

Concerns of Employees

Workers are known to have a number of concerns. Principally amongst these are security of tenure, conditions of employment and safety and health at work. In most case these rest with the employer. In some cases it is the actions, policy and practices of the employer that would provide the employee with some measure of comfort. By the same token, it is the irresponsible behaviour, indifference and the respect for following best practices and regulatory procedures that are cause for concern.

Be that as it may, it is safe to say that every employee remains concern about being terminated or dismissed, not being paid, not being paid on time or short paid. Generally workers are concerned about being exploited by their employers. This behaviour should not exist where there are standards in place, labour laws and regulatory procedures that guide the behaviour and actions of employee. In the case of Barbados, the Employment Act serves as a means of protection inasmuch that it tends to safeguard the unfair dismissal of employees. The Safety and Health and work Act sets the standards and legal boundaries that ensure the safety and health of workers.

The issue of security of tenure remains an open issue. Basically the employer has the latitude to determine the viability or the enterprise, and therefore can exercise the options of restructuring or closure. In either instance, dismissal or termination would not apply. Instead, the employee is either made redundant, retrenched, or offered a separation package. Irrespective of which form this takes, the bottom line is that the employee has to face the reality that he/she will become unemployed.

If it were that employees had options available to them to remain employed, then these are but few. To begin with there is the consideration

of reduced hours of work. This may take the form of a short week. A pay cut might be usual an option that many find difficult to accept. Regardless of which option is engaged, it basically boils down to a reduction in income and purchasing power of the employee.

It is at this point that there may be a greater appreciation on the part of the employee of the social security safety net that is in place. As it applies in Barbados, those whom meet the required National Insurance Payment (NIS) will become eligible to receive the payments from the Unemployed Benefit Fund when they are no longer employed. The challenge comes when the employer does not pay statutory portion of the NIS payment that is required that is required.

Returning to the issue of security of tenure, the main concern of most employees is that of being appointed in their job. To be appointed means job security, where employees are guaranteed a pension and a number of benefits and privileges that may be offered to those individuals who are categorized as full time staff. The reality is that some employees work for most of their lives at the same organization without receiving an appointment. This leaves them at a serious disadvantage. Without job security many are unable to secure mortgages from financial institutions, and even loans for educational purposes.

Finally, employees at all levels of the organization become concerned about the poor treatment and disrespect shown by supervisory / middle and senior management personnel. Usually the status of those individuals in management changes as a result of having received a promotion or being delegated some authority. The actions and attitudes that are exhibited by those in management can sometimes be demotivating and demoralizing. It leads to the destruction of workplace harmony and the poor relations between employees and management. This concern can be addressed if those in management recognized that they themselves are employees like their subordinates.

