

# Parameters of Industrial Relation influencing the overall satisfaction with the IR: Evidence from Power Sector of West Bengal

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## ARTICLE DETAILS

### Article History

Published Online: 25 May 2019

### Keywords

Factors, Industrial Relations, Satisfaction, Structural Equation Model, Power Sector, West Bengal.

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## ABSTRACT

*In this present study, we have tried to identify the factors of industrial relations which help to enhance the satisfaction level concerning to industrial relations among the employees of the power sector located in West Bengal. We have gone through the multifarious existing literatures to find out such type of factors. But we were unable to extract such suitable factors to understand the clear existing industrial relations. Therefore, from the various literature reviews, we have identified significant variables which will help us to explore the important factors to understand the actual situation of existing IR. Before exploring the factors, we have to validate the scale. Therefore, in the present study, we have validated the scale before exploring the factors and finally we have established the relations among the extracted factors and the satisfaction level with the industrial relations. We have used **reliability test**, **convergent** and **discriminant** validity test to validate the scale. Then, we have used Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to explore the factors and finally, Path Analysis model has been used to establish the relations among the factors of industrial relations and the satisfaction level. As a result, after validating the scale, we have explored four factors namely '**Redressal Time**', '**Actors' Initiative**', '**Impartial Measures**', and '**Settlement Procedure**'. The result of path analysis modelling suggest that the relations among the factors of industrial relations and the satisfaction level can be explained by standardized coefficients of **0.308** for Redressal Time; **0.333** for Actors' Initiative; **- 0.050** for Impartial Measures; and **0.158** for Settlement Procedure. The model has been significantly satisfied all the indicators of the Model Fitness.*

## 1. Introduction

Basically the term 'Industrial Relations' is a combination of two individual terms namely, 'Industry' and 'Relations'. While the term 'Industry' represents any type of productive activity involving a person or group of persons, the other term 'Relations' indicates the relationship that is existing within the industry between the employer and his/ her workmen or employees. Hence, Industrial Relations are the relationships exist between employees and employers within the set up of an organization. Industrial Relations may also be seen as the process by which employees and their employers in an organization interact at the place of work to establish the terms and conditions of employment. It therefore involves the study and practices of related aspects such as workers participation in management, collective bargaining, trade unionism and overall labour management relations. Undoubtedly, good industrial relations is an outcome of mutual trust and understanding between employers/ management and employees/ workers and their unions. Further, in addition to employers and employees the state (or the Government) often intervenes in labour-management relations in order to protect the interests of both the parties (employer and employees). The state also regulates the relations between employers and employees by enacting labour legislations and requires the employers/ management to comply with those regulations. Therefore, industrial relations are tripartite and involves three parties namely employers/ management, employees/ workers/

labourers and the state or Government. In India, the 'Industrial Disputes Act 1947' is one of the most important legislation for maintaining proper industrial relations in different industrial organizations.

In recent years, the issue of industrial relations has become one of the most delicate and complex problems of modern industrial society. This is due to the fact that level of education among workers has improved which has made them more conscious of their rights. Moreover, with increasing wages, the standard of living of workers/ employees has changed and now, they view the management from different perspectives. Even a slight change in the policy of the management may invite labour problem and the situation may become volatile. So, industrial relations have now become a very sensitive issue in all industries including power generating industry.

If industrial relations is not harmonious, then it has tremendous negative impact on industrial relations as well as productivity and West Bengal Power Industries will certainly face tremendous problems, as a consequence of poor industrial relations, number of Strikes, Gheraos, Lock-Outs are increasing year after year and productivity suffers like anything. If industrial relations is cordial, then it has got some positive effect on productivity which is the ultimate source of revenue generation of power sectors. If revenue is higher, then all

power sectors located in the territory of West Bengal will definitely fulfill the aspirations of different stake holders so there is a cascading effect of Industrial Relations system and enhancement of productivity in this sector.

In the present study, we have validated a new scale and investigated the most important factors under industrial relations which are influencing the satisfaction level with the existing industrial relations in the power sector of West Bengal. More precisely, we have explored the factors and their degree of influence on existing satisfaction level on industrial relations in this sector. In our research, we have given the literature review concerning to selected variables. On the basis of these variables, we have framed a validated (using content validity) questionnaire. Then, we have explored the important factors and with these factors, we have tried to develop a research model. Subsequently, we have incorporated the research methodology and have presented the result by analysing the data. Finally, we have given the conclusions.

## 2. Review of Literature and Gap

Several studies have been made of various aspects of industrial relations. Over the years, different research studies have been conducted by various renowned researchers in India as well as worldwide in the area of industrial relations after identifying the key variables and factors responsible for the same. Some of the major available research works have been referred below which are relevant to our present study.

**Mamoria, C. B. (1983)**, in his book, had discussed the emergence of industrial labour as a major industrial force. He had also discussed in detail about the origin, the structure, the growth and the role of the trade unions in promoting industrial relations. The book had recommended a systematic grievance procedure approach to satisfy both Labour and management. In order to promote good industrial relations, they had advocated workers participation in management, collective bargaining, arbitration and adjudication procedures. **Rath, G. C., Giri, D. V., & Parida, S. C. (1991)**, in their paper, had analysed industrial relations trends in Orissa. They had characterised the industrial relations scene in Orissa by: (i) deteriorating union membership in the organized sector; (ii) emergence of regional level unions in the unorganized sector; (iii) lockouts significantly contributing to the mandays lost; (iv) increasing realization on the part of some employers and their employees about the need to bargain collectively; (v) formation of joint forums at plant level in a few industrial units; (vi) unions' failure in some plants to play an effective role in improving production and ensuring protection of economic interests of workers; (vii) somewhat unsatisfactory and ineffective role played by the state government; and (viii) heightening tension in some industrial establishments caused by the immediate community. The book authored by **Gani, A. (1991)**, had examined the labour management relations with the context of the living conditions of the workers, job satisfaction of the workers and the working of the dispute handling machinery. The extent of participative decision making in the textile industry in the Jammu and Kashmir state had also been discussed by the author. **Sodhi, J. S. (1995)**, the paper had examined the issues, trends and developments in the industrial relations in India and in the other South Asian Countries with

the help of different literature. In this article, the author had explored the importance of the factors connected with industrial relations and their implications in respect of the industrial relations' policies. He had recommended various measures to promote sound industrial relations and the attainment of industrial peace. He had also recommended that the workers should be involved in the decision-making process, particularly at the time of 19 introducing changes in technology and that the employers should follow the people-oriented style of management. The article authored by **Pinto, J. L. (1995)** had sketch out the roles of the management as well as the trade unions for promoting a better understanding and a better relationship among the employers and employees. According to him, salaries of the workers should not be linked with their experience, but he said that skills alone should be taken into consideration for fixing their salaries. He had also suggested that the ownership of the company should be extended to the workers through stock options. According to the paper authored by **Raj, C. N. (2000)**, multiplicity of unions was a matter of concern for both the workers as well as for the employers as it was counter-productive in its nature and not conducive to the promotion of competitiveness in the present context of things. **Fahlbeck, R. (2002)** stated that legislative intervention sometimes, happens to be a result of deliberate choice by the labour market parties to solve the impasse of collective bargaining. **Jacob, K. K. (2005)**, in his article, the author had done empirical verification of several factors which were closely associated with industrial disputes scene in Kerala. Nine industrial sectors was included in that study where the authored had analysed the causes of the disputes, political affiliation of the workers, different forms of the workers participation in management and grievance redressal arrangements. Out of these causes, the author had adequately addressed two important issues namely why in general workers prefer 'multiplicity of unions' and 'outside leadership'. The study had emphasized that one important factor for the successful running of labour management participation schemes like works committees, canteen committees etc. is attributed to the attitude of the management. **Rajasekhar, D., & Anantha, K. H. (2006)**, his study had exposed that production relations emerging from within the industry could explain as to whether a worker was able to get access to the benefits or not. It was argued that when the workers were highly unorganised, the role of the trade unions in ensuring that there was collective bargaining for the benefit of the workers would become either marginal or non-existent as trade unions would find it very difficult to change the strategies in view of the changing conditions. **Srivastava, D. K. (2006)** noticed that expectation of new generation of workmen was not in line with the agenda of unions and there was a drastic mismatch as because likings and expectations of new workmen changed to a great extent due to stiff competition and volatile market condition. **Ghosh, B. (2008)** observed that though the unions were changing their strategies and approaches towards labour issues, but still some resistance existed in certain pockets because of non-redressal of common issues which was creating problems to the industrial relations of various organizations. **Jesili, I. M. (2012)**, had examined the causes and settlement of disputes from the perspectives of the workers as well as the management and he had suggested to maintain good relations between the management and the

workmen. According to him, the bonus, wages and allowances are the major causes for the industrial disputes from the perspective of both the workers and the management. Inter-union rivalry was the prime factor in this study which influences disputes he had also concluded that the arbitration was the best way for the settlement of disputes. **Ayantunji, O., & Ayantunji, M. (2013)** tried to explain major factors which may influence the selection of strategy for worker management relations in the British system of industrial relations. In his study, he emphasized on the field of interaction.

From the review of earlier literature, it may be concluded that though there are so many different factors explored by different researchers are available which are exists under the industrial relations in different sectors. They obviously discussed the causes and effects of different dimensions to the problems of industrial relations. But, there is a lack of solid established factors particularly in power sector. They are lacking in certain respects. No researcher has shown any cause and effect relations between existing factors of industrial relations and the satisfaction level with the IR. However, they are not complete. Therefore, we go for establish a good scale taking different variable from the existing literature review. From the scale, if we can clearly identify the significant factors of industrial relations which can effects the satisfaction level positively or negatively then we can shade some light on good industrial relations system in power sector of West Bengal in particular.

A scale by taking total **15** questions was set up to understand the factors under IR which may influence the employee's satisfaction level. Also, we have taken **5** questions which may help to understand the overall satisfaction relating to the IR in the power sector.

**3. Objectives of the Present Study**

After going through the literature review, on the basis of research gap, we have formulated three objectives for the present study. The objectives are as follows:

1. To develop a good scale to understand the factors of industrial relations which are influencing their satisfaction with the existing IR as well as to measure their satisfaction level concerning to IR in power sector;
2. To explore the factors of industrial relations which are significantly influencing their satisfaction level; and
3. To establish a relation between the extracted factors under the industrial relations and overall satisfaction concerning to industrial relations.

**4. Research Methodology**

At first, our created scale had been sent to twenty experts for the content validity. Among the experts, five were researchers, five were academicians, and rest ten experts were leader, supervisor and management authority from the

different existing division of the power sector of West Bengal. By taking their suggestions, we have developed a scale or questionnaire for data collection from the respondents selected for the present study. We have collected primary data from the respondents where multi stage stratified random sampling was used to select the respondents in our study. We have distributed the questionnaire among 400 respondents and finally we got **325** filled up questionnaire from them. The analysis is finally done on the basis of the responses from the 306 respondents as remaining 19 responses were not properly filled up. This Research work have undergone at the different divisions of power sector located at different area of West Bengal, India. The data collection was done during the period of January 2018 to June 2018. The survey questionnaire was consisted of two sections. The first section captured the agreement of the employees with the key indicators which may explore some factors that may affect the industrial relations in the organisation and the second section captured their satisfaction level with the existing IR in the organisation. The response was captured in a five-point Likert's Scale where 1 implies 'Strongly Dissatisfied', 2 implies 'Dissatisfied', 3 implies 'Averagely Satisfied', 4 implies 'Satisfied', and 5 implies 'Strongly Satisfied'.

**4.1 Research Methods**

At first, content validity was employed to develop a better scale or questionnaire and reliability test was also used to observe the data consistency between the two sections of the scale in order to fulfil the first objective in this present study. **This was finally used to collect the data for the analysis purpose.** The collected data have been used to fulfil the other two objectives of this study. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) has been used to fulfil the second objective in order to extract the important factors influencing the IRs. Reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha has been used further to observe the data consistency among the items under the different extracted factors and correlation coefficient has been computed among the factors itself and between the different factors with the overall satisfaction with the IR. Finally, Structural Equation Model (SEM) (**Kline, 1998**) or Path Analysis Model has been conducted to fulfil the third objective of this study to establish the relations between the influencing factors and satisfaction level concerning to industrial relations.

**5. Analysis, Results, and Discussions**

Objective wise analysis, results, and discussions are given below:

**5.1. Content Validity**

The suggestions received from experts help us to develop a good scale by taking 17 items under key indicators influencing the industrial relations and four items to understand the satisfaction level with the IR. Table 1 shows the proportion of their suggestions. We did not accept the items which are less important according to their suggestions.

Developed Scale or Questionnaire		Proportion		
Item	Key indicators to understand the facts affecting the IR	100 %	>75%	>50 %
1	Fairness in grievance handling	✓		

2	Length of time taken to complete the collective bargaining process			✓
3	Employee's opinion relating to conciliation Process	✓		
4	Fairness of Disciplinary Measures		✓	
5	Length of time taken to investigate disciplinary cases	✓		
6	Employee's opinion relating to Adjudication Process	✓		
7	Government acts as a role of enhancing industrial relations		✓	
8	Length of time taken to resolve dispute by the industrial court	✓		
9	Trade Union acts as a role of enhancing industrial relations		✓	
10	Length of time taken to complete conciliation process	✓		
11	Management acts as a role of enhancing industrial relations			✓
12	Nature of employment enhances industrial relations	✓		
13	Length of time taken to resolve a grievance		✓	
Item	<b>Key indicators to understand the satisfaction level with the IR</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>&gt;75%</b>	<b>&gt;50 %</b>
14	Satisfaction with the grievance handling procedure	✓		
15	Satisfaction with the disciplinary procedures	✓		
16	Satisfaction with the collective bargaining process	✓		
17	Satisfaction with the dispute handling procedure	✓		

On the basis of the suggestions received from the experts, we modified the items. **Where, we calculated the response for each and every item.** We accepted only those items for the questionnaire which were accepted by more than 50 % experts out of 20 experts. In this way, we have selected 13 items out of 15 items under the key indicators to understand the factors influencing the industrial relations and we have selected 4 items out of 5 items under the key indicators to understand the satisfaction level. Therefore, we have selected total 17 items out of 20 items to develop the questionnaire and

remaining four items excluded from the scale as those items were accepted by less than 50% experts.

According to the methodology, we have conducted the reliability test to observe the overall Cronbach's Alpha value for the developed scale which is also can be called as an instrument for the present study. The result of Cronbach's Alpha in table 2 is highly desirable as the Cronbach's Alpha value is close to 1. Therefore, on the basis of the result, we can articulate that the items under the two sections of the instruments are expressed the same things separately as the internal consistencies are too high.

**Table 2: Reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha**

Reliability Statistics		
Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Key indicators relating to the Factors	0.784	13
Key indicators relating to the Satisfaction	0.669	04
Total Scale	0.814	17

**5.2. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)**

Hence, according to the methodology, we have conducted EFA to explore the factors to fulfil the second objective.

In the EFA, the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) statistics predicts if data are likely to factor well, based on correlation

and partial correlation. There is a KMO statistic for each individual variable, and their sum is the KMO overall statistic. KMO varies from 0 to 1.0 and KMO overall should be 0.60 or higher to proceed with factor analysis. In our study, we have got the KMO of **0.714** which is quite logical to proceed for factor analysis. The result is shown in table 3.

**Table 3: Result of KMO & Bartlett's Test**

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.640	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2189.773
	df	78
	Sig.	0.000

We have constructed rotated component matrix in order to identify the factors in our study. This is represented in table 4.

Table 4: Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Q11: Length of time taken to investigate disciplinary cases	.870			
Q19: Government acts as a role of enhancing industrial relations	.818			
Q8: Length of time taken to resolve a grievance	.725			
Q16: Overall satisfaction with the dispute handling procedure	.669			
Q14: Overall satisfaction with the collective bargaining process	.607			
Q18: Trade Union acts as a role of enhancing industrial relations				
Q13: Length of time taken to complete the collective bargaining process		.817		
Q17: Management acts as a role of enhancing industrial relations		.764		
Q15: Length of time taken to resolve dispute by the industrial court		.734		
Q10: Fairness of Disciplinary Measures			.893	
Q7: Fairness in grievance handling			.775	
Q12: Overall satisfaction with the disciplinary procedures				.779
Q9: Overall satisfaction with the grievance handling procedure				.747
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.				
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.				
a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.				

From the above table, it is clear to us that we have explored five factors which influence the industrial relations system in the power generating organizations located in West

Bengal. We named these four factors as ‘Transparency’ (T), ‘Redressal Time’ (RT), ‘Dispute Procedure (DP), and Settlement Machinery (SM).

Table 5: Total Variation Explanation & Cronbach Alpha Values

Factors	Number of Items	Scale of Items	Cronbach Alpha	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Transparency (T)	5	LRF	0.817	29.148	29.148
Redressal Time (RT)	3	LRF	0.757	22.794	51.943
Dispute Procedure (DP)	2	LRF	0.801	11.678	63.621
Settlement Machinery (SM)	2	LRF	0.629	10.175	73.796

From table 5, it is also very clear to us that **Transparency** explains **29.148 %** variance followed by **Redressal Time (RT)**, **Dispute Procedure (DP)**, and **Settlement Machinery (SM)**. Thus, the analysis has explained total **73.796 %** variance through the above stated components.

the alpha is to 1.00, the greater the internal consistency of items in the factor being assessed. In the present study, all the Alpha values are desirable as the values are crossed the unaccepted range **0.5**. Some of the factors are highly desirable namely F1 and F2 as the values are more than **0.7**.

The table 5 also shows the Cronbach’s alpha value for each factors which is designed to look at the measurement level of internal consistency that whether the items under each factor measures the same thing within the factors separately. Alpha is measured on the same scale as Pearson r (correlation coefficient) and typically varies between 0 and 1. The closer

**5.3. Structural Equation Model (SEM) or Path Analysis Model**

Again, as per methodology of this study, we have conducted Structural Equation Model to establish a relation between the explored factors and overall satisfaction concerning to industrial relations.

Figure 1: Path Analysis Model

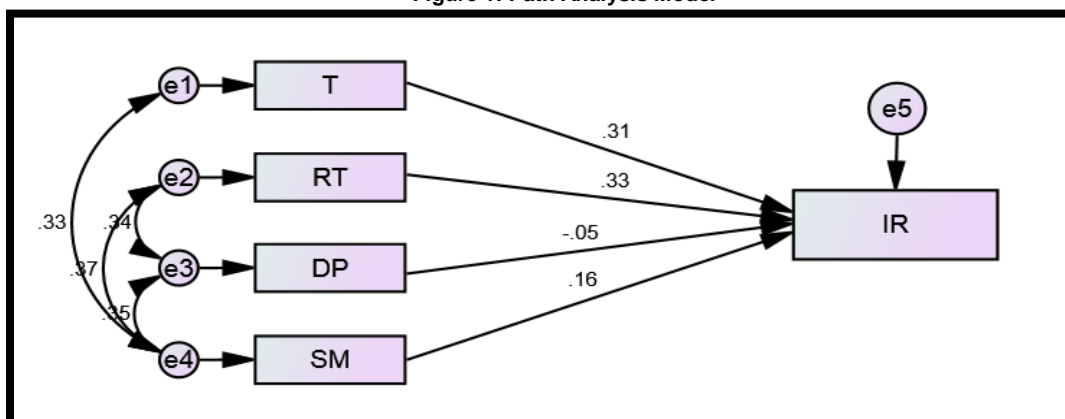


Table 6: Fit Indices for the Path Model

Model Fit Indices				Cut-off Criteria		
Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation	Terrible	Acceptable	Excellent
CMIN	0.289	---	---	---	---	---
DF	2	---	---	---	---	---
CMIN/DF	0.145	Less than 3	Excellent	>5	>3	>1
GFI	1.000	>0.95	Excellent	<0.90	<0.95	>0.95
AGFI	0.997	>0.95	Excellent	<0.90	<0.95	>0.95
CFI	1.000	>0.95	Excellent	<0.90	<0.95	>0.95
NFI	0.999	>0.95	Excellent	<0.90	<0.95	>0.95
RFI	0.994	>0.95	Excellent	<0.90	<0.95	>0.95
RMR	0.019	<0.08	Excellent	>0.10	>0.08	<0.08
RMSEA	0.000	<0.06	Excellent	>0.08	>0.06	<0.06
PClose	0.934	>0.05	Excellent	<0.01	<0.05	>0.05

**CMIN / DF:** The relative chi square is an index of modification towards the model evaluation. It may help to modify the path to obtain a better result on the model fit. As per our analysis shown in table 6, according to cut-off criteria, the value **0.145** is great. **Goodness of Fit Index (GFI):** These are chi square based calculations independent of degree of freedom. It varies from 0 (poor fit) to 1 (perfect fit). It indicates the proportion of variance in the sample variance covariance matrix and that is accounted for by the model. In this study, we have obtained the GFI value 1.000 as shown in table 6. So, our model is good and it matches the criteria of goodness of fit. **Adjusted Goodness of Fit (AGFI):** It should be  $\geq 0.90$  for goodness of model fit. In this analysis, we have obtained the AGFI of .997 as shown in table 6 which also matches the criteria of goodness of fit. The values of GFI and AGFI are excellent. **Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA):** It is based on predicted versus observed covariance but penalizing for lack of parsimony (or simplicity), in

assessing a model's amount of error. It is popular because it does not require comparison with a null model. In our study as shown in table 6, we have got RMSEA of **0.000** which indicates the acceptable fitness of the model and it is estimated at 95% upper ends. RMSEA  $< 0.08$  acceptable,  $< 0.06$  excellent. (Brown and Cudeck, 1993). **Normed Fit Index (NFI) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI):** It should be  $\geq 0.90$  for goodness of model fit. In this analysis, we have obtained the NFI of **0.999** and CFI of **1.000** as shown in table 6 which also match the criteria of goodness of fit. All the qualities were consistent respectively with the criteria of Bollen (1989), Diamantopoulos and Siguaw (2000), and Kaplan (2000).

The result of path analysis of the structural model is shown below. It clearly indicates that three the linking relations out of four linking relations in our study are fully supported with significant 'p' values.

Measurement Path	Hypotheses	Estimate	S.E.	C.R	$\rho$	Remarks
Satisfaction ← T	H1a	0.308	0.013	5.936	***	Accepted
Satisfaction ← RT	H1b	0.333	0.024	6.173	***	Accepted
Satisfaction ← DP	H1c	-0.050	0.041	-0.929	0.353	Rejected
Satisfaction ← SM	H1d	0.158	0.049	2.736	0.006	Accepted

In this study, we conducted a path analysis to test the framed hypotheses and to define the direction of relations. When we examined the Table, it can be seen that in the model, the three factors (T, RT, and SM) have significant effect on overall satisfaction with the existing IR but there is no significant relation between the factor DP and the overall satisfaction. Though, the total model is highly satisfied based on the fit indices (Table).

From the Path analysis of Structural Model shown in table 7, it is clearly observed that **Redressal Time** is the strongest determinant (**t value = +6.173**) which influences positively on the industrial relations system in power generating sector of West Bengal. It is also seen that **Transparency (t value = +5.936)**, **Settlement Machinery (t value = +2.736)**. Though,

the path analysis has shown one insignificant negative relation between the **Dispute Procedure** and the **overall satisfaction**.

**6. Conclusions**

From our study, we have explored the four factors successfully which are influencing the industrial relations of the power sector of West Bengal. From the established SEM or Path Analysis Model, it has been proved that there are strong linking relations i.e., the explored factors namely **Transparency, Redressal Time, and Settlement Machinery** are influencing the overall satisfaction with the industrial relations system in the power generating organizations of West Bengal where one important factor i.e., **Dispute Procedure** is not influencing the industrial relations in this organisation. From the present study, the final observation was that out of the explored four factors, **Redressal Time** has the strongest

influence on industrial relations system and Settlement Procedure has the smallest influence on industrial relations systems.

#### **Limitations and Further Scope of Research**

We have only given emphasis on the power sector, particularly in West Bengal. The future study may be conducted in other sectors of the economy as well as other parts of our country with the help of the same methodology. We have explored some significant factors which influence the industrial relations in our study. Other factors may also be taken in the future study which might be affecting the other dimensions relating to human resource management.

#### **Availability of Data and Materials**

The datasets used and analysed during the present study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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#### **Funding**

We declare that no funding was received for the design of the present study, analysis, and interpretation of data or the writing of the manuscript.

#### **Acknowledgements**

We are grateful to the officials of power generating sector of West Bengal for giving us this opportunity to consult with the **management authority**. Also, we would like to reciprocate our gratefulness to all the **employees** who are the respondents of this study.

#### **Declaration of Conflicting Interests**

The authors have declared that there are no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/ or publication of this article.