Chapter 3: Issues of collective Bargaining

The content of the chapter: since the industrial scenario is changing very fast, the issues of collective bargaining are also changing with time. This chapter has lots of scope for discussion. Since the participants are from different countries, their issues at large are different, although some issues like, wage, productivity remains the same.

Issues of Collective Bargaining:

What are the issues that could be bargained across the table?

Practically speaking, any issue that has relevance to management and workers becomes the subject matter of bargaining. However, in certain specific cases both management and the union are reluctant to yield ground. Traditionally, management is not willing to negotiate work methods’, arguing that it is management’s exclusive right to decide how the work is to be done. Likewise, unions don’t want negotiations on production norms and disciplinary matters, because any agreement in this regard would put limits on their freedom. However over the years, the nature and content of collective bargaining has changed quite dramatically. Traditionally, wages and working conditions have been the primary focus areas of collective bargaining. However, in recent times, the process of collective bargaining has extended to almost any area that comes under employer-employee relations, covering a large territory.

But broadly these issues can be categorized into two parts:

1. Issues of right
2. Issues of Interest
3.

Issues of Right: It is a participative right of both the parties. For example: Wage fixation and productivity norm setting are the rights of workers.

Issues of Interest: These issues do not have participative rights and may only be granted as a sign of goodwill. Example: Providing Transport facilities to the work place is not binding on the
Management. It is provided only for the convenience of the workers and the benefit of the company.

Some of the examples of issues of collective bargaining are mentioned below.

- Wages and Working conditions
- Work norms
- Incentive payments
- Job Security
- Changes in technology
- Work tools, techniques and practices
- Staff transfers and promotions
- Grievances
- Disciplinary matters
- Health and safety
- Insurance and benefits
- Union recognition
- Union activities / responsibilities
- Management rights etc.

The major issues dealt with in collective bargaining are broadly categorized as below:

- **Wage Related issues** – These include topics like how basic wage rates are determined, cost-of-living adjustments, wage differentials, overtime rates, wage adjustments etc.

- **Supplementary economic benefits** – These include issues as pension plans, paid vacations, paid holidays, health insurance plans, dismissal plans, supplementary unemployment benefits etc.

- **Institutional Issues** – These consists of rights & duties of employers, employees & unions, including union security, check off procedures, quality of work-life program etc.

- **Administrative Issues** – These include issues such as seniority, employee discipline and discharge procedure, employee health &
Discussions:

safety, technological changes, work rules, job security and training, attendance, leave etc.