

Abstract

There is no doubt that the environment in which employees, employers and trade unions find themselves has changed dramatically in the past ten years and will continue to change over the following decade. Perhaps the most significant changes are the ongoing fragmentation of workplaces and the shift in the balance from collective to individual models of employment relations. Traditional frameworks and assumptions surrounding employment relations are now becoming increasingly outdated and in need of renewal.

Despite from the other business areas, manufacturing field become one of the fields that practice employee relations strategies in large scale as a management tool and amongst that, apparel manufacturing sector became the most benefited with well organised ER strategies.

Although Sri Lanka holds the position of world's best apparel manufacturer due to its quality of the products, manufacturing and supply chain excellence and specially recognised as 'ethical apparel manufacturing' by decades long efforts of human relations practices, the sector still in need of improving its presently practicing employee relations to align with the world-wide, most updated employee relations practices.

The following study was carried out to identify the factors that define the future employee relations practices in global context and to develop a model for a selected apparel manufacturing organization in Sri Lanka.

A questionnaire was distributed among five apparel manufacturing organizations (ranked with the highest annual turnover by Joint Apparel Association Forum Sri Lanka (JAAFSL)) and ten international organizations (ranked as 'the best organizations to work' by Forbs Magazine (December 2014)) to investigate the present employee relations practices as the initial stage. And furthermore, a sample was selected from the organization that the developing model will be introduced to assess the present situation of the employee relations practices.

In combination of the findings from local and international organizations, country's labour law and the international labour conventions, a new employee relations strategy was developed to address the gaps identified through sample survey of the selected organization.