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## Lesson - 17

# DISCIPLINE

### 17.0 Objective:

After studying this lesson, the student is able to understand:

- \* the meaning for the term Discipline.
- \* what are the forms and types of Discipline
- \* what are the causes for indiscipline
- \* understand the disciplinary procedure.

### Structure:

- 17.1 Introduction
- 17.2 Meaning of Discipline
- 17.3 Objectives of Discipline
- 17.4 Principles of Discipline
- 17.5 Forms & Types of Discipline
- 17.6 Causes of Indiscipline
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### 17.1 Introduction:

Employee discipline is the backbone of industrial relations. It is essential to promote and maintain employee discipline for higher productivity and industrial growth. A disciplined work force can meet the challenges of the production and can achieve the organisation objectives in a better way. Discipline promotes cooperation among the workers and increases the morale of the people at work. Infact, the function of management is to keep an enterprise going on smoothly, efficiently and profitably. Every organisation must have a work force that has to accept certain reasonable standards of behaviour at the work place. Effective employee performance depends on the willingness on the part of the employees to carry out the orders of the superiors, to abide by the rules and norms of the organisation.

## 17.2 Meaning of Discipline:

In simple words, discipline means orderliness or the absence of disorder, chaos and confusion in human behaviour and action. According to **Richard D. Calhoon**. “discipline may be considered as the force that promotes individuals or groups to observe rules, regulations, standards and procedures deemed necessary for the organisation”.

Discipline means obedience and maintenance of proper subordination among employees and a check or restraint on the liberty of individual. It is at once a training that corrects, moulds and strengthens the individual behaviour. **Bremblett** observes that ‘discipline does not mean a strict and technical observance of original rules and regulations. It simply means working, cooperating and behaving in a normal and orderly way, as a responsible person would expect an employee to do. Discipline is employee self control which promotes him to willingly cooperate with organisational standards and objectives”.

Discipline in the broader sense mean “orderliness the opposite confusion”. Discipline is a product of culture, value system, environment and a basic part of the management of employee attitudes and behaviour. Discipline implies a state of order in an organisation. It means proper appreciation of the hierarch superior - subordinate relationship. Discipline is said to be good when employees willingly follow company’s rules and it is said to be bad when employees follow rules unwillingly or actually disobey regulations.

## 17.3 Objectives of Discipline:

- i) To develop among the employees a spirit of tolerance, and a desire to mitigate the problems and proceed for adjustments.
- ii) To create a good atmosphere of respect for the human personality and to maintain a good human relations.
- iii) To give and seek direction and responsibility guidance from one another.
- iv) To increase the working efficiency and to work in a effective motivation, so that the productivity is stepped up further, so the cost of production and quality of production can be improved further efficiently.
- v) To develop the harmonious relations between their colleagues and sub-ordinates.
- vi) To increase the working style and to develop the coordination and cooperation between each other
- vii) To improve the element of certainty despite several differences and other related changes in an organisation.
- viii) To provide direction, right leadership and getting coordination between each other.
- ix) To develop the feeling of adjustment so that workers can work effectively.

## 17.4 Principles of Employment Discipline:

The principles of a good disciplinary system are as follows:

- i) **Code of Conduct:** With the consent of both parties for the establishment of discipline a code of rules and regulations should be formulated. They should be properly and timely communicated.

- ii) **Equality in Treatment:** All workers should be equally treated on the basis of code of conduct without any partiality.
- iii) **Preventive Measures:** Always prevention is better than cure so the management should take all preventive steps to promote positive discipline in the organisation.
- iv) **Responsible Person:** On the basis of the code of conduct, the responsibility of disciplinary action should be in the hands of a competent responsible person.
- v) **Knowledge of Administration:** Employees should have full knowledge of the rules and administration and it should be clear that on the violation which punishment is applicable.
- vi) **Natural Justice :** Discipline should be based on natural justice. Accused person should be given a chance to hearing and then only any disciplinary action is to be taken.
- vii) **Prompt Action :** Disciplinary action should be taken very quickly. If decisions are delayed, there is no effective control on punishment.
- viii) **Instrument of Organisation:** Official disciplinary action is to be calculated as an instrument of progress of the organisation.
- ix) **Confidential Proceedings:** Disciplinary proceedings should be confidential.

### 17.5 Forms and Types of Discipline:

There are many types of employees discipline as takes place in an organisation. They are as follows:

- i) Positive Discipline.
- ii) Negative Discipline.

#### i) Positive Discipline:

Positive discipline implies a sense of duty to observe the rules and regulations. It is also called self-discipline. It involves creation of an atmosphere in the organisation whereby employees willingly conform to the established rules and regulations. Positive discipline can be achieved through rewards and effective leadership. Positive discipline, when developed from within, results in team spirit, automatic respect of established rules and regulations, respect for supervisors, escalating employee morale, greater freedom for personal development and self-expression and increased willingness to cooperate and coordinate, and appreciation of company objectives and effort towards their achievement.

#### ii) Negative Discipline:

It is also known as punitive, autocratic or corrective discipline or enforced discipline. Here employees are forced to orders, follow the rules and regulations and perform the assigned tasks according to procedures laid down. The objective is to ensure that employees do not violate the rules and regulations. Negative disciplinary action involves such techniques as fines, reprimand, demotion, layoff, transfer, etc.

## Kinds of Punishment/Penalties

Minor Penalties	Major Penalties
1. Oral warning 2. Written reprimand 3. Loss of privileges 4. Fines 5. Suspension	1. With holding increments 2. Demotion/stopping promotion 3. Discharge 4. Dismissal

**17.6 Causes of Indiscipline:**

The causes of indiscipline in industries can be divided into two types.

1. Internal causes
2. External causes

**I. Internal Causes :** Internal causes for indiscipline are as follows:

- i) Lack of effective and efficient leadership and direction is the major cause for employee indiscipline in the industry.
- ii) Undesirable behaviour of senior officials and supervisors
- iii) Lack of chances for personal growth and development leads to employee dissatisfaction and frustration. Such employees create indiscipline in the organisation.
- iv) Biased attitude of the management while giving facilities creates indiscipline due to dissatisfaction of the work group.
- v) Non existence of code of conduct and its knowledge to its workers lead to indiscipline.
- vi) If the officers do not care for the complaints made for the bad working conditions, ill-behaviours of supervisors and other conditions will lead to employee indiscipline.
- vii) Lack of upward communication, to represent the various work problems at lower levels is another internal problem of indiscipline.
- viii) Divide and rule policy of the management also create room for dissatisfaction among the employees. This gradually leads to a kind of indiscipline among employees.
- ix) Indiscipline also comes because of personal factors such as selection of wrong employee, lack of capability control and cooperation.
- x) Undersirable management practices, policies, and activities aiming at control of workers.
- xi) Absence of enlightened, systematic and scientific management.
- xii) Discrimination based on casts, colour, creed, sex, language and place in matters of selection, promotion, transfer, placement and discrimination in imposing penalties and handling out rewards.

**2. External Causes:** External causes of indiscipline relate to the factors outside the industry. Various non-economic social and political factors influence the discipline in industries as a whole. In the whole country is experiencing violence and disturbances, the discipline among the employees in the industry also will be affected.

### **17.7 Disciplinary Procedure:**

Disciplinary procedure in industry comprise of the following steps:

#### **a) Charge sheet is Framed and Issued:**

When the top management of the organisation comes to the conclusion that an act of misconduct committed by an employee warrants disciplinary action, the concerned employee should be issued a charge-sheet. The charge sheet should indicate the charges of indiscipline clearly and precisely and also the sufficient time should be given to the employee.

#### **b) Consideration of the Explanation:**

When the delinquent employee admits, in an unqualified manner, about his misconduct, there is no need for conducting any enquiry further. When the management is not satisfied with the employee's explanation, there is need for serving a show cause notice.

#### **c) Show-Cause Notice:**

In the show-cause notice, the employer provides another chance to the employee to explain his conduct and rebut the charges made against him. This notice is issued by the manager, who decides to punish the employee.

#### **d) Issue of Notice of Enquiry:**

If the explanation received from the employee is found to be unsatisfactory, a notice of enquiry, mentioning the time, date and place, has to be given to him in which the name of the person or officer who would conduct the enquiry would also be mentioned.

#### **e) The Holding of Enquiry:**

On the appointed day and at the appointed place and time, the enquiry is held by the enquiry officer in the presence of the employee. The details of the enquiry are recorded and the report is signed by the enquiry officer and the employee. All the supporting evidence and documents may be called by the enquiry officer and thoroughly examined.

#### **f) The Findings :**

Once the enquiry is over, the enquiry officer has to give his findings. Enquiry officer specifically mention which charges have been proved and which have not been proved. He then submits his findings to the authorities empowered to take a disciplinary action against the employee.

#### **g) Decision:**

On receiving the report, the executive authorised to take a decision there on passes an order of punishment.

### **h) Communicating Punishment:**

The punishment awarded to the worker should be communicated to him quickly. The letter of communication should contain reference to the charge sheet, the enquiry and the findings. The date from which the punishment is to be effective should also be mentioned.

### **17.8 Domestic Enquiry:**

There is no statutory regulation of disciplinary actions or procedures. However, case law has been developed by the various courts such as the Supreme Court, the High Courts, Labour Courts and Industrial Tribunals in India. Their various awards have indicated a detailed procedure for taking disciplinary action and made it compulsory on the part of the management to hold a domestic enquiry before the worker is punished for misconduct.

For holding enquiry the management appoints the company officer or immediate superior or the personnel manager as an enquiry officer. Domestic enquiry has to be held in the presence of the accused. The law does not permit a non-employee at the enquiry nor does it permit outside interference. Examination and cross examination should be free and proper and all documents are open to be seen by the parties. The findings of the enquiry officer then go to the management for proper action. Management implements the report if it is satisfied with the enquiry. Otherwise management may order for an external enquiry.

### **17.9 Essentials of a Good Disciplinary System:**

The following are the some of the essentials of a good disciplinary system that ensure smooth working of Industrial organisation.

- i) The employees must be informed clearly about what constitute good behaviour and the awards and rewards that are associated with good behaviour.
- ii) Any violation of misconduct should be promptly be enquired into and action must be taken.
- iii) All violations should be duly punished without any favour to anybody at all times but the employees should be given an opportunity to explain his action.
- iv) The procedure to be followed in respect of discipline should be carefully laid down and communicated to the employees.
- v) Disciplinary action should be handled in a constructive manner. It should be carried by the immediate line supervisor.

### **17.10 Summary:**

Employee discipline is an attitude of an individual mind, a product of culture and environment and requires along with legislative sanction, persuasion on a moral plane. Employee discipline is an indispensable code of conduct for a healthy industrial atmosphere for ensuring industrial progress. Discipline is of two types - Positive and Negative. Indiscipline is caused by faulty leadership, biased managed practices, political and trade union factors. Disciplinary action should be based on principles of natural justice. Knowledge of rules, prompt action, well defined procedure are essentials of a sound disciplinary system.

**17.11 Key Words:**

**Discipline:** It is regarded as force that prompts the individual and the group to observe rules, regulations and procedures to attain the objectives of organisation.

**Indiscipline:** Non-conformity by the organisational members to the formal and informal rules and regulations.

**Misconduct :** An act of an employee which is prejudicial.

**Domestic enquiry:** Initial enquiry, own witnesses and other evidence.

**17.12 Self - Assessment Questions:**

1. What is Discipline? Identify the different forms of Discipline and its procedure?
2. Briefly explain the various causes of Employee Indiscipline?
3. Identify few Principles of Employment Discipline?
4. Brief explain the procedure for implementing Disciplinary Action?
5. Explain the essentials of a Good Disciplinary System?

**17.13 Reference Books:**

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Tripathi P.C.- *Personnel Management and Industrial Laws* - Sultan Chand and Sons - New Delhi;

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