

Voluntary Retirement Scheme and it's after Effects in Post Reform Period: A Sociological Study on Four Steel Plants in West Bengal

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The concept of voluntary retirement is not something new to any public or private sector enterprises in India but the concept got special importance in post reform period as a tool for cost cutting measure and to make the PSUs slim and trim for survival in the competitive global market. However the scheme used to practice by different public sector undertakings in normal condition for extreme need after considering the appeal of the employee for their inability to continue either due to ill health or any other personal problem. But in pre reform period it was exercised voluntarily without giving any pressure from the company end. In post reform period PSUs practiced VR scheme for retrenchment of surplus labour as an effective measures for modernization programme. In PSUs under study it is observed that for survival of the company cost cutting was a necessity and they created the situation for taking VR with lucrative retirement benefit. I have opted here to study VR scheme in detail and to reveal the socio-psychological impact of VR scheme on employees who took VRS from PSUs and PSEs of West Bengal. Two heavy steel industries have been taken to analyse the research problem. Both qualitative and quantitative tools and methods have been applied for collecting and analyzing data in this research. Study reveals that VR scheme was an effective solution for making the company slim and trim without deploying heavy force. It was used as a mechanism for smooth retrenchment of surplus workforce and to make the company stable and competitive in global market. Study shows that the scheme was very much effective for PSUs under study because after retrenchment of surplus labour company was able to make profit in post liberalised period. By using the tactics of VRS majority of the workforces got retired and after that minor forces have been applied to some extent to push VR scheme for few workers. Researcher also comes to know that the after effect of such scheme was not very gainful for all of the employees retired under VR scheme. Except few employees most of the workers suffered at the end.

Key words: Voluntary Retirement, Post reform period, Public sector undertakings, Liberalisation, Privatization, Heavy Steel Industry