would help in closing the gap in knowledge and perception between different levels of management, and between management and workers. Workers must be educated towards joining trade unions.

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