
1.1 Definition of employee relations.

According to P.N.Singh & Neeraj Kumar, (2011), employee Relations is about ensuring the employer-employee relationships that contribute to satisfactory productivity, motivation and morale. Mainly it is about preventing and resolving problems involving individuals, which arise out of or affect work situations. As for Walker (1979 cited John Arnold *et al*, 2005, p.467-68), he defined employee relations as being to do with “*the accommodation between the various interests that are involved in the processes of getting work done*”. This definition however, does not assume that the parties involved are necessarily management and other employees, nor that the latter are represented by trade unions.

Walker, (1979) further argued that “*the key to competent employee relations is in effective communications. For the mutual benefit of the employers and the employee, engaging in conversations and consultations rather than passing orders down the line will be the way companies will operate. Rigid Labour legislations and controls will become less relevant and the government systems will have to look at the needs of the future.*”

Employee relations have been dominated by research on institution (such as government, trade unions and employers) rather than individuals as argued by Brotherton, (2003 cited John Arnold *et al*, 2005). This plus the perceived tendency of psychologists to adopt a managerialist perspective has meant that psychology has been rather marginalized in the field of employee relations.

Employee relations in the 21st century set the human factor as the highest priority in any organisation. It emphasises the search for, development of, continuity of talent and merit. People are encouraged to participate and contribute in a cooperative, collaborative team environment where status and power symbols are minimized. “*The frenetic urge of the managerial lemmings to throw themselves and others over the cliff has been replaced by a process of consolidation based on merit, talent, emotional intelligence, learning and continuous development. Office barriers are being eliminated.*” Loyalty is earned and not demanded. One remains loyal to an organisation as long as it contributes to ones development and satisfaction. (Laurie Dicker, 2003)