



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

**ACT/EMP**  
PUBLICATIONS



# **CASE STUDIES AND TEACHING NOTES ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

(Edited by C.S. Venkata Ratnam)

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## **PREFACE**

The idea of preparing case studies for teaching and training purposes on some contemporary themes in the field of human resources/industrial relations was mooted at the South-Asian Regional Conference of Employers' Associations in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in January 1994. The conference reviewed the human resource and industrial relations situation in South Asia and felt that employers' associations should proactively deal with the emerging challenges and contribute to strengthening professionalism. Noting the paucity of locally developed teaching and training materials that take into account the contextual factors, it was felt appropriate to commission a series of case studies on five major themes: modernisation and restructuring, multi-skilling, privatisation, corporate decline and turnaround, and labour-management cooperation.

The officials of the employers' associations present on the occasion readily responded by promising necessary support and cooperation. Financial assistance to launch this project was made available by the Norwegian Government funded ILO-Bureau for Employers' Activities Project on Human Resource Development.

Soon, a network of case-writers was formed with inputs from the national employers' organizations in the region. Short orientation programmes were held in four out of the five countries to discuss the method and approach as well as to identify the case study companies. In Bangladesh the case writers were not present at this orientation programme. In India, this was done through informal interactions.

The cases were written by executives of concerned employers' organizations or their nominees who happened to be either professional managers from member companies, academics or consultants. The background of various case writers and the circumstances in which they conducted the field work for preparing the cases in their respective countries being varied, it was felt appropriate to retain the divergence than force a unitary format and style of presentation. Some case studies are more complete and comprehensive in presenting data and information while others a little sketchy. The main reason is the difficulty in accessing information in spite of the fact that the national employers' organizations themselves have been actively involved in this project. Significantly, however, care has been taken to present the cases, to the extent possible, in an objective manner.

The cases were discussed at national workshops of case writers in respective countries. Two regional workshops of case writers were held: The workshop In Colombo, Sri Lanka in May 1995 discussed the drafts and the one at Kathmandu, Nepal in August 1996 helped finalise the drafts and the teaching notes.

It is hoped that given the inadequacy of teaching cases in human resources/industrial relations in the region, all the cases included in this volume would be seen as a useful effort in the direction of filling such a gap, even if partially. To make the use of the cases easy and effective, teaching note is developed for each of the cases and presented in Volume II.

The response to several of these cases has been quite encouraging. The ILO Office in Nepal has assisted the Employers' Council and translated the cases on Nepal into Nepalese. The ILO South Asian Advisory Team has used these cases in their industrial relations courses which included participants from all the three major social partners. In Sri Lanka, the Employers Federation of Ceylon assisted the Asian-American Free Labour Institute in developing curriculum for the Canadian International Development Agency sponsored project, "Improving Industrial Relations." Timothy Ryan, Country Programme Director of the Institute wrote, "In particular I'd like to note the importance of the role in the development of the curriculum that the case studies created under the Joint ILO-NORWAY project have played. These case studies will provide a valuable service and are quite useful in developing role plays and communications exercises for all the organizations involved. I understand also that the Employers Federation (in Sri Lanka) was an active participant in producing the case studies; the work is of a highly professional calibre, clearly written, and well-organised." In India one of the case writers and the editor had the opportunity to use some of the cases which were well received. Such spin off benefits and the encouraging feedback already received reinforce the trust and investment that the sponsors and case contributors have placed in the project.

It is hoped that the case studies and the accompanying teaching notes would be extensively used by not only the academic institutions, but also the social partners in their teaching and training programmes.

I wish to acknowledge my deep appreciation and debt of gratitude to: the ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities and the Norwegian government and their officials for sponsoring the project, the case writers and case reviewers, case study companies, the employers' associations in the region for their cooperation, and the International Management Institute for enabling me to undertake this pleasant task.

V. Chandra and D. K. Panigrahi provided research assistance and Rakesh Bansal of Print Bureau and Leena Prakasan of IMI helped me with word processing. I thank them too.

C S Venkata Ratnam  
31 October 1996

**(This package of case studies is available with the Bureau for Employers' Activities)**

*For further information, please contact Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP)*

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