"INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN KENYA."

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A number of studies have been carried out of the industrial relations system at the national level but little is known about the impact of certain Personnel Management practices and trade union responses in the manufacturing industry in Kenya. The aim of this thesis therefore, is to examine how industrial relations at two manufacturing firms in Kenya are influenced by Personnel Management Practices regarding recruitment, selection, training and promotion of personnel and provision of welfare services and wages. The role of workers' trade unions and the impact of politics in each company's efforts to create and maintain productive employment relations are also examined.

The feeling that the investigation would expose confidential critical material was quite high among shareholders' representatives of the two firms. This led to minimal co-operation which rendered an in depth study impossible.

However, on the basis of the data gathered mainly through unstructured interviews, it has been argued that as she moved from colonialism to independence, Kenya inherited a free enterprise economic system with its inherent prospects and problems. For instance, the distribution of the wealth of the country was skewed towards foreigners who were mainly Europeans and Asians. To the extent that the owners of Capital were foreigners, the distribution of the fruits of labour
is viewed as having discriminated against Africans.

What is more, employees worked under harsh sub-human conditions. Corporal punishment was a normal method of training African personnel. Hence, the workers' unions then emerged to protest against the maltreatment thus opposing rather than co-operating with employers in the production process.

Since independence, the situation has changed in detail but not in nature; workers' unions still play the role of the 'opposition' party in industrial relations and the interests of shareholders are still at variance with those of the workers. Hence, the ill employment relationships which defeat managerial resources invested in creating a co-operative productive enterprise community.

To the extent that the ill employment relationships are inherent in a capitalistic mode of production which has so far thrived in this country with the support of the Government, the characteristic uneven distribution of fruits of labour and its consequences at enterprise level have also received the Kenya Government support. Furthermore, it is argued that in as much as the Government ensures that each enterprise operates within the confines of its free-enterprise socio-economic objectives, industrial development in Kenya will continue to benefit a minority more than a majority.

The thesis has been divided as follows:

The first chapter gives a brief substantiation of the significance of proper recruitment, selection,
promotion and other aspects of Personnel Management functions in developing a productive committed labour force in an enterprise.

The second chapter attempts a summary of employment relations from the colonial period to the contemporary Kenya. The chapter is based on the belief that to understand the present we need to know something about the past.

The picture of the present situation at two firms is coloured by the presentation of case study materials on Mumias Sugar Company and Panafirican Paper Mills in the third and fourth chapters respectively.

The fifth chapter briefly compares and contrasts the findings in the case studies.